The political space of labour movements in times of crisis

A study of the labour movement on Chiloé, Chile

Master thesis in Geography

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Abstract

This study examines the political space of the labour movement within the Chilean salmon industry on Chiloé, southern Chile, in times of profound ecological crisis. To do that an operationalisation of political space is developed with focus on actors' social fields, power relations between actors and with sensitivity to scale and development over time. By taking a closer look at how claims have been articulated over time and at different scales and on achievements I seek to find out how an ecological crisis, such as the appearance of the virus ISA on Chiloé, can change the possibilities and constraints the actors in the labour movement faces. I argue that through the increase in attention to the negative aspects of an industry, an ecological crisis can open new spaces of engagement for local actors. This can bring about an upscaling of the articulation of claims. However, whether the demands are pressed successfully or not relies on a number of factors; hegemonic political regime; macro economy; culture; and power relations both locally, regionally and nationally.

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Abbreviations

CAT	Central Autónoma de Trabajadores, the Autonomous Workers' Central
Cenda	Centro de Estudios Nacionales de Desarrollo Alternativo, Centre for National Studies and Alternative Development
CONATRASAL	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria del Salmón y Mitílidos de Chile
CUT	Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, the Unitary Workers' Central
DII	Departamento de Ingenieria Industrial, Universidad de Chile, Department of Industrial Engineering, University of Chile
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas
ISA	Infectious Salmon Anemia
LO	Landsorganisasjonen i Norge, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
OLACH	Observatorio Laboral y Ambiental de Chiloé, the Labour and Environmental Observatory of Chiloé
Sernapesca	Servicio Nacional de Pesca, the National Fisheries Service

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1. Introduction

On May 27 2009 Javier Ugarte, president of the *Confederation of Salmon Farming Trade Unions*, CONATRASAL, stood up at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) of the Norwegian multinational corporation Marine Harvest in Oslo, stating the claims of the Chilean salmon workers:

> "We propose that the General Assembly solicit the Directory to consider establishing or authorising The Auditory Committee or other competent Committee, to study the conduct of the company, in relation to the diseases, according to an environmentally responsible management. What is Marine Harvest going to do with the massive dismissal of workers in Chile? The salmon industry collapsed due to bad management by part of the companies and this has provoked a serious social-labour impact, such as the 20 000 dismissals in the industry, where Marine Harvest steers the numbers."

This might be just any event in today's globalised world, where companies have workers all around the globe, and where freedom of speech and freedom of organisation are supposed rights of the inhabitants of the western hemisphere. But for Ugarte this was not any event and any claim. For the 32 year old salmon worker, living in the little town of Quemchi on Chiloé, southern Chile, a place without traditions of labour organising, this was a major step both for him as a unionist, and also for his union and the workers of Chiloé.

In Chile workers' right to organise was abruptly removed with the neoliberal regime introduced by the military dictator Pinochet (1973 – 1990), who straightforwardly prohibited organisations such as labour unions. The laws and regulations organising economic life in Chile today is very much the heritage from this period. Thus, for the Chilean workers the right to organise is not, as in most other parts of the world, a given but a right fought for since the return to democracy. Three actors can be identified in the Chilean panorama: the state, the market and civil society, and particular for Chile there exists an alliance between the state and the market. This alliance shapes much of Chilean economic life, both structurally and mentally; the notion of the entrepreneur as the main actor capable of creating new economic possibilities is very central, thus regulations are weighted positively towards companies and investments.

Internationally the everyday reality of trade unions is ever changing, and workers in many parts of the world have witnessed a decline in unions and union membership. This can be linked to several factors, most of which have one common feature; namely economic globalisation (Haarstad 2009a). The free flow of capital and multinational corporations' possibility to change production localities as the comparative advantages of places change, have led to more flexible labour, and hence a weakening of the workers' rights and their abilities to press claims. Nevertheless, labour movements do still exist all around the world, and they do still press claims and make efforts to have their voices heard.

The fairly new geographical arena of "labour geography", first introduced by Herod in 1997 (Castree 2007), discusses and proposes alternative routes for how unionism can survive and remain or become a central actor in the shaping of the geographies of capitalism. As Coe et al (2007) describes, the labour geography is an attempt of shifting the focus away from a *geography of labour*, meaning how workers are spread across space, and to a *labour geography* in which workers and unions are "active geographical agents whose activities can shape economic landscapes in ways that differ significantly from of capital" (Herod 1997: 3).

Studies of the geography of labour is quite divided (Castree 2007), where some claim that workers still have possibilities to influence their situation and improve their organisation and its reach, whilst others assert a decline in trade unions and their prospects to articulate successful claims. It has been argued that in the course of neoliberal globalisation, class has lost its impact whilst organisations, both NGOs and civil society organisations, based on ethnicity, stating the claims of indigenous groups have managed to articulate claims that are paid attention to (Haarstad 2009a; Andolina et al 2005; Fraser 2003). Hence, globalisation has contributed to a "qualitatively different shaping of political spaces, which encourages some forms of collective action and discourages others" (Haarstad 2009a: 239).

The term political space has been discussed and developed in different directions, ranging from a mere way of stating space of agency, to intents of encompassing a wide, political, socio-economic expression of the structure surrounding actors. In this thesis I aim to operationalise the

concept into more of an analytical tool, with a focus on the dynamic of the term and how actors can influence and enlarge their own political space. Central here is to identify and discuss the different components shaping the political space, to better get a grip of it as an analytical tool. I will link political space to structural context, and discuss how changes in one or more of the components of the structural context might serve as a *trigger* for actors to rearticulate demands, reorganise and/or rescale their strategies for influence. In the case study of this thesis the trigger is the ecological crisis of the salmon industry in Chile.

The case of the study is the labour movement of the salmon industry on Chiloé, in the tenth region in Chile. This industry has been studied and discussed widely, both with a critical view and as a case of a successful, internationalised industry (Barton and Fløysand 2008; Thorstensen 2007; Liabø 2005; Barrett et al 2002). During the 1990s and 2000s the production of salmon increased in such a manner that it was characterised as a boom, both economically and production wise. The regulations, however, were poor, and the past couple of years it has become evident that the boom was not monitored satisfactorily. During 2007, the ecological collapse became obvious. The crisis of the virus ISA has influenced the salmon industry at practically all levels: workers have lost their jobs; firms have gone bankrupt; sites have closed; local politicians are trying to rethink the economic basis of the region; national politicians are working on new and stricter regulations for the industry and a new law on aquaculture; the international environmental movement organising to articulate claims concerning what they see as an unsustainable industry has raised their voice. The crisis affect actors at all levels, and in this thesis I seek to identify how it affects the different scales, local, regional, national and also international, and the consequences of the changed panorama. This includes whether the claims stated at the different levels are more or less successful.

It is important to note that this is not a quantitative study, but a qualitative one. I seek to understand and analyse the situation as experienced by the labour movement, represented through some of their main leaders. It is not a study where I have quantitatively analysed the situation, although I will draw on available statistics to shed light on the development of the labour movement. My aim is thus to understand the processes which produces changes in the possibilities of the unions, and how these changes are experienced and interpreted. Additionally I

wish to find out how the unionists experience their own capabilities and possibilities, and the shifting environment.

1.1 Research questions

As stated previously, I aim at developing the concepts of structural context and political space into analytical tools, linked together as changes in the structural context can serve as a trigger on the dynamics of the political space. Hence I wish to analyse how one such change, in this case in ecological context, can both positively and negatively change the possibilities and constraints on the actors of the labour movement in question. My hypothesis is that such a change and the national and international attention it brings forth can be both an opportunity for development for the labour movement, but also a tremendous challenge. Increased concern about an issue can lead to an increase in social fields available for the actors, and can shift the relations between the participants in these fields. Linked to social fields are also the ability to network, and this increase in attention can lead to new networks and a rescaling of networks and action.

How can an ecological crisis affect the possibilities and constraints facing a labour movement at different scales?

My assumption is that a crisis will affect the labour movement differently at different scales, that is the branch working locally, within companies and in the local communities will face different consequences and impacts than the unionists acting at regional and national levels do. Thus, the analysis will concentrate on scales, and the changes happening at each scale. Importantly it will also to map and analyse the processes of rescaling, both up- and downscaling, brought on by changes.

The impact of most triggers are not either positive or negative but both. A change in the structural context can both lead to an increase in possibilities, as described, but also constrain the possibilities. If, as mentioned previously, large numbers of workers loose their jobs, this will affect the labour movement negatively, as their membership base will decrease. Hence, an important part of an analysis of the changes in a political space caused by an external trigger will

have to weigh positive and negative impacts against each other to discover if there is an absolute improvement or deterioration.

To be able to answer the main research question, it is necessary with a broad understanding of the political space of the labour movement, including both internal and external constraints and possibilities, weaknesses and strengths. Thus, I present two sub questions:

1. What characterises the political space of the labour movement on Chiloé? How is it experienced by the actors?
2. What are the main elements shaping the structural context they act within? Or; what are the main impediments preventing successful claim making?

To be able to discuss the changes, it is important to analyse the political space at the different scales, and it is therefore necessary to get an understanding of the mechanisms which both internally and externally affect and influence the possibilities of the labour movement. This includes factors such as power relations, meaning systems, laws, political regime and so on.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

The analysis of the thesis is based on the research questions, however in a reversed order. But before arriving at the analysis, theoretical perspectives and methodology are introduced.

Chapter 2 discusses the theories used and further developed, aiming at operationalising the somewhat abstract concept of political space. Focus is on scale, social fields and power relations, and on the structural components of the possibilities and constraints facing labour movements. I introduce the concept of *a trigger*, understood as an abrupt and sudden change in context of the political space which shifts and alters the possibilities and constraints in both positive and negative ways.

In **chapter 3** I present and discuss methodological choices and different aspects of the collection of and production of data, based on fieldwork and interpretation. I also present the

methodological implications and structure of the analysis based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2.

Chapter 4 gives and overall view of the area of focus, namely Chiloé, an island in southern Chile. I also present a brief introduction to Chilean unionism, and the main ideas of earlier studies of the Chilotan labour movement.

The next three chapters form the analysis of the thesis. I start by taking a closer look at the labour movement through a description of its development the past 15-20 years in **chapter 5**, analysing important aspects of the networks the unions are engaged in, the alliances made, and the relationship between unionists and workers, and unionists and employers. In **chapter 6** I present and discuss the success of the articulation of claims up to date, focusing on the institution of collective negotiations and the salmon industry specific tripartite discussions on the future of and status of the salmon industry. **Chapter 7** focuses on the main research question and thus discusses and analyses how the ecological crisis caused by the virus *infectious salmon anaemia*, ISA, influences the labour movement. Important here is the upscaling of the articulation of claims through the confederation to the national and international level, but also the extreme effects the crisis has had on in terms of unemployment, bankruptcies and unions closing down.

In **chapter 8** I summarise the thesis and attempt to conclude on the research questions. Through a review of the approach and the case studied I take a look at the main research question and discuss how an ecological crisis can change the possibilities and constraints facing a labour movement.

2. Theoretical framework

In the present chapter I will discuss and bring together theoretical contributions stemming from the fairly new part of economic geography, labour geography; the possibilities and constraints on civil society brought about through globalisation; and ideas from political ecology. This is done to get an overview of how the geographical tradition can theoretically inform the main research question of this thesis, namely: *how can an ecological crisis affect the possibilities and constraints facing a labour movement at different scales?* Capitalist production makes use of natural resources, and, as Lier (2007) argues, an important insight from the Marxist tradition in human geography is that "capital accumulation is *inherently expansionary*" (2007: 815). Thus, production and extraction of resources spreads, and with it comes the expansion of and competition between labour markets.

Labour geography discusses how workers are capable of becoming actors involved in the shaping of economic landscapes, and how they in different ways make use of channels and institutions to better their situation and that of fellow workers. In the following I will discuss how unions, understood as an expression of organised civil society, can participate in 'spaces of engagement' (Cox 1998), and particularly how an ecological crisis can open new such spaces.

To be able to analyse a case where an ecological crisis has brought about changes in the possibilities and constraints for local actors to press claims, I will discuss and shape a theoretical framework. It is based on the term *political space*, and uses the concept of a *trigger*, such as a crisis, to analyse how this can shift the possibilities and constraints in context and the structures surrounding the political space in such a way that the unions can rearticulate or articulate their claims at new scales and in new arenas. At the core of this chapter is the operationalisation of the central concept, in which social fields, scale and power relations form the understanding of how claims can be articulated in shifting conditions.

2.1 Local fights and international spaces of engagement

The spaces open for articulating claims within the reality of a world dominated by continuous and rapid interaction, is one where those who have the possibilities and means to mobilise globally will be more likely to succeed in having their claims heard. Globalisation is not only

intensification of interconnectedness globally, but also an augmentation of social relations across borders (Potter et al 2004). Although many authors underline the importance of economic globalisation and the free flow of capital, and transnational companies (TNC), globalisation also involves political and cultural flows. As Haarstad and Fløysand argue, there is a danger to equating globalisation to neoliberal economic ideology because "the view of globalization as inherently empowering multinational corporations ignores the more complex restructuring of social, political and economic processes" (Haarstad and Fløysand 2007: 290). It is important to understand the opportunities inherent in the so called *information society*, or in Castells' (2000) words, the *network society*, in which information technology has tremendously increased the information available and the reach of social relations.

However, the impact of the internationalised capitalism is tremendous, in many ways, and one of its most important features is the weight placed on the competitiveness of countries. This is the basis of relocations, but as Munck (2002) states, it is not the issue of competition among nations, but "between workforces, or to be precise, labour regimes" (2002: 111). Castells (1996 cited in Munck 2002) explains this by drawing on the international division of labour, saying that this division does not depend upon the 'characteristics of the country' but on the characteristics of its labour, included its embodied knowledge.

Some authors claim that through globalisation groups based on class are loosing way because they are territorially bound, few workers have the possibility to move and mobilise across borders, and thus they are struggling to win space to articulate their demands (Fraser 2000; 2003, Haarstad 2007; 2009c). In the face of globalisation claims of recognition have been more successful than those of redistribution, that is, groups based on for example ethnicity that have articulated demands related to their groups recognition and rights have to a larger degree been able to do so than workers whose main demands are based on redistribution of wealth (Fraser 2003). This fact gives way for the importance of scale in discussing labour geography, and contrary to other fields, in which terms such as *glocal* (that is global and local) are frequently used to describe the arenas of action; to unions and workers the national scale is still very much a core arena for pressing claims to improve their situation. When governments deregulate and lower taxes for companies to become more attractive to foreign investments, this profoundly

affects the everyday reality of workers. Thus, to discuss the spaces of engagement related to labour movements the national scale is still, despite globalisation, important to bear in mind and analyse.

The globalisation of production and the structure of TNCs give the latter some tremendous advantages and possibilities of profits, but it also includes an increase in possible watch dogs. As Castells (2004) argues, the powerlessness felt by people all over the world by the notion of loosing control over most spheres in their own lives, in many cases turns into resistance. He further argues that the environmental movement is the most comprehensive and influential of our times. Consumers are becoming more aware and international standards and agreements on *sustainability* gives way to a set of spaces in which the articulation of demands of sustainability by part of TNCs and industries can be made. Sustainability is here understood as in line with the report Our Common Future: *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (www.worldbank.org). Fløysand et al (2010) argues that discourses on sustainability should not only be regarded as means to reduce contradictions in capitalist exploitation of resources but also as "providing real opportunities for involving local stakeholders in environmental governance" (2010: 8). Civil society organises with different aims and makes visible the unsustainability of industries and companies, all facilitated through the mechanisms and communication facilities brought about with globalisation.

The question which then arises is how actors can work to influence their situations and that of others, how can they press claims in this world in which multinational companies have increasing power and the networks and relations are becoming ever more globalised? Cox (1998) presents a *set of spaces* which he labels 'space of dependence' and 'space of engagement'. The space of dependence can simplified be defined as the spaces in which everyday life unfolds, the relations and institutions we all rely on to lead our lives, whilst the space of engagement is "the space in which the politics of securing a space of dependence unfolds" (Cox 1998: 2). The latter space is not locally bound, and might be global, both on scale and reach, that is the local issues can be linked to broader discourses, as the actions to maintain or improve the space of dependence can demand action at different scales. From this one can hypothesise that a sensibility to and

understanding of scale and action on different levels might be central to successfully securing the space of dependence. Relevant here is also the ability to form networks with groups and organisations already working within related fields. If we relate this to the previous discussion on sustainability within internationalised industries it can be assumed that there is potential in international spaces of engagement linking local fights to international claims of sustainability. Or in the words of Fløysand et al:

> "the globalism in aquaculture production may facilitate civil society networks linking organizations between host countries, in the same way that globalization has facilitated the upscaling of a range of local environmental campaigns drawing on international discourses in sustainability" (2010: 9)

2.2 Workers' agency

> "Workers have agency. They have the capacity to act, to change, to challenge and to resist." (Ward et al 2003: 159).

Ward et al's argument of workers ability to act to change their own situation might be a simple one, and might be disputed in some cases, but the bottom line is that workers do have the possibility to act. This is what agency is: the capability to act for the benefit of oneself or others. The extent to which they are able to do this, the risks this might involve, such as loss of jobs, and the success of their actions, is contingent by a number of structural variables. These structural impediments include politics, culture, history, ecology and socio-economic conditions. Ward et al (2003) show how socio-geographical variables influence the possibilities of people, and these socio-geographical variables are made up of the structural impediments listed above. Thus, a unionist in Norway, where there is a long and fierce history of union action, and where unionism is embedded in the welfare system, will have a much greater success rate than his peer in say South-Africa. This fact is very much at the core of this thesis: what kind of structural reality is facing the labour movement on Chiloé? How do changes in the structure affect their possibilities of articulating demands? And what are their strategies and possibilities of acting to improve their own reality and that of their fellow workers?

Herod (Herod 1997, Castree 2007) was the first to discuss labour geography, as opposed to the geography of labour (see chapter 1), and repeatedly states the importance of a geographical understanding of workers and their opportunities and constraints. As a group workers are "spatially embedded in the landscapes in which they live, that is spatial embeddedness may be enabling and/ or constraining of their social praxis, and that workers will thus try to shape in particular ways the geographical structures and relationships within which they live their lives" (Herod 2003: 113).

This implies that the researcher must be geographically informed; the local, regional and national structures and relationships define how the processes of globalisation affect the specific places and the landscapes of the workers there. The place specificity of workers should be seen in relation to their counterpart, namely the companies, or capital, and their distinctive spatiality: "capital crosses space whilst labour can only occupy place" (Rainnie et al 2010: 62)

Unions have certain institutions and channels to work within to press their claims, and these institutions are dependent on a number of factors, both structural and internal to the given labour union.

> "[C]ollective negotiation is dependent on the union development and on the phenomenon that forms this, but it is also tributary to other variables, such as the labour institutionalism, the prevailing levels of union liberty, the structure of occupations and of salaries, and particularly on the culture concerning the sense of and value of human work in the productive process." (Salinero et al 2006: 9, my translation)

As Salinero et al states, the degree of success of claims pressed, in this case through the institution of collective negotiations, are related to several issues, in which culture, or meaning systems, can play a central role. By turning the argument around, one sees that the different views upon labour as a component of the production cycle influence not only the possibilities to negotiate, but also the opportunities to develop unions.

As Herod stated when labour geography was at its very beginning, it is "an effort to see the making of the economic geography of capitalism through the eyes of labour" (Herod 1997: 3). Labour geography studies how workers do have agency to shape the economic landscape and their own realities, and that this agency is, as with all agencies, constrained by external factors. Through the empirical data and the analysis I have come to an understanding of the importance of ecological factors to workers' and unions' situations; a crisis in, or shift in ecology can lead to tremendous local changes, influencing the possibilities and constraints on their agency. This linked to globalisation and the opportunities inherent in transnational discourses on sustainability and in social movements across borders has led way to the theoretical framework used in the analysis.

2.3 Shaping the framework

In the following I will discuss the theoretical framework which is shaped to analyse how the processes discussed above, in which civil society forms organisations to articulate demands of sustainability in broad terms for their territories. The overarching theoretical foundation is, as the title of the thesis indicates, that of *political space*, which is shaped by the structures, or the *structural context*. I wish to present ecology as an element of the structural context, that is the *opportunities and constraints actors are confronted with*, hence I will make use of some ideas from political ecology. My interest in political space stems from a geographical tradition and thus I am more concerned with scale and the interaction between people and nature than what might be the case with studies from other disciplines. This implies an aim where spaces of engagement and agency is analysed in relation to the mutual influence people and nature have and the strategies of rescaling taking place in order to better press claims.

My focus is on the actors themselves, and their possibilities to act within their context, and also on their apprehension of their reality and prospects. By making a divide between the political space and the structural context, I seek to develop an understanding of how the agency works within the structural context. By doing this I understand the political space as the space made up of the structural variables within which agency can make use of the channels and institutions available, both to articulate demands concerning their situation, but also in attempts to change the structures themselves. However, the political space and the structural context are of course,

closely linked and intertwined, and to show the mechanisms which tie them together and shape the dynamical space, I introduce a new concept. Deriving from Ward et al's (2003) discussion on social movement unionism, I make use of the concept of a *trigger* as a link between the structural context and the political space. A change in the structural context, whether it is a political, economical, ecological or other kind, can lead to new possibilities and new constraints facing the actors, and their political space of action is thus influenced and challenged by structural changes.

2.3.1 The structural context

Before discussing the political space I draw attention to the structures surrounding it. By means of defining the concept I concur with Haarstad (2009b) in his view that the structural context is the set of political, economical and social opportunities and constraints that shape the space actors operate within. I include another factor, which are the ecological opportunities and constraints as the salmon industry, like other natural resource based industries, very much relies on the natural conditions and the ecological status of the place. The structural context can be understood as the backdrop of a given political space, the factors shaping the possibilities of action, but also the understanding of possibilities. The structural context is not static, it is important to understand it as a dynamic environment, where the different factors mutually influence each other, and this dynamic enables some actors and constrains others.

Haarstad (2009a, 2009b, 2009c) argues that the neoliberal globalisation "has changed the structural context for collective action" (Cerny 1995, referred to in Haarstad 2009c: 170). This leads to a situation in which some actors are being constrained whilst others gain entry into new arenas. The social movements which seemingly are succeeding within these new spaces tend to share the ability of making use of the increased mobility and the facilitation of networking created by the popularisation of communication. However, trade unions do not share these opportunities, in that they "are dependent on workplace-based organization and active state regulation, and can be assumed to be less able to manoeuvre effectively within the political spaces of globalization" (Haarstad 2009c: 170). Trade unions are therefore facing a new arena, not only one where flexibilisation of labour is undermining attempts to organise, but also where other groups are able to make use of the new possibilities in ways difficult to place- and industry-based organisations.

Haarstad (2009a) argues that a decline in trade unions and their related class struggle is not only caused by unemployment and subcontracting, but that deeper structural variables are to blame.

> "The internationalisation of production, the rise of "lean" production and the general empowerment of trans-national corporations have drastically changed the balance of power between capital and labour, and 'sponsored a virtual race to the economic and social bottom for the workers of the world'" (Moody 1997: 307, referred to in Haarstad 2009a: 240).

I argue however, that neoliberalism, a country's hegemonic political regime with regulations and laws, and economic globalisation are not the only structural aspects which shape the political space of the labour movement, and that the interaction between the structural contingents is of great interest. That is, the political regime affects the economical system and vice versa, and these two affect the ecological premises in that the understanding of nature and resources very much shapes the ecology and the landscape. Hence, the prevailing discourses on nature and resources are important in understanding the ecology as a structural factor.

Changes in nature and ecology also affect the politics and the economy in that an increase or decrease in available resources can promote new discussions and create new economical opportunities and interests or jeopardise existing industries. An example of this is the recent debate over whether or not Norway should exploit oil reserves in the Lofoten archipelago. The two main standpoints in the dispute can be said to be divided by ecological considerations. The pro oil argument is that this is a unique economic opportunity for both Norway and the region, creating not only profit but also employment opportunities. The counter argument underlines the importance the area has for one of the largest stocks of wild cod in the world, and that this is a unique natural region which should be preserved.

In an attempt to show the importance of the natural conditions of the salmon industry and accordingly as a structural variable for the political space of the trade unions within it, I will make use of some ideas from a fairly new part of human geography, namely political ecology. In

few words, political ecology sees environmental change as the result of political and/or economic decision making and institutional interaction (Barton and Fløysand 2008). "As such, rather than focusing on the object of change itself … the focus should be on the subjects that drive these changes and the ways in which … these social actors are able to shape their environments in specific ways" (Barton and Fløysand 2008: 4). In considering the necessity of implementing the ecological dimension to the structural context shaping the political space of actors, I find the argument of power and politics relevant:

> "It focuses on the (unequal) power structures and politics that underlie processes of environmental change and the sociopolitical and environmental implications of changes in the ways that natural resources are allocated and managed, with particular emphasis on the interests of the "weaker" social actors" (Budds 2004: 325).

The reason I make use of political ecology as an element in the structural context, is its focus on describing how politics is important to understand impacts on and changes in the ecology. Additionally, how these two structural components are part of the wider picture of the local societies involved, and how the shifting balance between politically founded resource management and the ways ecological changes caused by human influence forces political attention towards the success of the management. Thus, the term is introduced to the structural context as a description of the interaction between ecology, and natural resources, with the political and economical sphere. The environmental changes, and possible ecological crisis, should be seen in relation to the political and institutional decisions made concerning territories and the environmental resources there.

2.3.2 Political space

"*Political space:* the phrase slips easily off the tongues of commentators these days. Activists invoke the need for political space frequently. Cartographers regularly seem to have specified political space in choropleth representations of provinces and states." (Dalby 2005: 415). The term political space has been used and misused in many contexts and by very different people and groups of people, and definitions of the term are in abundance. In the following I will present two of the discussions on political space I find most interesting, and towards the end of the

subchapter I will summarise by giving my own definition. This will lead the way into the discussion on how to operationalise the term into a manageable framework for analysis.

As previously mentioned, Haarstad describes political space and structural context as: "the possibilities and resources available for political action within a particular structural context" (Haarstad 2009a: 241). He focuses on political space for trade unions, and relates the decrease in unions' rate of success in their articulated claims to the discourse on neoliberal globalisation. The success of one group in relation to another is something Webster and Engberg-Pedersen relate to the nature of political space. In their view of the nature of political space they draw on literature discussing the relationship between the state and the citizen and the discourses shaping the contested political space. "[P]olitical space emerges as part of a constantly shifting landscape of contest that is primarily about social actors winning position rather than achieving decisive victories" (Anderson 1976 referred to in Webster and Engberg-Pedersen 2002: 13).

Webster and Engberg-Pedersen (2002) discuss political space as a tool to analyse the possibilities of poor, or organisations working on behalf of the poor. They stress the political discourses on poverty and poverty reduction, the available institutional channels and social and political practices the poor base their agency on. This last they find important in that a political space is not created solely through the agency of government:

> "It also depends on the organizational practices and political experiences of different social groups … A favourable policy environment and committed government may achieve little in poverty reduction if marginalised groups are unorganized, poverty is internalized, and if the interests and views of the marginalized remain excluded from the process of governance" (2002: 10).

Their weight on the organisations' experience and practice I find relevant to an understanding of the success of demands made, especially related to trade unions. With praxis within the context comes know-how which is vital to future action and success.

In this thesis, however, I seek to identify and use the concept as an analytical tool, and hence I understand political space as the possibilities and resources available for actors and groups to articulate claims, of political, economic or social character. The claims made by trade unions vary, but can be summarised into three main categories: *material*, such as wages and bonuses; *political*, such as right to run for election; and *worker rights*, including working conditions, types of contract and maternity leave. My argument is that by decomposing the term political space into a set of components which are easier to map than the somewhat abstract concept of political space itself, it can become a tool for understanding the dynamics by which actors can change their possibilities of articulating claims.

As Webster and Engberg-Pedersen (2002) propose, a main aspect of political space is not the organizations themselves, but the possibilities for actors to "bring about change through local organizations" (2002: 15). This might be changes of different characters, and the rate of success might also vary, the importance here is placed upon the *possibility of influence*. This possibility is shaped by various factors, both internal to the group or the organisation and external, such as the local culture and norms, the networks the organisation participates in; in other words, the *meaning systems* of the agents and their *social fields*.

Thus, in an effort to define the main term, I see political space as *a system of social fields at various scales, in which meaning is produced in the shape of claims with importance to the actors' and the system's rights – and material interests*. In the following I will discuss further how to operationalise this view of political space, in which social fields, power relations and scale are central for understanding the possibilities, the constraints and the success of the articulation of claims.

2.3.2.1 Social fields

Networks and social fields are terms which are very much overlapping and can easily be claimed to involve the same. However, I choose to use the term social fields, agreeing with Fløysand and Jakobsen (2010: 9) in that the main difference between networks and social fields as concepts is that "the latter pays attention to the time-spatial scale of social relations". The aspect of scale and time is central to the understanding of the development of labour movements, and in analysing

their networks with regard to time and scale I find it easier to grasp the changing space of engagement. I will return to a discussion on scale related to labour and social fields later.

According to Fløysand and Jakobsen (2005: 8) "[a] *social field* is a collection of geographically and historically distributed social networks coordinated by formal and informal rules of conduct in a given material, practiced, and imaginative setting". Drawing on Grønhaug (1978) Fløysand (1996) gives the term social field importance as a way of defining and conceptualising a social space. By using the social fields approach the scale at which events occur can be defined by both the type of event and the number of actors involved. My understanding of social fields in this thesis is as the patterns of relations the actors within the labour movement engage in, and which facilitates and constrain their agency.

Trade unions can be placed in several such social fields, and each component, that is local and firm branch of the movement, is placed not only in the social field of the labour movement, but also each of them in different, but possibly interlinked fields. These social fields are important in the making of the trade unions capability of articulating claims, and they affect the effectiveness of the claims on each of the scales where they act. Because of the heterogeneity of the actors within the labour movement, their background and political strands, there are several components to the social field that are interesting to explore.

An important aspect of the social fields is the construction of meaning which takes place, and the changing of the already existing meaning systems. As Fløysand and Jacobsen (2005: 9) notes, "social practices produce inter-subjective meaning composed of categories, narratives, and rules of conduct that the field members use to interpret, maintain, and generate new meaning". Changes both in the structural context, the social fields and the different spaces for political action can change the interpretation the actors have of their possibilities to act. The presence of new ideas and organisational structures and behaviour might be one such factor to change the meaning systems. For example, in the case of the Chilean aquaculture industry one can form a hypothesis that the influence of large Norwegian companies is affecting the labour movement's ideas about their role in the social fields and their capability to act. This is due to the fact that companies are embedded and influenced, both by their country of origin, and the locality of

operations. Even though it might be obvious that the Norwegian companies will act differently in countries with fewer legislations and with a far more deregulated workforce than in Norway, they will however be affected by critique and impulses from both country of origin and place of production.

A very important part of the meaning systems in social fields and in social movements is the construction of identity which takes place, and the distinction between us and them. Haarstad (2009b) discusses how the collective identities are relational, and states that "political practices and identities arise from intersubjective relations as much as material interests" (2009b: 13). Place is important here, even though the *information age* provides means to interact and expand actors' social relations across place, "local communities, constructed through collective action and preserved through collective memory, are specific sources for identities." (Castells 2004: 68).

In Latin America the term patron-client is often one used to describe certain principals for social organisation, and is an example of how culture, or meaning systems, can impede or enhance opportunities. It is a two-way relationship "in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and re-sources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron." (Scott 1972: 92). The patron-client relationship is seen as typical of non-industrialised societies, but different varieties of it can also be seen in industrialised countries. Here the importance of the people you know and the people in the networks and on the different scales and their abilities, constraints, attitude and opinions on the different matters and claims can be very important and be part of the reason why claims are effective or not. Another important feature is of course the difference in social status of the actors; the patron is of a higher social class than the client, and this affects the relationship and the outcomes. However, the patron-client term is one with long history, and it is one that is changing.

Linking patron-client to the political space shows how the culture and the agency of the social fields affect the possibilities of pressing claims and the effectiveness of these. If the political space is a description of the possibilities, and the arena where claims are being articulated, then

the social fields and the meaning systems are the resources and channels available, and the patron-client forms part of this panorama. This is one example of how culture can be linked to social fields and agency within these. It is also relevant to see the patron-client phenomenon as a way of understanding the power relations within the social fields. It is not enough for an actor to extend his social fields and increase the number of fields, as important is the power relations he is placed in within the fields. Always maintaining the role as a client will not increase the actor's possibilities of influencing processes and outcomes, however, if he manages to achieve certain power within a network the chances of successfully stating claims increases.

The social fields actors are involved in are differentiated by the number of actors, the types of actors and the geographical extension of the field. They are also diverse in that the power relations within the fields will be different from one field to another; for example a trade unionist will have a very distinct relation to the other actors in the field of the company, where he interacts with the management and other workers, than in the field of the local labour movement, where his position amongst the other unionists will define his status. These power relations are important to understand the effectiveness of the claims, not only the power relations within one field, but the various positions an actor can have. A unionist, who has gained a certain level of respect amongst the bosses, might experience that his relations with other unionists and workers can change.

An analysis of the social fields an actor is involved in is important in the mapping of a political space in that it is relevant to explain the effectiveness of claims. The number of and type of fields is not a given and static scenery. Several factors can lead to an increase or decrease in social fields, and the changing panorama of an actor changes his possibilities and constraints. Faced with the globalised reality where labour is constantly being forced into more flexible forms, and where unionism is in decline, the labour movements are trying to find new ways of being heard and successfully articulating their claims. Some academics (e.g. Haarstad 2009a, 2009b and Moody 1997) discuss *social movement unionism* as a way of coping with the decline in workers' organisations. This I interpret as a way of enhancing the social fields, the number of them, the reach and the power relations within them. Allying with other social movements is thus one way of enhancing the chances of making one's voice heard, and there can be others, such as

cooperation with NGOs or through political affiliation. The bottom line is that this kind of networking will increase the number of social fields the actors participate in and might change the dynamics of the social fields. However, it might remove focus on the issues which form the bottom line for the unions.

2.3.2.2 Scale

As previously mentioned, scale is very important in understanding the degree of success of organisations working to press claims in the globalised reality of the twenty-first century. As Ward et al (2003) states, trade unions are traditionally scaled at three levels: the workplace, the local and the national. The 'local' might for example be organised within the city, a region or a county. Within this, somewhat simplified mapping of trade unions' scales, it is important to note that assuming a hierarchy when it comes to power is difficult "as autonomy will vary along a number of dimensions" (Ward et al 2003: 112). This might be variations in for example sector, regions and national economic context, and of course, local and regional relations of patron-client.

An important aspect when discussing scale, related to movements such as the labour movement, is the potential in not only upscaling to the global level, but within many countries an up- and rescaling within the country's boundaries might be a strategy to explore for unions. In areas and in industries where the labour movement is weak, it could be an impossible vision to form strategies of transnational cooperation, at least until the local, regional and national fields of cooperation and agency are established. A rescaling of this sort might be one of forming regional organisations to articulate common demands made either to regional or national authorities.

Haarstad (2007: 58) argues that trade unions "are largely organized towards influence within the national state structure, and are less able to influence political processes that are disembedded from these". This means that in discussing and analysing labour movements, it is important to remember the necessity of a focus on the national scale, as workers' situation is largely shaped at this, and at local, scale. Transnational companies move operations to other countries because they provide cheaper labour, that is, the host country will have regulations that are favourable compared to other countries. This scale specificity is somewhat of an disadvantage for the labour

movement, as globalisation provides the possibilities and mechanisms for movements to upscale to the global level, and thus increase the opportunities to articulate claims and have their voices heard, and it can be claimed that this is one of the reasons why *class* is "loosing" in the struggle for impact (Haarstad 2007, 2009; Andolina et al 2005; Fraser 2003).

2.3.3 The dynamical political space

Central to understanding the possible changes or expansions of the political space is the dynamics between the social fields of the actors, and the different meaning systems involved in these. By this I mean the ways in which actors engage in different fields to increase their possibilities of success in articulating claims, and these fields are influenced by the meaning systems of the various actors. However the process of engaging in more fields and larger fields brings with it a number of challenges. It is necessary to have knowledge of at least part of the political, social and economic processes to gain access to the broader range of social fields.

The political, judicial, economic and also ecological processes affect the actors in different ways, and shape their spaces of action differently. An employer is differently affected by changes brought about by new labour laws than the employee is; if it is a law which increases the flexibilisation of labour, this will typically increase the power the employer has over the employee, and decrease the employee's possibilities of articulating claims towards the employer. Hence, the ways the structural context affects the actors differently is an important measure, and entails areas such as judicial institutions and the prevailing views on the nature of labour as a component in the production process.

Another essential part of the widening of the social fields is the position the actor manages to gain within these fields. It might not be sufficient to just access new and wider networks, but his or her position within the fields is also important. Being a reliable and trusted co-operator is vital to be heard. Or in other words, the power relations and one's place in the in the social fields might be as important as the scale of action.

Hence, I propose a way of understanding the dynamics of the political space from the point of view of the actor, consisting of:

- Type of, number of and scale level of social fields;

- Power relations within these social fields;

- Level of knowledge, and access to new knowledge;

- Access to material resources, such as funding;

- Ability to network.

An increase in one or more of these factors can increase the possibilities of the actors to successfully articulate claims, and the factors are also interlinked. An expansion in social fields can lead to easier access to knowledge and experience, and hence make the actor better equipped to articulate demands. However, even though access to new social fields can increase knowledge, provide material resources and shift power relations, if the factors in the structural context are very unfavourable, the efforts might not be enough.

As mentioned and briefly discussed in the previous chapter, changes in the political space are, probably, caused by some sort of trigger. This can be one caused by one of the factors of the political space, for example gaining new material resources of some reason can improve the mobility of union leaders, and thus their ability to access new institutional channels of influence. But I argue that the most important triggers are external, and this is where the structural context makes it way into the analytical tool; a change of politics, of market demand or ecological conditions can alter the possibilities of the actors to access social fields; create opportunities to upscale action; shift the power relations in already accessed social fields; or create a different knowledge panorama.

3. Methodology

This chapter deals with the work of transforming abstract, academic ideas and the research questions into a realisable fieldwork, methodological choices made and the interpretations of the collected empirical data. I will in the following discuss the preparations prior to the fieldwork; the actual work conducted while in Chile; and the process of interpreting the information gathered upon returning to Norway.

An important part in this chapter is also the discussion of the problems and difficulties I confronted whilst conducting my fieldwork. The anecdotes from fieldwork are often about the daily routines of an unknown culture, the problems encountered and the ways in which people communicate, or do not communicate, their views and opinions about mainly everything.

As my main research question concerns the change in the political space of the labour movement caused by the crisis, and also to get a grip of the ever changing political space they act within, it was natural to do a qualitative study. Qualitative studies aim at revealing the "meaning behind social phenomena, their character and the qualities of the subject matter" (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007: 13, my translation). The research questions and the theory to be used in analysing the empirical data led to methodological implications, which will be discussed and defined.

3.1 Qualitative research

As described in the previous chapter, a main aspect of this study will concern the social fields the actors are involved in and the creation of meaning within these. This corresponds well with qualitative research, and as Aase and Fossåskaret (2007) discuss, a focus on the explanation found in interaction leads to relations as the study-units: "the units are the interplay that tie persons together into social systems" (2007: 23).

Central to qualitative research is the interpretation and analysis of the data collected, and this process is primarily linked to the later stages of the research period. However, as Thagaard (2009) states the researcher's theoretical framework and the data collected mutually influence each other, which is something I experienced to be true. The focus on ecology as an important structural factor for unions' space of action came about in the work with analysing the

information gathered during fieldwork. When realising that the upscaling of the labour movement's articulation of claims largely came about through the networking with international environmental movements, this led to a discussion on how, through the possibilities in globalisation, labour movements can adopt ideas from the discourse on sustainability to upscale their claims. The understanding of political space I developed has been shaped particularly by the discussions of the necessities of trade unions with a deficit in labour history; that is, their need for, and might I say, hunger for knowledge, training and material resources was dominant in the interviews. The development of what I labelled the *dynamical political space* is thus largely a product of what the unionists themselves expressed to be what they found vital to be able to press claims.

Another aspect of the process of producing data in qualitative research is the analysis; that is the operation of giving meaning to the empirical data in the light of the theoretical framework. "Interpretation and analysis can be seen as two sides of the same process, because we can not describe and categorise the course of events without at the same time adding meaning" (Thagaard 2009: 35, my translation).

3.2 Preparations

In May 2009 a delegation from the Pure Salmon Campaign, with representatives from all the countries where the two main Norwegian salmon farming companies operate, came to Norway wanting to attend Marine Harvest's and Cermaq's AGMs (Annual General Meeting). Amongst the delegates were Javier Ugarte, head of CONATRASAL and Alejandro Salinas, director of OLACH (Observartorio Laboral y Ambiental de Chiloé – Labour and Environmental Observatory of Chiloé). I thought this to be a unique chance to get a glimpse of the labour movement's many working facets, and went to Oslo to see them. I spent one day tagging along, which gave me opportunities to talk to both of them and get a certain image of what I was to expect on Chiloé, but I also went to the AGM at Marine Harvest and got to see first hand Ugarte state his claims to the Norwegian Multinational.

It was also both interesting and useful to talk to and learn about the situation within and around the salmon industries in Canada, Ireland and Scotland, to get a fuller picture of the broad

resistance to the way the salmon industry is conducted today. Many of the other representatives were however more interested in the ecological and environmental consequences than the Chilean delegation, which came to press claims about the working conditions and the responsibility they claim the companies have in the crisis.

Before departing to Chiloé I spent some time in Santiago, where I met with the first secretary at the Norwegian Embassy. He gave me valuable points of view on the labour movement and the current situation in the south. I also had a meeting with Professor Jonathon Barton and master student Álvaro Román from the Pontificia Universidad Católica. The information, tips and opinions these three gave me served as valuable insights for me before arriving Chiloé.

3.3 The fieldwork – Collecting data

Doing fieldwork in an area and an industry in profound crisis is, for a master student, interesting, challenging, frustrating and an awakening experience. The scenery might have changed over the weekend, or the holiday, the person you had a planned an interview with might have lost his job and would not want to do the interview any more, and the management would be too stressed to even send a simple e-mail saying they do not have time to talk to anyone. But it can also be watching the everyday political action, bargaining, and the renewal of strategies of extremely engaged people at work. And all of that was my fieldwork on Chiloé.

My case is the island of Chiloé, but due to the nature of the labour movement and the geography and infrastructure on the island, it became clear that it would be good to have a main base. I spent a total of two months in Chile, whereof 5 weeks were on Chiloé, where I had my base in Ancud. I chose Ancud due to the fact that this is where the only NGO on Chiloé has their offices, and because of recommendations from head of CONATRASAL, Javier Ugarte, when I met him in Oslo. I was told that even though many of the meetings are held in different villages on the island, most of the activities related to the labour movement take place in Ancud.

By OLACH director Alejandro Salinas, I was offered a desk at OLACH's offices in Ancud, which I accepted. Even though it might, and did, influence my status and role in the community and in the context of the salmon industry, I thought it to be too good an opportunity to refuse.

And it turned out to be the most important step towards getting an understanding of the chilotan labour movement's political space. El Canelo de Nos, one of the organisations which form OLACH, is the only NGO present at the island, and is working with local communities concerning poverty, cultural heritage, indigenous issues and the labour movement.

An important part of the use of and stay at the OLACH office, were the many conversations and discussions at coffee breaks, lunches, or just trying to warm up one's fingers over the chimney. These informal conversations, or as Aase and Fossåskaret (2007) name it: field conversations, are part of the every day interaction for the field worker, and might be the arena where he "gets the answers to questions he has not asked" (2007: 30). Important to these conversations is that the researcher will get the more *uncensored* version of opinions, which might be crucial to his understanding of the meaning of situations. In my case both the office of the NGO and several conversations with the owner of the hostel I stayed at about local bureaucracy and the recent turn of events on the island, served as important reflexions and backdrops, and a way to widen my perception of the local social and economic impacts of the crisis.

My data consists of four main categories; data collected through interviews, data collected through direct observation as a by-sitter in different meetings, data collected through informal interaction and conversations with people linked to the networks of the labour movement, and second-hand sources, such as newspaper articles and interviews on the web-pages of NGOs.

3.4 Interviews

The main methodological tool has been in-depth interviews. I chose to do these semi-structured as I wanted to be able to follow up on issues the informant touched upon. It is also a good way of doing interviews compared to the fully unstructured interview; according to Repstad (2007) semi-structured interviews should serve as a check list, and a point of departure – a way the researcher can check that she touches all the important topics with all the informants to get a fuller picture. In addition the semi-structured interview has a tendency to become something more of a conversation, which could create a more open and amiable environment for the interviewee.

In Chile, I conducted 15 interviews, all between 30 minutes and 1 hour. All were recorded and later transcribed, and I did the interviews in Spanish. After returning to Norway I received answers by e-mail from one Norwegian salmon unionist.

3.5 Informants

I had a certain idea of which people it would be interesting to talk to. I consider the trip to Oslo in May probably the most important single act as to getting in touch with potential informants. Ugarte, the leader of CONATRASAL, and Salinas, director of OLACH turned not only into excellent starting points for the so-called snowball-method, but they are also two of my key informants.

One group of actors in the political space on Chiloé is not represented amongst my informants: the management of the companies. At the moment and within the current crisis in the industry these are highly pressured people, but it is also important to note that the laying off of employees in the industry has also reached management levels, and some of the people that would be of interest to talk to were not working with the company. But, I did try to contact the people who were working in the firms, with two possible outcomes; they did not answer the phone or I was told to send an e-mail, which was never replied to. This, it must be admitted, is a weakness of the data. Several of my informants; unionists, local and regional government and people representing NGOs had strong opinions on the role played by the local and midlevel management however, and my ideas and analysis on this part of the panorama is therefore coloured and shaped mainly by these informants' statements.

The fact that the industry and the region is living through a severe crisis, both ecologically, economically and socially due to the severe outbreak of the virus ISA, has put several limitations and possibilities for the aim and scope of the thesis. It proved difficult to get interviews with and even get a hold of the unions at company level. Many of these unions have also been changed, weakened and have lost about half of their membership basis, and some have even ceased to exist as the companies went out of business. However, most of the unionists at the levels of federation and confederation also had either current positions in unions at company levels, or broad experience in this work. Thus, the interviews with these people were both about the work at

federation and confederation level, but also about unionism at the basic scale. But, I did get some interviews with some unionists at company level, in a certain variety of companies.

Another group who proved difficult to get actual and official interviews with were the newly elected and lower level unionists. They were concerned that the management would find out they had talked to me and hence loose their jobs or get worse working and union conditions. I respected their reluctance to talk to me on tape, but still had several interesting and informative conversations with many of them. This information forms part of the analysis where I draw a picture of what I observed and experienced as a visitor and guest on Chiloé, and specifically in Ancud.

3.6 Observation

Data collected through observation must, according to Aase and Fossåskaret (2007), be defended by two demands. First, the observer has to be honest about the observations through taking careful notes about what is happening at the given situation. Second, the people involved in the situation have to be able to recognise themselves in the description of the situation. This Aase and Fossåskaret, referring to Schutz (1973) name the accordance claim. During my fieldwork I did a bit of observation, but more than observing situations of opposing actors, I sat in on meetings where actors, often part of the same labour federation, NGO or visiting NGOs, discussed and analysed the present situations within the industry. I tried to take careful notes, and also to make notes of the interaction between the actors.

Due to my desk at the OLACH office I often arrived at the house when a meeting was about to start. Some of them were closed, but for others I was told to sit down, listen and take notes. This role of participant observer at the meetings of the NGO together with local and regional authorities, the trade unions or visiting NGOs gave me an invaluable insight into the problems of the trade unions and the industry. Being at the office also led to several working lunches with the people from the aforementioned arenas, a space where the discussion from the meeting continued, someone told the latest news on the union somewhere, a joke about national politicians' ignorance of the complexity of the current crisis in the industry and so forth. The daily life within the space of the trade unions is very much lived within an informal setting such

as these lunches and coffee-breaks at the office of the federation in Ancud or at the OLACH house. This is both due to the lack of formal spaces, but also a part of the local culture. Chilotans are relaxed; they prefer the discussions amongst themselves to be in a somewhat relaxed ambience.

As will be discussed in the next subchapter, people accepted me as a researcher received at the OLACH. They therefore had faith that I was not linked to a company, which might have been a normal assumption as I am Norwegian. Even though I did not get the impression that people acted or said things they would not have if I were not there, in some situations my presence can have led to an inclination to discuss Norwegian companies' responsibility, and the desire to form networks with Norwegian unions. However, these subjects might be just as common when I was not there as the Norwegian companies are amongst the largest, and there is speculation on whether the virus ISA was brought to Chile from Norway (Vike et al 2009, quoted in Fløysand et al 2010), and that thus these companies have a particular responsibility to the region.

3.7 My role

Observation and participatory observation requires that the researcher establishes a relation related to others (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007). Relations imply *sets of statuses*; the actors share views on the other actors so to pose *role expectations* to each other (ibid). The expectations are not strictly given and there is some space for variation, and expectations might also vary culturally and across generations. What is important as a researcher is to understand the cultural codes and the expectations to be able to find her place and thus gain access to information.

It was very important to me not to be understood as a representative from a Norwegian company, or a journalist disguised as a researcher, which has happened in this area before, and has led many unionists and others to be very careful who to talk to about certain topics. Thus I tried to participate in arenas and interact with people I assumed Norwegian companies would not want to be a part of or where they would not be accepted. Most importantly here was of course my role at the office of OLACH, I was embraced by people who were experienced to be critical to the industry, but at the same time helpful and very engaged with the workers. The unionists knew that I was "la niña de OLACH", the girl at OLACH, and both the director and the other

employees at the office vouched for me. The fact that I had meet the president of CONATRASAL in Oslo, and that he both did interviews with me, and invited me to sit in on several of the meetings in CONATRASAL, was of course also very important.

My position related to OLACH gave me many advantages, including practical ones: it would have been a tremendous job to get a hold of the phone numbers of most of the unionists. All of them use cell phones, which are not listed in phone books; they live in the outback, where housing is cheaper, and they work long hours. The phone register at the office thus proved to be invaluable to me. I also met many of them coincidentally at the OLACH house, and they knew my face and accepted to meet, talk and open up to me.

3.8 Case study

A case study is an investigation of one or few units, where large amounts of information about the entities/entity is analysed by the researcher (Thagaard 2009), and can for example be used to shed a critical light on existing theories (Repstad 2007). Studying the impact a severe crisis can have on the political space of actors such as unionists has the potential to be a very broad field, depending on a number of contextual factors. A specific case study might loose focus on several issues of the complexities and dynamics of such topic, however, it might also enlighten the understanding of the theoretical background, and show the way for new understandings of the complexities at hand. Nevertheless, it is important not to aim at generalisations of cases in which context, place and situations have little potential of transferral.

Chile is, as previously mentioned, a particular case when it comes to the neoliberal reality surrounding the labour movements, in that this is not the economic and political model of the past 10 years, brought in by globalisation, but the doctrine imposed by an extremely authoritarian dictator. This has implications on the context of the case, and thus on the generalisability.

Case studies have a more general objective than merely to describe and analyse the unit; it should also aim to achieve knowledge wider than the case studied. This thesis forms part of the larger project *Negotiating new political spaces: claims for redistribution and recognition in Chile and*

Bolivia, and can thus contribute to the wider discussion of political space and on labour movements.

3.9 Producing data - Transcription and interpretation

Aase and Fossåskaret (2007) describes what has been named "the dialogical turn" in social science as opposing to the former "telegraph model" in which a message is understood to be sent from one person to the other person in more or less equal state. The understanding of how messages are being sent in the dialogical turn however, is quite different: "According to this approach, messages are not only imparted through a course of communications, but new meaning is created in the communication process itself" (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007: 80, my translation).

Even though I speak Spanish, have lived in Santiago de Chile and have in general spent a few years in Latin American countries, there are always some linguistic and cultural issues when doing fieldwork in a different culture. As Aase and Fossåskaret (2007) discusses, the way we categorise the world varies from place to place. They define a category as the sum of the object, the biological senses, the mental abilities and culture. Amongst these four components the three first are general for humans; water is water both if it is observed by a Norwegian and a Chilean. But the relationship between the mental abilities and the culture "is so that all people make metaphors, but the *content* of the metaphor varies" (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007: 113). By this I understand that the variations of metaphors describing similar phenomenon is due to the people's different cultural knowledge.

Both in the interview situation and in the process of transcribing the interviews, this became clear to me and I tried to reflect upon the cultural and linguistic differences. By having the advantage of knowing Spanish, and that I have knowledge of Chilean socio-linguistics I did not face the challenges of having to use interpreters. But, the ways a Chilean union leader uses and understands both formal Spanish and the colloquial Chilotan versions varies from the local-linguistic understanding of a Norwegian master student. Often I understood these differences in the interview situation, and re-asked the questions, in a different way, and we got on the track I had intended. But another of the challenges is of course my interpretation once the interview is done and transcribed into a text.

I chose to record all of my interviews, which led to a big job waiting for me upon my return to Norway: Transcribing all the interviews. This is a tedious and time-consuming exercise, but I realised that it has some great advantages. First I have concise and correct quotes from my informants. Secondly, and this I realised while doing the transcriptions and through talks with fellow students who did not record their interviews, it gave me a very good opportunity to get a grip on my empirical data, and hence an overview of what I actually found while in Ancud.

3.9.1 Mapping the political space of the Chilotan labour movement

> "Most fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena. We do not simply "collect" data; we fashion them out of our transactions with other men and women. Likewise, we do not merely report what we find; we create accounts of social life and in doing so we construct versions of the social worlds and the social actors we observe. It is, therefore, inescapable that analysis implies representation." (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 108)

As discussed in chapter 2.3, I operationalise the political space through a focus on it as composed by actors organised on different scales, acting within social fields. These social fields are constituted by different types of actors with varying aims and backgrounds, and the relations of power between the actors are important to understand the different successes at or failures at pressing claims. Hence, to shape a map of the political space the Chilotan labour movement acts within there are several factors which are relevant. As unionism on Chiloé is a young movement, I include time as a factor, and chronologically map the development of the labour movement. In this way it becomes clear how the different networks have become available to the labour movement and how this has affected the claims and the ability to rescale the claims.

Seidel and Kelle (1995: 55-56 in Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 29) describes the process of coding and conceptualisation as a an operation in three steps: " (a) noticing relevant phenomena, (b) collecting examples of those phenomena, and (c) analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, patterns and structures." In the work to analyse the labour movement I tried to

find patterns of what the unionists would focus on in the answers to particular questions, and use this to shape the analysis. This led me to model the analysis on basis of the chronology of events: describing how the movement has upscaled its organisation and its arenas for articulations of claims over time, through networking and access to different resources. This description made way for the analysis of the explanations of why claims were successful or not. Thus, a focus on the general development of the labour movement, and questioning how this development influenced the claims and their success, gave way for a mapping of the dynamics of the political space and the ways in which the structures influenced the space, and vice versa.

3.9.2 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are methodological concerns often related to quantitative studies, but are also important measures for qualitative research. However, the truthfulness and the authenticity of studies are as important in qualitative as in quantitative studies, however they have to be discussed and treated a bit differently.

Reliability concerns questions of whether the project has been performed in a trustworthy and reliable way (Thagaard 2009). It can be discussed as a question of accuracy and consistency concerning collected data, as the extracts available for the reader of the study can not be more than extracts due to space (Silverman 2002). A typical issue of reliability in studies done in foreign culture is misunderstandings due to language.

As my main source of data is recorded and later transcribed interviews, linguistical issues such as sociolinguistics has been an area of attention. The transcription period was long and I was very thorough in the process, so to not miss out on central issues. The local slang was sometimes challenging, but when unsure I consulted a Chilean linguist friend, who works at a University in La Region de los Lagos. My own Spanish was also something I was conscious about, as I learnt the language in Ecuador, and later spent some time in both Mexico and Chile, it has become somewhat of a mix. This was dealt with by asking the questions differently when realising that I was not fully understood.

Validity concerns the interpretation of data. Discussing a studies validity can be done by questioning whether the interpretations we make and assumptions we reach "are valid in relation to the reality studied" (Thagaard 2009: 201, my translation). Important to assure validity is transparency, that is to clearly show how interpretations have been made. This can be done through stating how the analysis gives the conclusions (Thagaard 2009).

By not only using the "punch lines" but rather showing the informants reasoning behind the arguments I have tried to maintain a level of transparency to the reality described. Additionally I have used most of their own concepts when describing and discussing, for example the idea of the *empresario*, the business man, and the opposition between the workers and the unionists.

When referring to the main research question, *how can an ecological crisis affect the possibilities and constraints facing a labour movement* and the validity of this analysis it has to be emphasised that my study was conducted in the midst of crisis. A study conducted in a few years time might come to a very different conclusion than I did, if the same study would be conducted only a year after I did, the scenery would prove different and the visions of the unionists could have changed, as there has been presidential elections since then; the work getting a labour statute attached to the recently approved modification on the law on fisheries and aquaculture will probably be affected by the change of presidents[1]; and the well-known earth-quake has affected the region in many ways. However, a master thesis does not include the possibility to return and do a follow-up study a couple of years later, and I must thus relate to the period of time available and the data collected during the given field work.

As was discussed in the previous subchapter concerning how the mapping of the political space was conducted, I analyse the development of the union and their political space through a focus on the spaces they engage in and the means to gain access to knowledge and material resources and changes in this over time. Another variable is the extent to which the actors experience that they are being heard and the rate of success in articulated claims. Mapping social fields is based on empirical data and observations, and a way of showing how the observed social fields in a

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[1] The newly sworn in President Sebastian Piñera is from the political right in the country and he stated in his campaign to start a harder line on workers and unionism if elected.

transparent way is through making clear distinctions and by describing them on different levels. In this case this is particularly relevant when discussing the links between the hierarchy of the labour movement (trade union, federation and confederation) and the labour movements' relations to the NGOs working with them.

When discussing the identities created and the actors' understanding of power relations the topics discussed by the unionists were quite similar, and even though they, naturally, had different opinions on internal conflicts, the topics and the *categories* they used shaped the structure and the analytical discussions in the thesis.

4. Context: Chilean salmon industry and labour movement

Chiloé, from *Chilhue* (mapudungun, the language of the mapuches) meaning place of seagulls, is an island and one of five provinces in the tenth region of Chile, also called the Lakes Region

(Region de los Lagos). The 250 km long and 50 km wide island is characterised by fiords and green hills and its humid climate although there are differences across the island. The eastern part is where most of the smaller islands are situated, and it is here the majority of the fiords are found, the western part is a bit more mountainous, and is scarcely populated. Approximately 150 000 people (the census of 2002

counted 153 670 (www.ine.cl)) live on Chiloé, and they are spread across the various towns, villages and nearby islands. The capital of the island is Castro, with the second largest town Ancud, and the smaller towns of Quemchi, Chonci and Quellón form the other urban areas.

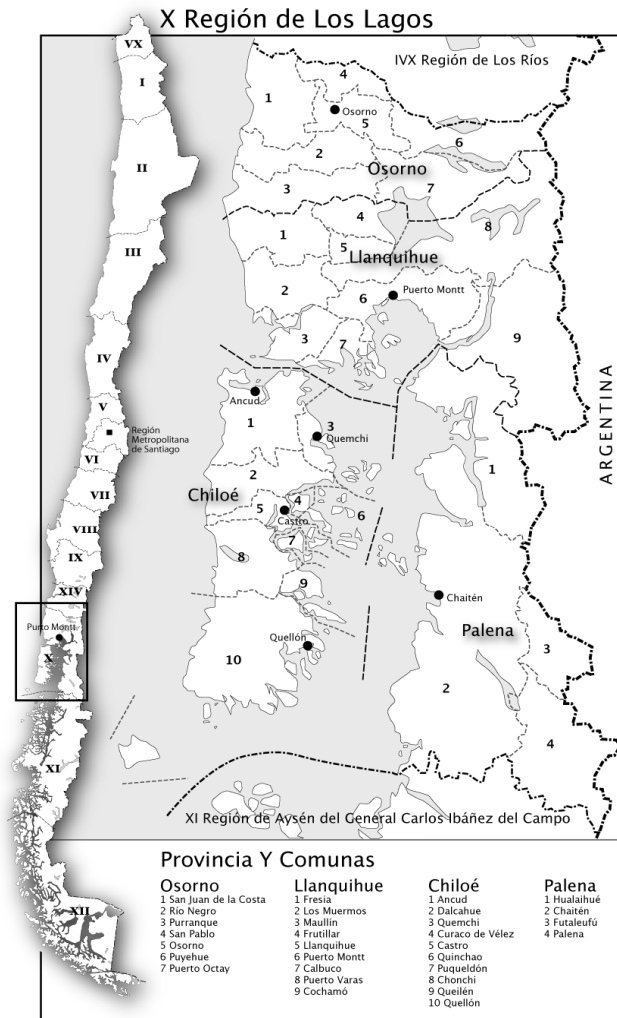*Picture 1: From Ancud (by author)*

X Región de Los Lagos

Provincia Y Comunas

Osorno	Llanquihue	Chiloé	Palena
1 San Juan de la Costa	1 Fresia	1 Ancud	1 Hualaihué
2 Río Negro	2 Los Muermos	2 Dalcahue	2 Chaitén
3 Purranque	3 Maullín	3 Quemchi	3 Futaleufú
4 San Pablo	4 Frutillar	4 Curaco de Vélez	4 Palena
5 Osorno	5 Llanquihue	5 Castro	
6 Puyehue	6 Puerto Montt	6 Quinchao	
7 Puerto Octay	7 Calbuco	7 Puqueldón	
	8 Puerto Varas	8 Chonchi	
	9 Cochamó	9 Queilén	
		10 Quellón	

Figure 1: Map of Region de Los Lagos. Elaborated by Kjell Helge Sjøstrøm

During the dictatorship, Chile was divided into 12 regions, named by numbers. There is a discussion whether some of these regions are too large and composed by too different areas, both economically, ecologically, culturally and socially. Hence, there are proposals of new regions, and one of them is the new region of Chiloé. This is something which people on Chiloé are very much engaged in, and the project *Chiloé Region* (www.chiloeregion.com) is a voluntary initiative including representatives from various sectors in the Chilotan society. This enterprise and its arguments show quite clearly the specificity of the Chilotan identity, and the aspiration of maintaining a proper way of existence:

> "… our land deserves to grow and strengthen its commerce and investments in an autonomous and sustainable way, that the central government leaves it to us to develop our social, cultural and economic interests. This is why we have united to extend the dialogue between our municipalities as we are defending our right to concretely resist and to propose alternatives, and we believe in our ability to put them into practice."
> (www.chiloeregion.com, my translation)

Until the appearance of the salmon industry in the early 1980s, it was an area of subsistence agriculture and capture fishery, and had experienced outward migration and high levels of unemployment. With the salmon industry came a rapid modernisation of the area, with opportunities of salaried work and a rapid urbanisation of the population.

Chiloé, or *La Isla* – the Island as many of its inhabitants prefers to call it, is a particular case in Chilean labour history. They do not have a large trajectory of unionists from before the dictatorship to remember and glorify, nor the collective knowledge and traditions to go with such a history. But what they do have is their own particular culture, and particular ways of organisation and hybridism between the local indigenous people, *huilliches*, the mestizo population and migrants from other parts of the country.

> "There is a long tradition for fighting for the demands of a proper Chilotan identity, which basically is a syncretism of original cultures, huilliche, Spanish or a marked dominance of the catholic ideology and doctrine, which establishes forms of participation and of social control which are very characteristic in this part of the country."
>   Informant 2, NGO representative

This Chilotan identity is extremely important to the people of the island, they participate in local folk singing groups, knitting circles, the typical way of making ceramic, and first and foremost they are concerned about preserving the Chilotan way of relating to the sea, the fruits of the sea and the climate. This, of course, clashes with the industrialised view of the ocean, and the particular way of cultivating fish. However, more importantly in this case, the capitalist system of wage – labour was a new experience for the Chilotans.

4.1 Chilean salmon industry

In Chile the natural and ecological conditions, including both seawater sites, freshwater locations for hatching, and good water quality and temperature, enabled the development of an aquaculture industry in the south of the country. There had been several attempts at cultivating different kinds of salmon in periods ranging from 1850 – 1970. However, it was first during the late 1970s, when Chile was searching for ways to diversify their export sectors that salmon aquaculture became one of the prime initiatives, deriving from the Japanese development agency, JICA, and the national innovation committee, Fundación Chile (Barton and Fløysand 2008). Chile's location on the southern hemisphere included another advantage, being counter-season of the established salmon sites in Norway, Scotland and Canada, and international investment was dominant during the first years.

In Chile the fisheries industries was already developed into a large commerce, but there was still not fresh fish production for export. Hence, the emancipation of the industry was led by big companies, already experienced within other parts of fisheries, mining, foresting, real estate and so on: "[a]ctors who already were thinking business, and who one can presume was concerned with the creation of the most appropriate structures to make money" (Liabø 2005). This is seen in contrast with the situation in Norway where regulations favoured the small "fish farmers" when handing out concessions. Thus, the large Norwegian companies interested in going into the aquaculture industry went abroad; first to Tasmania and Chile, where the first Norwegian company, Chisal, was established in 1984.

By 1985 there were 36 cultivating centres in the country (www.salmonchile.cl), and this was the beginning of what turned into a boom. As figure 2 shows, since 1991 until 2007 Chile experienced a tremendous growth in production of salmon, and was very close to exceeding Norway as the number one producer in the world. With this tremendous growth, in investments, production, export volumes and sites, there has also been a concentration of production in terms of companies; in 1997 35 companies produced 80 %, whilst in 2005 11 companies were responsible for the same percentage (Thorstensen 2007). Foreign direct investment (FDI) has also increased substantially during the 1990s; by 2004 six foreign companies produced 35 % of total

exports (Fløysand et al 2010). This development has been called a *fairy-tale* and a prime example of a successfully internationalised industry.
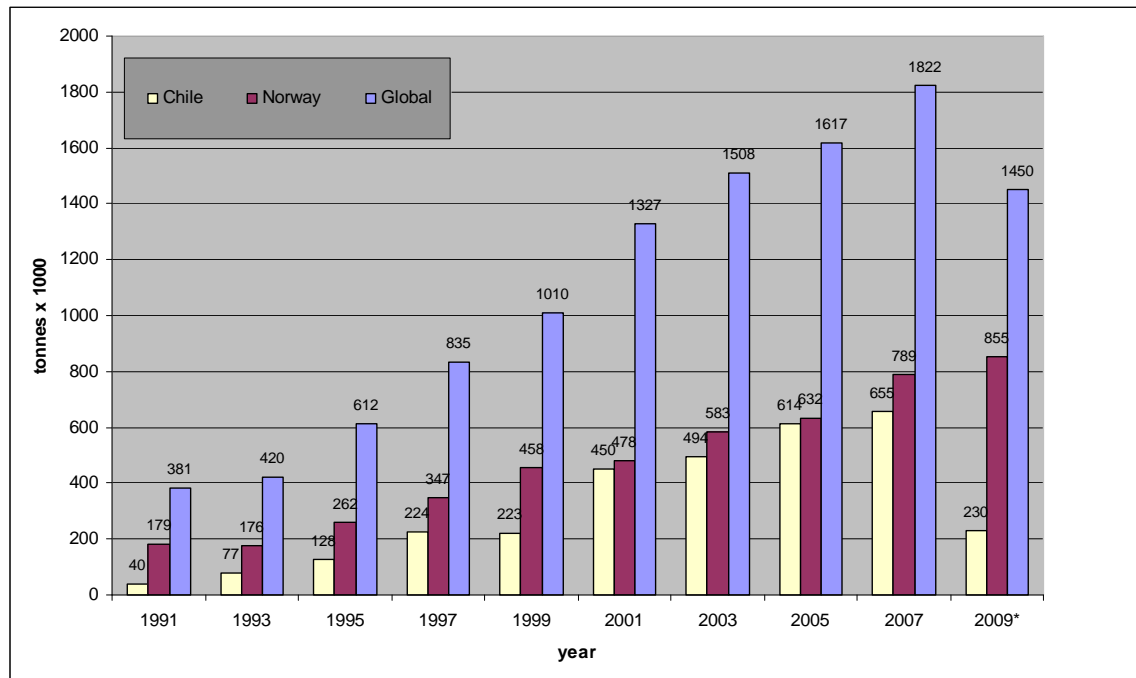

Figure 2: Chilean, Norwegian and Global production of salmon (source: Fløysand et al 2010)

Barton and Fløysand (2008) argues that the period from mid 1990s and the next decade was characterised by "strong economic growth and a 'socio-ecological silence'" (2008: 8), and that this silence, a result of the industry's position in Chilean economy, is a contributing reason to the extents of what was ahead. As can be seen by the numbers from 2009 (these data have been collected by Fløysand et al 2010), production has dropped, and was in 2009 less than half of the numbers from 2007. SalmonChile's prediction for 2010 is that levels will drop almost 40 % from the 2008 figures, to 245 000 tons (Aqua.cl 2010). The fairy-tale seems to have come to an end, and 2010 are by many predicted to be the year when the Chilean salmon industry hits rock bottom. There had been warnings about the deterioration in production and the water quality, by both workers, fishermen and NGOs working in the area, but they were not being paid attention to, as this fairy-tale was too good and too important for Chile to fall apart. "The case makes visible some of the generally relevant processes, we argue, in which the generation of a crisis

takes place within governance structures that fail to take heed of local narratives that contest the tales of economic 'boom'" (Fløysand et al 2010: 2).

An important factor for understanding the growth of the industry is the fact that it appeared during the dictatorship of general Pinochet. In the early 1980s Chile was facing severe economic decline, and the government relied on measures to increase the export to improve the situation. This implied that the industry was not imposed with the same strict regulations and taxations as the same industry was in for example Norway. Hence, the political-economic context of Chile enabled the companies to engage in an expansive and profoundly market-based industrial development: "Governance favoured production – capital – over labour and nature, leading to high growth rates of these sectors at the expense of labour and nature (reduction in environmental quality and services)" (Barton and Fløysand 2008: 7).

Accordingly, flexible and low cost labour is Chile's main comparative advantage compared to the other five salmon producing countries. As will be discussed later, today's ecological situation is a result of this governance where nature was conceived as a resource for human exploitation.

4.2 Chilean labour movement and its experience with neoliberalism

The period after the return to democracy in Chile has been called *The Chilean miracle*, due to the period's economic growth, increasing foreign investments and decreasing unemployment. Chile became the successful Latin American country, stable and trustworthy in a region where inflation, corruption and political chaos were common rather than the exceptions. But within a vast literature describing the miracle, some voices started discussing the social costs of the growth, and the human costs of the climate constructed to create comparative advantages for foreign investment.

"Have Chile's workers paid the cost for their country's economic success? Were their interests sacrificed on the altar of neoliberalism? Are they victims of Chile's neoliberal 'miracle'?" (Winn 2004: 2). The questions Winn asks in his book *Victims of the Chilean Miracle – Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973-2002*, many of my chilotan informants would answer very simply sí, yes. The neoliberal policies of Pinochet are still visible and very much played out

in Chilean labour; flexible contracts; poor labour rights, poor protection of labour rights; a widespread informal sector; low levels of unionisation.

The legislation and the practices experienced in today's Chile is the result of the military dictatorship governed by general Pinochet from 1973 until 1990, but also from the continued neoliberal model led by the centre-left government of the *Concertación* coalition. "Neoliberalism was imposed by the Pinochet dictatorship during the late 1970s in a highly ideological version that made it a vehicle for an aggressive attack on Chile's workers and the labour rights they had acquired during decades of struggle" (Winn 2004: 3).

The model of the dictatorship was one of opening up trade and finance towards the international economy and thus mainly focusing production on exports of commodities, and also great changes in the political arena. The Parliament was shut down and political parties deferred, and unionism, as other social organisations, was obstructed. (Campero 2001). "That is why, for Chilean trade unionists, the process of globalization and its structural effects was felt at the same time as the political and social effects by the military government" (Campero 2001: vii). Campero's argument is thus that since Chilean unions faced neoliberalism as part of dictatorship, and not, as with most other Latin American countries, during democracy, the struggle to restore democracy, where the unions played a vital role, has often been linked to a fight against the new economic model "since they regarded the authoritarian military regime and the new model as two sides of the same coin" (Campero 2001: vii).

The Chilean neoliberal regime played out in a time when the rest of the world was governed by the prevailing social democratic ideas, and was thus a counterpoint to the ruling doctrine. It has been stated to be the first successful attempt at imposing the ideals of open market and the free flow of capital, and hence one might claim, an inspiration to the governments of later neoliberal regimes. The processes and ideas of neoliberal globalisation is however influencing and reinforcing the impacts, exemplified by the comparative advantage Chilean salmon industry has in relation to other salmon producing nations, namely the flexible and cheap labour.

The labour movement is thus not inexperienced with the shift of balance between capital and labour to the benefit of capital, although it is the main structural shaping factor of the political space the trade unions intent to articulate claims within. The remains of the laws and norms of the dictatorship might be more important to the Chilean labour movement than today's globalisation, as the workers of Chile have experienced the implications of neoliberalism since the 1970s.

4.2.1 Chilean labour movement at a glance

CUT, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, is the largest national union organisation in Chile with 800 000 members of 6 500 000 workers, and CAT, Central Autónoma de Trabajadores, is the second largest with 50 000 members. UNT, Unión Nacional de Trabajadores, is part of the communist global labour movement and counts for approximately 40 000 members (LO 2007). Obviously CUT is the most important of these unions, and is also the union with relevance on Chiloé. Cut was established in 1953, but were forced to work in hiding during the dictatorship, due to Pinochet's harsh attitude towards unionism. As the figures show, unionism is still weak in Chile as membership is low.

The Chilotan labour movement is young, deriving from the late 1980s, and thus there is an obvious lack of union-history (Schurmann 2004). However, within the salmon industry, union membership is higher than both national and regional levels: 33 % in the industry compared to 23 % in the region and 11 % nationally (figures from 2005, DII 2005).

4.3 Earlier studies of the Chilotan labour movement

There have been conducted a few studies on Chiloé where unionisation have been part of the analysis. In the following I will briefly present the arguments and findings relevant to my study from three of them, in particular to have a point of reference as to the state of the labour movement in the years prior to my investigation. The first study is one by Barrett, Caniggia and Read from 2002; the second is a publication by the Chilean environmental organisation *Terram*, conducted by Pinto (2007) and lastly a study conducted by the department of industrial engineering at the University of Chile (2005). None of the studies have unionisation as main theme, but both have used significant portions of their documentation on the subject.

In their study Barrett et al (2002), seek to analyse the impact of globalisation on the communities of the tenth region in Chile, through the case of the salmon industry. They argue that by using a framework of *sustainable community*, they "find substantial evidence that surplus labour, low wage levels, and poorly enforced or nonexistent health and safety standards are conditioning factors in the growth of the salmon industry" (2002: 1952). During their fieldwork in several rural communities on Chiloé, they find very weak trade unions, and argue that the intents to unionise to improve the conditions of the workers have been little successful.

> "Besides the limitations on cooperation due to the incentive system of pay, workers told us of discriminatory practices used by companies against workers trying to organize, such as firings, loss of benefits and production bonuses. (…) workers prefer a direct relationship with their employer, "individualism" is prevalent in Chilean society, and lack of knowledge on part of workers regarding efficient union action" (Barrett et al 2002: 1958, and Silva & Schatan 1999, referred in Barrett et al 2002).

Pinto (2007) argues that the labour movement on Chiloé is met with anti-unionisation measures by the companies, such as giving benefits to workers who do not unionise, withholding of information about the state of affairs of the company and hindering the liberty of opinion for union leaders. He also argues that the processes of globalisation have led to more unstable labour relations and that the workers have had to "get used to labour conditions with more insecurity and changing in their form and base" (Pinto 2007: 56, my translation).

In the study conducted by the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Chile (DII) from 2005, the main conclusion is that there is a huge difference between what the companies argue and what the workers explain as their reality. This, the authors claim is not only the case in the salmon industry, but common throughout the country. They also resume that "… all the studies which base their information on data from the companies show a less critical situation with respect to the working conditions" (DII 2005: 9).

5. The political space of the Chilotan labour movement

In this chapter I primarily seek to describe and analyse the labour movement within the Chilotan salmon industry with reference to the first sub-research question *What characterises the political space of the labour movement on Chiloé? How is it experienced by the actors?* Focus will be on the networks formed and the power relations shaping these networks and the scaling of the organisations. This is done to be able to analyse and understand the success or lack of success when articulating claims, which is the subject of the next chapter. It is also important when trying to understand the processes and events caused by the ecological crisis, which is the subject of chapter 7.

The labour movement within the salmon industry on Chiloé is divided into three main levels:

- Trade union; the unions at company level negotiating with company management. There are many of these unions and it is common with more than one union within each company. Many of the unions are members of the federations;
- Federation; there are nine federations of trade unions which are based in the towns, such as the Federation of Ancud, the Federation of Castro etc. Out of these nine, seven form the confederation;
- The confederation, CONATRASAL, Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria del Salmón y Mitílidos de Chile, The National Confederation of Workers of the Salmon and Mitílidos Industry in Chile.

These categories form the base for parts of the analysis, especially in chapter 7; I seek to analyse how the different levels of organisation are affected by the ongoing crisis, and how they are affected very differently by the crisis. Consequently I will also interpret the changing possibilities and constraints faced by the different organisation units and how they rearticulate their claims, and also how major changes affect their aims. However, to understand the impact of the crisis it is important to get a clear picture of the situation before the crisis, what has affected the labour movement and its articulation of claims before the crisis, and the effectiveness of the demands.

Importantly to understand the political space the unions are acting within one must have a comprehension also of the structural context they are facing. As mentioned the ecological crisis

now experienced in the Chilean salmon industry is one of the main contextual factors shaping the labour movement on Chiloé at the moment. The other is the neoliberal reality of both the political regime prevailing in Chile, which is enhanced by globalisation.

During the years of unionism on the island two main shaping factors can be identified: the establishment of the umbrella organisation OLACH in July 2006 and the ecological crisis caused by the virus ISA beginning in 2007. The first had several positive impacts on the movement, in various ways, affecting the different level of union organisation differently. The latter primarily can be described as an ecological, social and economic catastrophe. However, I will argue that the crisis also affected the Chilotan unionism in various ways and even though mainly in negative ways, it has also led to some positive changes for the labour movement.

5.1 The emergence of a labour movement on Chiloé

The trade unions on Chiloé form a young labour movement, without much history to rely on. Prior to the salmon industry, the island was an unindustrialised area, where subsistence-agriculture and fishing formed the basis of the socio-economic organisation. The salmon industry appeared in the late 1980s – early 1990s, and with it salaried work.

> "… the majority of the salmon workers are ex-farmers, ex-fishermen, ex-shellfishmen, and people migrating from cities further north in the country, and a very particular culture has been developed, very resistant to social and cultural changes, and sometimes it has led to a lack of clear commitment, both with the industry which is installed within their traditional space, as also with other forms of organisation, such as unionism, which have very few direct references on the Chilotan island."
>
>   Informant 2, NGO representative

The salmon industry experienced a boom during the late 1990s, and very many Chilotans and people migrating from other parts of the country found work in the globalised industry. However, Chile had just made its way into democracy after the 17 year long dictatorial rule of general Pinochet, and his neoliberal and worker-hostile doctrine. The rights of the workers were (and still

are) poor, and after years of abuses and many accidents, people started forming the first unions in the late 1990s. One of the informants explains how one of the unions was created:

"The constant ruthlessness concerning the workers' rights and the precarious conditions of hygiene and environmental health at the working areas, where also women work, produces a malaise and total discomfort of the entire working mass, resulting in a warning strike and constant complaints to the workers' court, which finally culminated in the constitution of our union."

Informant 1, unionist

This story is one of many; most of the trade unions have similar versions of why they were established. Severe abuses by part of the companies, wages experienced to be unfair, many accidents and poor standards of hygiene are all part of the panorama which shaped the labour movement. According to numbers from CONATRASAL, during the first 6 months of 2009, a total of 68 denounces against the companies in the salmon sector were sanctioned, and amongst these the sanctioned accusations on hygiene and security were in majority with 27 cases (CONATRASAL 2009, personal communication). Hence, the situation for the workers is one of insecurity and quite poor labour standards which are, together with the fight for better pay, the main claims of the unions:

"I worked an entire year, and I managed to earn a total of 2 800 000 pesos, when a manager makes 7 000 000 pesos a month. That is injustice! And, I tell you, it is on this base we have to start fighting for what is ours. But while we have union leaders which aren't exactly trained, in a context where we should all be part of an advanced [union] leadership to be able to have the same expressions or to be able to fight the management, a bit in the sense of the dignity of the workers and how to earn more, this process will be difficult."

Informant 7, unionist

The time after the establishing of the first unions, the main claims have been, and are still: remuneration; working conditions; working hours; women's rights including pregnancy rights;

and the rights concerning unionisation. The union conditions include such issues as the company providing an office and getting paid for the hours spent on union work. By Chilean law the missed working hours is to be paid for by the union, however, the level of membership fee is varied, and it is common on Chiloé is to pay 1000 pesos a month, approximately 1,3 Euros.

In the wake of the labour movement of Chiloé, the main focus was to be able to establish organisations. The companies were very opposed to the development, and there were both threats of being fired if one organised, but also promises of better conditions and a bit better wages for the individual worker if he or she did not organise. "There was a lot of oppression towards people, and due to this one of the great achievements is that the union managed to keep on" (Informant 12, unionist). This is a fact many of the unionists, at all levels, and also representatives of local authorities mention; the maintenance and growth of the labour movement is a great triumph, and one might say a successfully pressed claim.

The age of the labour movement is important in the analysis of the political space they are acting within; one can not discuss the rearticulation of demands caused by the current crisis against earlier or other changes in the structural context and their implications, because there have not been changes as drastic and shaping as what is occurring now.

> "… there is a lack of experience or culture on Chiloé, and it has do with the fact that salaried work is of very recent date, and it is very affiliated with the salmon industry. Hence, we are talking about not more than 10-15 years of union experience and the absence of experience has been a disadvantage to a more powerful development, more accelerated and this has implicated that there has been a lot of change in leaders and that these are quite young, and that they often commit mistakes which are seen to be quite obvious. There is little professionalising of the unionist's work. There have been bad experiences concerning vindictive actions, social fights which have resulted in a lot of frustration and which has pulled the air out of the participation from the workers in these types of organisations and which has prevented that there is more cooperation and solidarity amongst the unions."
>
> Informant 2, NGO representative

These facts about the labour movement on Chiloé are important to bear in mind, and clearly show the state of affairs: the movement is weak and does not only face structural contingencies working in their disfavour; there are internal forces and ideas which also prevent successful development and enhancement. However, union membership on Chiloé is higher than both national and regional levels, 33 % against national 11 % and regional 23 % (figures from 2005, DII 2005).

> "[S]ince 2000 unionisation has increased a lot because unions saw the light of day because they saw that a labour organisation could be as a life west, to decompress the pressure the company caused."
>
>   Informant 12, unionist

5.1.1 The context of the Chilotan labour movement

The Chilean neoliberalism is an inheritance from the economic regime of general Pinochet, and his constitution of 1980 is still the construction upon which Chilean political and policy life is conducted. This is evident by the many laws "privatising" natural resources, such as the ocean; a flexible workforce; low levels of taxation on companies to attract investments and the education system where only private schools have high enough standards getting pupils ready for university, and where most universities are private owned, and hence with high levels of tuitions. This system makes up the national structures surrounding the Chilean labour movement.

> "This movement came into existence in very unfavourable conditions; there is a legislation which does not favour the organising of workers in unions. The major part of the labour code was elaborated during the dictatorship."
>
>   Informant 2, NGO representative

What is interesting and relevant in the aftermaths of the dictatorship is the way the three components of Chilean society relate to one another; the state, the market and civil society. There has developed an alliance between state and market, the typical expression of which is the policy of low taxes on companies and access to adequate and cheap labour for private employers. This policy reflects the idea of the entrepreneur as the only agent capable of generating development

and ideas, which should thus be encouraged through neoliberal policy. This implies a two-sided relationship for labour: unions as one expression for civil society has a bipartite association with the market, the state takes little part in this. Even though the legislation has been changed a bit in contrary to this, for example through admitting trade unions, one of my informants expressed that it is still not something which is accepted and understood by actors from the market:

> "[I have a broad relationship with the unions] because it is part of my obligations as public servant, and this is something many company managers do not understand. I have been accused several times "why does the work inspector go around helping the workers to organise?" They see it as something abnormal, but that process, that culture comes as a part of the dictatorship."
>
> Informant 9, local politician

This of course, influences the labour movements all over the country tremendously, and is one of the most visible heritages of the dictatorship.

> "It is necessary to emphasise what is a reality in our country, which is a way of organising the administration of the state which is very centralised. Therefore both the regions and the provinces, such as Chiloé, are treated as secondary or tertiary in respect to what is considered priorities in the centres of national political decision-making, which is Santiago, where the executive is placed, and the legislative in Valparaíso. Thus there is a situation of complete indifference or lack of knowledge of the reality of the salmon workers which for years were suffering from abuse and discrimination by part of their employers in these regions."
>
> Informant 2, NGO representative

The centralised state of Chilean public life is important in understanding the labour movement in a place as far away from the Metropolitan region as Chiloé. This implies that there is a situation in which what happens within the industry is too far away from the centres of government for the legislators to have a good idea of what the situation of the workers is. The big companies will have their main offices in and around Santiago and hence good opportunities to promote their

point of view and their visions of what is necessary to promote and better the industry, which has become Chile's third largest export. The centre thus concentrates the political and economical power, whilst at the other end of the country, almost literally speaking, we find the periphery, in which workers and their organisations are trying to articulate demands. The workers are territorially bound and additionally they do not have the funds, the networks or the possibilities to travel to see the legislators when necessary. As will be discussed later, this situation has changed a bit for the unions on Chiloé through cooperation with NGOs and an upscaling in organisation.

Local and regional media is also entangled in the centralised structure and the prevailing business culture: newspapers, radio stations and TV channels are often owned by large conglomerates and resourceful people, most often with addresses in the capital. Thus, nor the workers or the organisations working with them see the media as particularly concerned with larger issues of communities; their foremost goal is often to generate profit.

The institutions and the channels are experienced to be impeding structures: the laws are not in favour of workers rights; when making political allies there are experiences of being forgotten once they are elected; collective negotiations are sensed to be already decided, before even starting the arguments.

> "She [former president Bachelet] worries, the problem is the votes in the Senate. The business class has the votes. … By God, I don't know why the workers always have such bad luck in Chile!"
>
> Informant 6, unionist

5.2 Identity

In developing a social movement the construction of a common identity is vital. A sense of belonging to the class or ethnic group is essential to the level of commitment and engagement in the work of the movement. This is related to the meaning systems within a culture and social fields. This can include both the way actors identify themselves within a group, but also their view upon other actors, and how these relate to their identity. This is of course closely related to

the existing power relations, and to get a grip of these, a mapping of the identities as they are perceived by the unionists is important.

> "I should have received you in my office, as a union leader, but I receive you in an office which isn't even mine."
>
>   Informant 6, unionist

The feeling of being a union *leader*, and of having an important assignment as elected leader, might be strong amongst the unionists on Chiloé, but is weakened by the conditions under which they work. Only two of the interviews performed were done at offices of the unions, and both times they were in offices provided by the municipalities to the unions. The lack of offices has been an issue in collective negotiations, and one of the companies accepted to offer their union a space for their activities. However, they put very many restrictions on its use, such as that they were not allowed to bring outsiders to the offices, and that the keys were to be on the hands of the company secretariat. These conditions were experienced to be an insult to the union, and hence they are still working without a designated workstation.

5.2.1 Relations of power: *Empresarios* and *trabajadores*

There is a strong and obvious sentiment of us versus them within the labour movement on Chiloé, and in more than one way. First, there is the evident dichotomy between the *trabajadores*, workers, and the *empresario*, management and business owner. The second is the difference between unionists and workers, which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

> "Today the Chilean business class is quite reactive, they are also still very convinced by the logic of the dictatorship of visualising the union as a threat, rather than a contributor to development within the logic of the enterprise. This is why the managers are very reactive to the proposals of the workers organised in unions and it has been a hard process during all these years to get the managers to understand that the unionised workers can even participate in the development and the objectives the company have projected."
>
>   Informant 2, NGO representative

> "The businessmen will not accept that the unions are the organisations with whom they negotiate. Within a negotiation the company can be negotiating with the union, but also with another group which the company themselves have organised."
>
> Informant 6, unionist

As the informants indicate part of the business culture in Chile is that of direct relations between employer and employee, instead of accepting the union as main negotiating partner the management would instead seek to make deals with workers one by one. The type of direct relation between the employer and the employee can be interpreted as a version of the patron-client relationship, and although this praxis is in decline, and even more so when the companies at the moment are facing a severe downturn, it is still common. The business culture in Chile can be said rather to be the culture of the management, and thus there are very obvious opposing interests. In this view we might say that the trade unions' demand for collective negotiations is a challenge to the hegemonic business culture.

The owners of the companies and the higher level management do not live on the island, they do not have direct links to the communities and the people there, and thus do not have an understanding of local culture, and one can assume of the economic realities. As was stated in a quote earlier, *I worked an entire year, and I managed to earn a total of 2 800 000 pesos, when a manager makes 7 000 000 pesos a month*. The managers in question here are the ones working locally, and we can assume that the higher level management will be much further removed from the economic reality of the workers on the island.

> "Normally the salmon business men do not live on Chiloé; they have their houses in Santiago or in Puerto Montt, and if it is in Puerto Montt, it is not in the city, but in the area around Lake Llanquihue, specifically in Puerto Varas, where there's a quality of life superior to the average in the country, and of course to Chiloé. Hence the relation to the population, with the territory, with the workers, is very indirect."
>
> Informant 2, NGO representative

The understanding of the company management in opposition to workers organising and claiming their rights is supported by the poor legislations, and what many name the prevailing *culture of the business class.* This culture influences the labour movement and the reality of the workers in various ways, and is said to be a matter of ideology in Chile. Most of the unionists I spoke with on Chiloé expressed political sympathy with the parties to the left, prevailingly to the Socialist Party of the former president Bachelet (2006-2010). Although few of them claimed to be members of the party they did have sympathies with the ideological ideas of the left. Hence part of the dichotomy between the *empresario* and the *sindicalista* or the *trabajador* can be understood as part of the evident, and historically contingent, division and fight between the left and the right in Chilean politics. Important to remember is, however, as mentioned earlier, the economic and material differences between the two groups are huge.

> "*How can the labour legislation be changed?*
> By having worker representatives as Members of Parliament. But unfortunately, even in this area the right not too long ago voted against the project proposing that unionists could be candidates."
>
> Informant 6, unionist

The sentiment of not only the economic advantage of the business elite, but also their political benefit of being able to run for office or have close allies who are in positions is part of the divide the workers are experiencing to largely shape their capabilities to press claims. By making alliances with candidates during the elections, the labour movement seeks to improve their political situation.

In discussing the situation and possibilities of a solution to the quite negative panorama for the island and its surrounding salmon producing areas, many of the informants revealed an idea of who they thought fit to revitalise Chiloé:

> "If new businessmen don't arrive to create new sources of work, sadly we are seeing a very complicated situation for Chiloé, including the entire tenth region, because this does

not only affect Chiloé but from Llanquihue to here we are all in the same. And it looks very complicated."

Informant 5, unionist

The informant shows quite clearly the Chilean vision of the *empresario* as the only one capable of creating workplaces. At one public screening of the film *Jodida espina*, Damned fishbone, there was a discussion about the situation afterwards. One of the viewers, clearly an outsider noone seemed to know, spoke about the possibilities of and necessity of creating one's own work, of the possibility of the workers together starting their own company, or occupying one of the closed plants. He did this with reference to the Argentinean labour movement of the occupied factories. This suggestion was however refused and denied as a possibility on Chiloé, both by unionists and the NGOs present as impossible in the Chilotan and Chilean context.

Hence, from this view of the *empresario* as the one capable of developing and revitalising economical and productive life of Chiloé I read that the prevailing Chilean ideas of entrepreneurism by part of the business class are integral also to the logic of the unionists. This influences the way they experience own possibilities, and also the power relations; they understand and why the relations are the way they are.

However, this reliance upon the entrepreneurs investing and creating, might also be an expression of the spatial embeddedness of the workers, or as Herod puts it, the spatial entrapment:

> "their spatial entrapment makes them reliant for their well-being upon continued investment into their own communities (since they cannot readily move elsewhere), such that they may participate in cross-class coalitions not as dupes of capital but as fully aware social actors who perceive their own futures as being dependent upon the success or failure of local boosterism and who act accordingly" (Herod 2003: 119).

Although the unionists on Chiloé do not participate in any coalition with the business class, they do seem to express a faith in this section to revitalise economic life on the island, and bring them sources of income.

5.2.2 *Sindicalistas* **and** *trabajadores*

There is also a dichotomy of *sindicalistas*, unionists and *trabajadores*, the workers. Although the level of union membership is higher than the national average, there is a sentiment amongst the union leaders that the workers do not engage much in union matters. This has led to a division between the people who do engage in union activities and the ones who do not. Some of the union leaders, especially the ones who have recently been elected, is making note of a certain gap between these two groups:

> "The union leaders today are starting to understand to what point we are going, and the workers are being left a bit behind, due to lack of communication, due to the lack of a lot of things."
>
> Informant 7, unionist

The reasons for not allying with the unions are many, and there are different opinions on the main factors. A common argument is the so-called fear-factor, a left over from the dictatorial period, where unions were forbidden and union leaders were persecuted, incarcerated, tortured and some killed. Although the extremity of the dictatorship is history, the workers express a fear of the consequences in joining a union: "I believe people don't join the union due to fear. There are many threats by part of the bosses".

However, the people heading the unions have managed to overcome the vision of being a unionist as one of the main reasons for persecution: "You learn how to loose your fear" (Informant 6, unionist).

This lack of union culture or union history is something the unionists experience in for example demonstrations.

> "*What do you think is the main problem of the Chilotan labour movement?*
> A lack of compromise by part of the workers. The movement should be more united, because as a union leader you are always in front, but when occasionally you need that the workers have your back, it be for example in a manifestation, you will always only see the

union leaders. You never look behind you and see your people, your 200 associates following you in the march. There's always very little compromise from the people. The people want you as a union leader to work for them, to achieve benefits for them, but when you need them to have your back, to put pressure on the government or on the companies to get them benefits, you don't see them.

Why do you think this is the case?
I think it is due to a lack of union culture. There is a need to communicate more about the labour movement to the population. That the workers in groups or in organisations can achieve much more than individually. And also because it has always been this way here in Chiloé, the workers don't take many risks. And of course due to the geographical situation, there are a lot of people living in the countryside, and where I am from many of the associates live in rural areas, so when we call for a demonstration in Ancud, they have to travel 20 km to get to the village, and then the bus here, pay the fair. And we, as an organisation don't have a way of paying them the fairs either."

       Informant 10, unionist

The sentiment of working for the situation of people who do not realise the possibilities in organising seemed to be quite strong, especially amongst the unionists who had been working with these issues for some time. This had led to a situation in which many of the unionists were getting tired of the work, and led to even more discussions on the nature of the movement, what it should be, who should be involved.

"What we lack are mobilisations. Whilst we do not mobilise, whilst we are so passive at the dialogue tables, we will not get more from the government. That is the problem: We are very quiet. Or we don't believe that as union leaders we can be in the streets with people, or we lack the capacity, something is missing. But, as I said to you earlier, I believe in the fight in the streets, the class fight, I believe a lot in equality, but this has to be by getting people out into the streets, that is the only change there should be, the only real change."

       Informant 7, unionist

As the informants express, many of the unionists express a lack of workers identity, the common feeling of a fight for the workers rights. This can be addressed to several issues on Chiloé, getting people to demonstrate against their own situation might prove difficult when they are scattered in different villages, far away from the towns and the streets. However, as many of the informants expressed, even though the labour movement has developed and increased, there is a long way until it is common amongst the salmon workers to be organised.

The Chilotan identity of being a *pueblo*, a people, different from Chileans with own norms, ways of life and cultural, social and political structures might be a reason why people do not feel the same class identification. The proletariat is not something with a history on Chiloé; it is not part of the collective Chilotan identity. The modernisation of Chilotan society came as part of the introduction of salmon aquaculture in the region, and it was a fast and abrupt modernisation. Hence, the society has not yet fully accepted and adopted the ways of organising common to the proletariat of modernised societies.

The geography and the scattered population is also a reason why people do not appear in the demonstrations; they live far away from the towns and they work long hours, and have obligations with their families after work, and their wages are not equipped for handling several travels to other towns, and loosing a day's work. However, on Chiloé there is a higher level of unionisation than is the average for the country and the explanations for lack of class belonging can not only be ascribed to the local culture. As mentioned there is a general fear of unionisation which many, both my informants and commentators explain with reference to the union-hostility of the dictatorship.

5.3 OLACH, Observatorio Laboral y Ambiental de Chiloé

OLACH, Observatorio Laboral y Ambiental de Chiloé, Labour and Environmental Observatory in Chiloé, is a conjuncture of national and international NGOs, working from Ancud with issues ranging from indigenous groups, environment and trade unions. It was established in July 2006 and consists of the Chilean organisations Canelo de Nos, Terram, CENDA and until recently, British Oxfam. The latter participated mainly through funding, but in mid 2009 the organisation

decided to withdraw from Chile, and hence also OLACH. Canelo de Nos is the organisation working on Chiloé, and it is this organisation which the director of OLACH, Alejandro Salinas represents. The two other organisations are based in Santiago, Terram is mainly an environmental organisation whilst CENDA, Centro de Estudios Nacionales de Desarrollo Alternativo, Centre for National Studies of Alternative Development, primarily participates in OLACH with research but serves also a function as advisor to unionists.

The establishment of the organisation has had several implications on the labour movement on Chiloé. Through OLACH the unions got access to several networks of NGOs and politicians at different scales and they got the chance to negotiate directly with the central government. The cooperation with OLACH is both an increase in and a widening of the existing social fields in the labour movement.

> "When OLACH came to the island, it was as if the labour movement woke up a bit. It was a source of communication, more free, a source of getting to the different ministries, certain ministries of the country which became more easily accessible. There were other contacts. Due to the fact that this is a non-governmental organisation, there is more access to the parliament, to senators, to deputies, so for us it has been a very important source for contacts."
>
> Informant 15, unionist

5.3.1 Access to knowledge

An important part of the work OLACH has done, and are still doing, is to educate and train the unionists, both the more experienced leaders, and the new. They have done this partly through union "schools", courses focusing on law – workers rights and the laws related to collective negotiations; accounting; and strategic negotiation. This access to knowledge and experience has been very important to the labour movement, and the increase in know-how was an important part of the establishment of the confederation. Hence, the cooperation with the NGO has served to increase the general level of knowledge in a way that contributed to a broader understanding of the possibilities inherent in upscaling the organisation, and also in making contributions to the trade unions capabilities in collective negotiations.

"… I thank the NGOs; I thank Canelo; I have received a lot of wisdom from them."

> Informant 7, unionist

The strategy proposed and presented by the NGOs is one of dialogue and participation in the forums of public and private cooperation and discussion. This has been adopted by the main narrative of the labour movement, that is the CONATRASAL and its associates, whilst the counter-party, the federation of Quellón, are opposed to this line, as will be discussed in a later chapter.

Picture 2: Poster informing about a union school for salmon workers, conducted by Canelo de Nos and funded by the Chilean Government's program for Social Dialogue. (personal communication)

5.3.2 Economic constraints

Additionally, as many of the informants mentioned, the economic situation of the labour movement would have been very different if it had not been for the presence of and cooperation with OLACH, and economically most important, the international aid organisation Oxfam:

> "[W]hen we went to Santiago and Valparaíso to fight for the issues of the LGPA and to get money for the dismissed workers, Oxfam paid the mobilisation; they paid the board and lodging, in sum, they paid all the expenses there were. And to us this is super

significant because here it is not enough to be a good unionist but to be a good unionist you have to have resources to be able to move around, stable travels and in this respect Oxfam has helped us a lot"

        Informant 5, unionist

"[T]he confederation has gotten somewhere, has earned a name, has managed to negotiate directly with the central government, they go to the parliament, they go to Valparaíso[2], but if there hadn't been contact with international NGOs we might have been stuck."

        Informant 12, unionist

However, in mid 2009 Oxfam decided to withdraw from Chile, and hence also from its participation in OLACH. This might have wide consequences, as one of the major challenges for the labour movement is financing its activities, especially those at national scale.

One of the main results of the establishment of OLACH and the cooperation the organisation has with the labour movement, has been an increase in knowledge, a widening of possible networks for the labour movement, and of course the establishment of CONATRASAL. Hence, it is obvious to see that the contact with OLACH has broadened the social fields of the labour movement.

5.3.3 Opportunities in emerging environmental discourse

Part of this increase in networks and knowledge, has been through the environmental organisations which form part of OLACH. The international environmental movement critiquing salmon aquaculture is large and especially vital in Canada, but also in Scotland and Ireland and the past few years Norway. In these areas the salmon farming is said to jeopardise the wild salmon stock, which affects other economic activities such as tourism and also the ways of life of indigenous people (in Canada). The presence of and interaction with the environmental discourse is both positive and negative for the labour movement; they get access to even more networks, and especially important are the international aspects, knowledge is widened and also resources. But, for the unions and the workers on Chiloé, salmon aquaculture is at the moment the only

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[2] The Chilean congress is located in Valparaíso, whilst the executive power has its seat in Santiago.

large scale possibility for employment for workers with low levels of education, and they are not interested in a diminution or extinction of the industry, as parts of the environmental movement are aiming at.

> "I would say that the environmental movement often takes more external measures, it has led to a simplification of the reality of these regions. This often implies a protection of the environment within conservationist logic more than the necessary preoccupation that has to exist for the people who live in the territory in question."
>
> Informant 2, NGO representative

In July 2009 several environmental organisations worked together in a public campaign called *13 arguments for the elimination of the salmon industry – An irresponsible and destructive industry subsidised by the Government and by Nature is bad business for Chile* (see Figure 6, in appendix). Both OLACH and CONATRASAL were asked if they wanted to sign, but neither of these organisations wish an elimination of the salmon industry: it is the main source of work for Chilotans. This also had implications for the environmental organisation in OLACH, Terram, which out of obligations to the observatory did not sign the campaign, which they had participated in creating. The cooperation with the environmental movement does not only widen the possibilities of networks, it also leaves the labour movement having to reflect upon and take stands in issues related to their line of work, and relate to the environmental discourse. The labour movement does press claims for a more sustainable industry, but first and foremost their claims are related to the everyday life of their workers, which all wish to maintain the salmon industry, whilst to the environmental movement in Chile their main goal is to shut down the salmon industry (notes from field, and the arguments from Figure 6)

> "By part of the workers there was major comprehension of the environmental variable, a conscience which has always existed because the Chilotan culture is directly linked to the soil, to the ocean and the products which can arise from there. But without a doubt since four years ago and until now, the importance which the environment has acquired, the role of sanitary conditions in the claims made by the unions has become much more serious than before and the concept of sustainability in the industry and the territorial

development is growing. I am not saying that it is neither ideal nor absolute, because in these times of crisis the emphasis is on the defence of the jobs and the possibility of feeding or not feeding one's family."

Informant 2, NGO representative

The workers, and local fishermen, were amongst the first to alert about the alarming situation; they were the ones with first-hand experience of the situation at the plants, and saw the negative development. However, they were not heard, which can be linked to the chronology of events: the first signs of disease appeared long before OLACH had been established, and importantly; before the confederation which was to become the legitimised voice of the workers saw the light of day.

In June 2009 OLACH celebrated their anniversary, and used the occasion to establish an award: "Chiloé justo y sustentable 2009" (Chiloé fair and sustainable 2009) (Prensa OLACH 2009b). Amongst others both the regional head of CUT and the work inspector of Castro were given awards for their work for a more just community. This prize and the people who received it states some of the core of OLACH, they wish to promote what is seen to be sustainable and fair to be something that the workers and the local community represent.

5.4 New organisational space: CONATRASAL
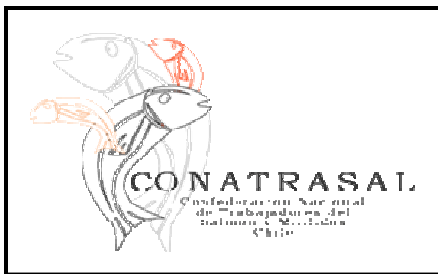
The establishment of the confederation CONATRASAL, Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria del Salmón y Mitílidos de Chile, the National Confederation of Salmon and Shellfish, can be seen as the sole major change within the labour movement, a development of the organisation from being purely local, and to a minor degree regional, to a fully regional and national organisation. It was established in December 2006 and was composed by seven federations on Chiloé, Puerto Montt, Aysén and Magallanes. It started as a confederation on Chiloé, but has managed increase its territorial coverage to the other regions with salmon industry, thus territorially stretching 1000 km.

> "As trade union [company level] noone listens to us, as federation, some local authorities, and as confederation from the president and her ministers to the parliament. This is why we believe that union makes strong, recruiting politicians, governors, mayors and trusted NGOs to be able to realise the change we want for our workers."
>
> Informant 1, unionist

Due to the centralisation of Chile, and the scale of the unions' work within the salmon industry, prior to CONATRASAL, the many abuses of the workers by part of the companies, the poor conditions they worked in and the very low levels of their salaries, was not something which was known nor a subject of discussion concerning the extremely successful industry in the capital. However, when the industry started showing signs of disease and problems, there was a need for an interlocutor representing the workers. And of course, the workers had an interest and a need for their voices to be heard. Hence, when the workers managed to organise themselves into a national confederation, including all the salmon producing sectors, the situation on Chiloé started to become more evident. By successfully managing to claim to be the voice of all the workers within the industry, the CONATRASAL accomplished to get considered by the authorities. This led to them being one of the partners involved when discussions on the industry started, both through the *mesa del salmon*, the salmon tripartite discussion roundtable, and in direct discussions with government and the companies.

When asked what the main accomplishments of the confederation are, I received a simple answer: "Respect. We have earned the respect we deserve." (Informant 6, unionist). To the unions and the unionists, the legitimisation of the organisation and receiving respect by people and institutions experienced to be powerful and hierarchically far above the working class, is a very important step.

> "This is how this confederation has been gaining space and has been taken into account and through this their voice has been better heard. However, there are still great difficulties in these relations in which a powerful state, a powerful business elite and an emerging and weak union organisation."
>
> Informant 2, NGO representative

As the informant mentions, although the CONATRASAL has managed to elevate the scale of the Chilotan labour movement, the power relations within this newly acquired social field of national dialogues on the salmon industry, are still very much characterised by the unions as the weaker part, one might say the unions still as the client facing the powerful patron.

The picture below is from a campaign CONATRASAL and CUT arranged, and the poster asks: *Do you know that Norwegian salmon produces contamination and unemployment in Chile?* Through this, they link the environmental aspects of the salmon industry and the labour issues. Being inhabitants of the area and the workers of the industry, they can, rightfully one might say, claim to be preoccupied of both discourses.

Figure 3: Poster by CUT and CONATRASAL "Do you know that Norwegian salmon produces contamination and unemployment in Chile?" (personal communication)

5.5 The counter narrative: the Federation of Quellón

Although the creation of CONATRASAL is a story of development and positively and successfully altering the agency of the Chilotan labour movement, there are voices on the island and within the workers of the salmon industry which are not agreeing with the posture of the confederation. Only a year prior to the establishment of the confederation, a report was published by Terram (Pinto and Kremerman 2005), where they amongst others, had interviewed several

unionised workers. One of the interviewed states that he can not imagine how a confederation can be established, due to large differences of opinion:

> "I think it is very complicated with respect to what the union is. Its said that union makes strong, and strength makes power, but in the circumstances we are in today, with the division of the federations and the workers' unions, it is debatable whether it is possible to have an important strength within the area or not" (Pinto and Kremerman 2005: 30, my translation).

As mentioned, the confederation is composed by seven of the nine federations in the salmon industry, and the two federations which are not within the confederation is one in Puerto Montt, whilst the other one is the Federation of Quellón. The town of Quellón is one of the worst affected areas by the ecological crisis, and large numbers of people have been fired during the past two years. This has led to a situation where Quellón, the once fastest growing village on Chiloé, is turning into a ghost town, the people who came there from outside Chiloé in search of work, are leaving, and unemployment levels are skyrocketing: in May 2009 reports stated that unemployment had reached over 50 % (aqua.cl 2009), and since then the figures have been rising.

Union levels in Quellón are low, and in decline due to the impacts of the salmon crisis. In this area people are not, as in other parts of Chiloé, seeing the possible positive impact of joining a union, but are afraid of loosing their jobs or being "black-listed" and thus not being of the preferred workers when, or if, the industry regenerates.

The unions in this part of Chiloé came into existence in the wake of the first big confrontation workers – employers, where the collective negotiations in the company Los Fiordos led to an occupation of the plant, and fights with the police.

> "There was a time here in Quellón when the unionism was very strengthened, in many companies unions were established, new unionists came about, and amongst the first ones was the union of Los Fiordos. They had a collective negotiation, they occupied the plant,

fights with the police, and after this many new unionists from other unions came about, and this was our base. But as I am telling you, today it's not like this. You could say that we are trying to fight, we are trying to strengthen the unions, we are trying to find a new way of organising again, but it all depends on the conditions, of the conditions we manage to give to the people."

Informant 14, unionist

Since that incidence the labour movement in Quellón has been in decline, although the federation of Quellón was re-established in March 2009 (Prensa OLACH 2009a). However, the federation and the unions which form the federation do not represent a significant share of the workers, and additionally it is the town worst struck by the crisis. Hence, the federation is extremely weak, and their strategy is to *jugar las cartas que haya – play with the cards at hand*; they try to get more funds to the unemployed, and try to maintain collective negotiations.

5.6 The development of the labour movement – chronology, scale and social fields

Through this chapter the development of the labour movement has been presented, with emphasis on the networks built and the power relations which shape the space of action. In the following I will briefly summarise this, before the next chapter addresses the main issues concerning the articulation of claims at the different levels. The summary is necessary to get a better understanding of the pressing of claims as the changes in possibilities and constraints become visible through a look at the development of the labour movement in the Chilotan salmon industry.

Hence, what has happened amongst the unions on Chiloé since the 1980s a gradual upscaling in organisational structure. From mere company based unions there was established town-based federations, and eventually also a confederation. Through this expansion of the organisation, they have managed to expand the arenas in which claims are being pressed, from company, to local and regional government, and ultimately at the national level. The development of the organisations social fields is illustrated in figure 4; here we see how the labour movement has been built over time, from company based trade unions in the late 1980s (it must be noted that

these are the first unions, and still today new trade unions of this scale is being established), to the formal establishment of cooperation in the federation in the 1990s. In 2006 the confederation was established, and with it a more formalised cooperation with NGOs through OLACH (the stapled circle).
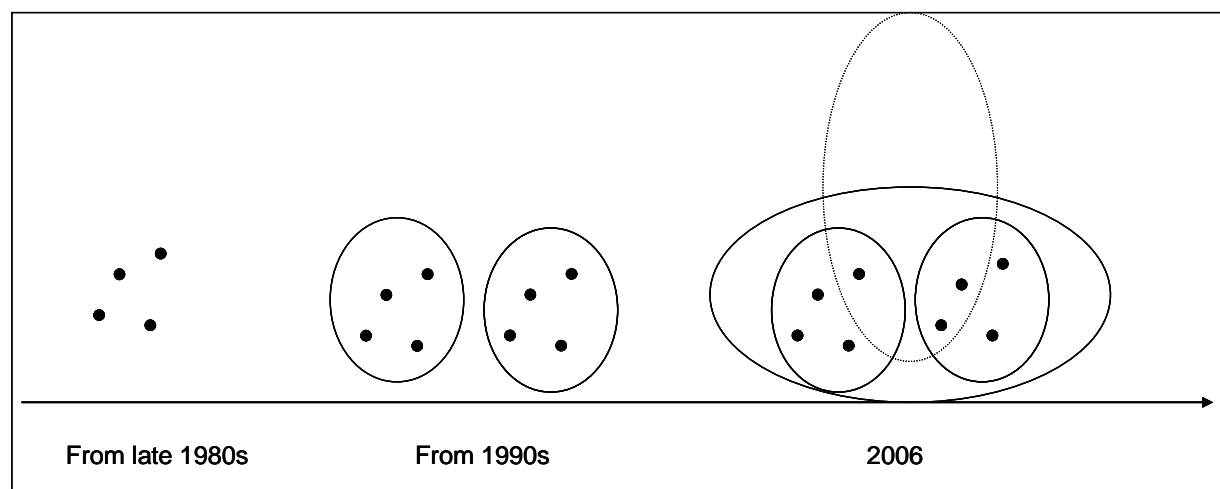
Figure 4: The development of the labour movement and its social fields

It is important to note that the upscaling of organisation has partly been made possible through cooperation with and transfer of knowledge from the organisations forming OLACH. The permanent presence of the NGO Canelo de Nos, and the possibilities of drawing on the contacts, information and resources of the other organisations has been vital to the expansions, both in channels used and articulated claims. Importantly to understand the scenery upon entering the crisis is the relation built with parts of the environmental movement. This part of the new social fields of the labour movement provides a different set of networks, linking the Chilean salmon industry and its ecological issues to the wider discourse on the sustainability of farmed salmon.

The labour movements construction of identity is largely based on two sets of 'we'-'them'. Especially the very uneven relation of power between unionists and companies are greatly influential in the way the unions comprehend their own role and their possibilities, but also the distinction between unionist and worker is relevant as this is experienced to weaken the voice of the workers in the industry. This leads us to the next chapter, in which the articulation of claims the past 15 years is to be analysed, and with a critical view on achievements and explanations.

6. Articulating claims

The articulation of claims and acting on behalf of the workers in attempts to better their situation is the main purpose for the unions, whichever the scale. In this chapter I focus on the political spaces in which the Chilotan labour movement has participated before and after the crisis to have their claims heard, and seek to analyse the processes of articulating claims and the effect of these. I will centre the attention on two particular areas: collective negotiations and tripartite discussions, called the *mesa del salmón* – the salmon table. The last arena, the national level, will be discussed in chapter seven, as this is a scale where the labour movement won ground in the aftermath of the crisis.

6.1 Collective negotiations

Collective negotiation is one of the main activities that have the potential to directly influence the situation of the workers; negotiations are about remunerations, health issues, hygiene, and rights, and as discussed in the previous chapter, it can be a way of challenging the hegemonic business culture. In Chile, collective negotiation is a fairly new institution; however, the legislation states the right to collective negotiations in periods of minimum 2 years and maximum 4 years (código del trabajo, art. 347). The areas with experience in collective negotiations are the mining and copper towns in the northern parts of the country, which were the regions with strong unions prior to the dictatorship.

> "When one negotiates collectively here it is like walking with no floor (pisa sin piso). But one of our big victories was to maintain the collective negotiation which was born the first time we negotiated."
>
>   Informant 12, unionist

When the unions started to organise on Chiloé, and during the first negotiations there were several practical features that influenced the success of the claims stated by the workers. When the unions' negotiators entered the office where the meetings were to take place, which normally occurred within the companies' buildings, they stepped into a room of men in suits, with laptops, power point presentations, excel-sheets of available resources and they offered coffee, tea and snacks. The management would talk to the workers using colloquial *tú* rather than the polite

Usted, thus showing that this was not as formal as might be expected, and giving a general impression of superiority to the unionists, most of whom had never seen a laptop before, were used to the boiler suits of the plants and who had articulated their claims by pen and paper. To the workers, the whole experience was overwhelming. When their superiors presented numbers and figures stating that there was not enough resources to give the workers what they wanted, they believed them, whilst trying to figure out what the colours and statistics on the screen on the wall actually meant (source: conversations with unionists and NGOs, developed from field diary).

In 2004, when the organisation *Canelo de Nos* arrived on Chiloé, with the aim of establishing social projects to improve the situation of the relatively poor people of the island, work that later led to the establishment of OLACH, they soon realised that an important part would be to establish links with the weak, but fight willing labour movement. There were two representatives of Canelo who started working, a sociologist and an accountant, with experience in law. These two established relationships with the unions, and started educating the unionists in labour laws and directives. Through this cooperation, where the accountant also participates in the negotiations as the union's advisor, the unionists have started to demand that negotiations should take place on neutral ground; they have enforced a more formal tone, and are starting to get a grip on some of the necessary computing skills.

Hence, through the participation in the social fields of OLACH where knowledge and advisors are accessible to the unionists, collective negotiation as an institution available for pressing claims has become more comprehensible and manageable for the unions. It is important to note that as with unionism in general in this part of Chile collective negotiations is a new institution, and is still dominated by the management, which influences the success of the claims made.

Nevertheless, as many of the informants express, their strategies upon entering negotiations are quite basic:

> "This is about the sensible part of the person. Try to reach his sensibility; because that is the only way they can listen to you. You have to explain to them that the workers have

two, three children that they have to get an education; that they can't educate them with such miserable wages."

> Informant 13, unionist

There is also another, very important aspect explaining the problems concerning the collective negotiations, which many of the informants express:

"At the moment it is very difficult to raise demands and collective negotiations in the companies because of the great fragmentation of unions within one company. When some are negotiating, others are producing, which doesn't really harm the employer."

> Informant 1, unionist

As the quote in the beginning of this chapter states, one of the main accomplishments of the trade unions has been to have a collective negotiation, and return to this institution after three or four years. In Chile, and in the Chilotan panorama, this was not taken for granted. Although there are still cases of accidents, of poor standards in safety and hygiene, of discrimination of women and especially of pregnant women, the unionists note that there have been some improvements due to their efforts in negotiations.

One of the major problems of collective negotiations has been, and still remain, lack of transparency by part of the company. The unions do not get access to most recent updates on the state of the company, on levels of profit and available resources:

"Sometimes one can't know if the facts, if the conversions are correct or not, because they handle all that is computers, one can't log onto their computers and check if the prices they present are real or not."

> Informant 13, unionist

This uneven level of knowledge at the negotiating table underlines the asymmetrical relationship of power existing between employees and employers, and contributes to the lack of more fundamental changes in for example remunerations, working conditions and health and security.

6.1.1 Display of power

When the newly elected directory of one trade union was to start negotiations in 2009, the police (carabineros) went to the home of the leader of the union, asking for contact details for the leader "to know how and who to contact if the negotiations lead to problems". As this was a newly elected leader this act was frightening, the person had never earlier been in collective negotiations and had never before had anything to do with the police and they had now arrived at his door step. The adviser from OLACH was contacted, and he summoned a press conference to make noise around the situation. It was explained to me that the boss of the plant in question was an *alguacil honorario*, which is a civil servant collaborating with the police, and therefore had the proper contacts. To the unionists this was a situation in which they felt the management showed their strength and superiority, but it was not an unfamiliar situation for the advisor of the group of unionists. He explained that this had happened during the last negotiations, in 2006, and that it is quite common in Chile, an inheritance from the dictatorial period. However, it is not a common or accepted procedure anymore, and the advisor used his experience and knowledge, and his own contacts, namely the media and the regional director of the company.

Nevertheless, the so called *fear factor* (Hatfield 2006) amongst Chilean unionists was something I experienced when trying to do interviews with some of the fairly new unionists, especially the ones active only at company level. They were afraid that to do interviews with me might cause conflicts in their negotiations and at their work place, as had been the case with unionists earlier who had said "the wrong things" to journalists.

6.1.2 Achievements

As expressed also in the previous chapter, for the labour movement in this area their bare existence is a major achievement. Apart from this, many of the informants mention that through negotiations they have achieved a greater respect for the working hours; when working overtime they now get paid, as opposed to 5-10 years ago when this was not the case. The arrangement of bonuses has also become more understandable for the unionists, how to obtain certain bonuses has not always been transparent.

"First it is to have stated that this industry has experienced enormous growth, has exported a lot of dollars, but that all of this has been with the cost of precarious labour conditions for the workers."

Informant 9, local politician

Some of the workers express a change in sentiment of exploitation, that through some of the changes the past few years, with claims pressed by the unions, they understand a bit more of the wage systems, and most importantly, they have some weekends off, and experience to be somewhat more in control of their lives:

"I admire the workers. How they have been exploited … and how they in reality were the property of the company. You could not have a weekend off because the company forced you to come and work on Sundays. You couldn't go on vacations; because the company would not give you vacation. You didn't have a way of organising your own life. You were condemned to work."

Informant 7, unionist

6.1.3 At a standstill?

Even though the trade unions entering into collective negotiations with the company management are somewhat better equipped for these situations, they do not experience major improvements in either of their main claims. They keep up the level, and do get the 2-3-4 % increase in remunerations, but never more than what is within the Chilean law. Hence, the companies are acting within what is demanded of them, but still, the workers and the unionists experience their wages to be unfairly low compared to what their superiors make (see quote by informant 7 pp. 53), and what they know salmon workers in other countries are making. Thus it is the system, or the institutions which are impeding them from being able to successfully articulate new claims to further improve the situation.

"Once, Norwegian unionists came here, and talked to us. And they told us that when they enter negotiations, they negotiate above the law. Here in Chile it is different, here you negotiate completely stuck to the law. When you get to the negotiating table they

immediately say 'but what does the law state?'. Here, if the law says 3 % increase in salary, then they won't give you more than 3. … The negotiating above the law is a tremendous guarantee."

Informant 13, unionist

The surplus of available labour and a bipartite negotiating system in which the employers have all the available information and data leads to a situation in which the unions are negotiating for what is experienced to be crumbles, and never more than what the Chilean law states to be the minimum wages for the industry.

6.2 *Mesa del salmón* – **Tripartite discussions**

One of the main Chilean forums for joint discussions on the future of the salmon industry took place in the salmon producing regions during 8 meetings in 2006, and later on two extra meetings. These meetings were attended by various actors from the industry, the labour movement and regional government representatives, and also one participant from an NGO. The main issue during these sessions was themes concerning health, hygiene and security; labour rights; maternity; subsidies to the sector; and housing, education and training.

"The workers state their positive attitude to the dialogue and their expectation that this authority can signify a bettering in working conditions. To this the industry's representatives manifest that this is not a negotiating instance, and hence matters concerning remunerations are not to be dealt with, amongst other aspects, referring to remunerations and similar matters are proper to the labour relations of each company."

(MTPS 2006: 3)

As the section from the report of the tripartite discussions clearly show, the expectations of the workers and the companies were very different when first approaching the "salmon table". The workers assumed this to be an arena where some of the main and overarching problems of the salmon industry could be addressed, whilst the managers thought it to be a space for discussing the advancements achieved in the industry, and how to continue this work. The unionists

participating in these meetings expressed a certain resignation when speaking about the salmon discussion table and the results:

> "There was a moment when we saw that there was quite a bit preoccupation, but there were situations in which things were going to get done, people from different areas signed up, both at the level of the government and the municipalities, and other people such as CORFO[3] and at the end what we discovered was that with all the talking there was very little advancement."
>
>   Informant 5, unionist

The very different attitude towards the possibilities of the salmon discussions as a channel seems to have brought about disappointment for the unionists. Where they had expected agreements and a certain level of compromise towards improving their situation, both in terms of salaries, but also hygiene and security, they found there to be little action in the aftermath. In some of the most important areas for the unions, they did not reach any form of agreement as the following section shows:

2. Workers' rights:
   a. Collective negotiation. Collective rights.
       Proposal from the workers:

- The recognition of the union as the only valid interlocutor. Elimination of the existing negotiating groups.
       There is not agreement in this matter.

- That there will not be dismissals after a collective negotiation.
       There is not agreement in this matter.
       (MTPS 2006: 11, my translation)

---

[3] **CORFO**, the Chilean Economic Development Agency

In most of the issues discussed during the meetings there was some kind of an agreement on how to work out differences and ways to improve the situations, but as is seen in the section above, from the final report on the tripartite discussions, the subjects concerning workers' rights and the union as the workers' organisation, was not something the companies would accept. As earlier mentioned, in Chile there exists a vision of the union as a threat to economic and industrial development and this is something very visible in the extract above.

6.3 Successfully pressing claims?

The main arena for unions articulating claims is the collective negotiations, which in Chile takes place every three or four years. In July – August 2009 many of the salmon unions started their second or third round of negotiations; the institution of collective negotiation, as the labour movement itself, is of recent date on Chiloé. These settings are characterised by very uneven access to central data and resources which gives the administrations a tremendous advantage. What most informants expressed was that during the first negotiations most of the improvements visible today were obtained, and that ever since there has been somewhat of a standstill in relation to achieved benefits. This is by many related to the fact that negotiations are always done "stuck to" the law: salaries do not exceed minimum wages, and what is being negotiated is often the structure of the salaries, that is the system of bonuses. Thus, even though the unions have successfully expanded their social fields and been able to engage in networks where they can access knowledge and advisers, at the local level the interaction between employer and employee is still very much defined by an uneven relationship of power, and uneven access to the industry's data. Additionally, the surplus of labour leads to a situation in which the unions are not in position to negotiate significant increases in wages.

First Unions

Claims to the
companies:
Wages;
Hygiene;
Union rights

First federations:
Claims to the
local authorities:
A bettering in
public
supervision of
state in salmon
companies

Establishment of
CONATRASAL:
Claims to national
government and
transnational level of
companies:
Bettering in jurisdiction
on salmon farming;
Sustainability:
Recognition

Late 1980's   2000's   2004   2006

Canelo de Nos:
Social dialogue;
Legal and
financial advisory

OLACH:
Contacts;
Environmental
discourse;
Financial resources

Figure 5: The development of the Chilotan labour movement and their claims.

As figure 5 shows, even though the labour movement has advanced and developed in scale, the claims at the basic level remain the same, since the late 1980s until 2010. It is important to note that not all the trade unions were created during the 1980s, many of the unionists I spoke with represented unions deriving from late 1990s – early 2000s; the panorama is ever changing with unions disappearing and emerging. The box also shows that the presence of other actors cooperating with the labour movement, has led to an increase in demands, and an upscaling of the demands.

7. The crisis

In this chapter I will try to shed light on the main research question; *How can an ecological crisis affect the possibilities and constraints facing a labour movement at different scales?* By taking a closer look at the work done by the different levels of the labour movement on Chiloé in the wake of the crisis, I wish to describe how a crisis can both positively and negatively affect the possibilities and constraints at the different scales the unions work. I will focus on the upscaling of action done by the confederation, and on the crisis at the local level.

7.1 Discovering ISA

The first reports on possible findings of the virus ISA, infectious salmon anaemia, at cultivation centres near the island of Lemuy on Chiloé, came on the 30th of July 2007 (aqua.cl 2007). The disease has caused problems in salmon producing countries earlier, and was first diagnosed in Norway in 1984, and later in Canada (1996), Scotland (1998), Faroe Island (2000) and the United States (2001) (Mardones et al 2009 in Fløysand et al 2010). However, these areas have managed to find ways to cope with the virus, and it has never become a crisis of the same magnitude Chile has witnessed the past two years. It has become a catastrophe of great proportions; ecologically, economically, socially and politically. The industry had approximately 30 000 directly employed workers, and some 50 000 including the indirectly employed, and since the virus was detected 20 000 people according to OLACH (PrensaOLACH 2010e) lost their jobs. SalmonChile has announced that during 2010 additionally 5000 salmon workers will loose their jobs. On an island of 150 000 inhabitant, these numbers of unemployment are tremendous, and have wide impacts in the society.

Such a downturn in what had become a regional example of a successful, internationalised industry necessarily woke up the media. All of a sudden newspapers, radio-stations and TV-programs which had never before taken an interest in the local effects of the industry were all over it and, as Barton and Fløysand (2008) states, the debate became global in March 2008 when The New York Times published an article. This increase in attention and debate brought with it a need for a trustworthy voice from the locals, preferably from the workers. The crisis led to an increase in both opportunities and constraints for the Chilotan labour movement, and this has been very unequal on different scales. Locally the most important factor is the massive dismissal

of workers, bringing with it a lowering in membership bases, a responsibility to help the fired workers and a weaker position in collective negotiations. At national and to some extent international level, the movement has experienced a legitimisation as the voice of the locals, and has to some extent been able to successfully articulate claims, although the degree of success can be discussed.

7.2 Narratives on responsibilities

Unions and politicians in Chile agree to a large extent that the responsibility of the crisis lies on two hands: the companies for their "total and exceptional incapacity of self-regulation" and the public sector, which did not create the regulations to prevent such an overexploitation. "Hence, it is a mix of a permissive public (sector) and an abusive private sector which led to the catastrophe" (Informant 3, national politician).

> "… sadly there was an *exitismo* [exaggerated aspiration for success] in Chile, by which the explosive development of this sector was viewed upon, without concerns for the risks this explosive development brought along. And the industrial sector used parts of its enormous profits on a public communication campaign which inhibited those who had critical opinions and which made it impossible to be heard."
>
> Informant 3, national politician

As the informant states, the economical superiority of the companies led them to be on top of the crisis for some time; spending enormous amounts of money on campaigns both in Chile and abroad. These campaigns also received financial support from the government, which experienced one of their major export industries in a serious downturn. However, after some time it became clear that it was not just any decrease, but was developing into a severe crisis, on all levels.

Whilst both unions and politicians in Chile wish to place blame, both on the companies and on the poor legislations, it seems as if the companies do not want to dwell on this, but rather push for new legislation. The unions have tried to use the companies' responsibility in the crisis as a way to push for them to take greater responsibility, in the form of educational programs for the fired

workers; economic support for the creation of micro-companies; and promises of reemployment once the industry starts to bloom again.

7.3 Local responses to the crisis

Important figures of the labour movement together with the NGOs composing the OLACH met in July 2009 to discuss the situation of the crisis, both the environmental, but first and foremost the social and labour impacts the crisis had had on the region. The meeting was intended to formulate an analysis of the situation, by part of the workers and the NGOs working with them. One of the main conclusions by means of labour was that today's situation with massive dismissal of workers is just the tip of the iceberg, and that when, or if, the industry recuperates it will be in a different shape with different ways of production. Most importantly: they will not have the same need for workers. Stipulations by part of the NGOs said that approximately 8000 people will find work within the salmon industry, against the 30 000 directly employed before the virus ISA struck the plants. This imbalance between available jobs and unemployed former salmon-workers will give the employers a great advantage to push wages even lower. Additionally it will lead to even more flexibilisation, as the companies for a long time have wanted to hire more people on seasonal contracts, and just maintain a few permanent, higher trained workers on the plants throughout the year (developed from field diary).

This analysis leads the labour movement to form their main strategies and articulate their demands: It is necessary to get Chilean laws regulating the labour conditions, levels of salaries, liberty of organisation and limiting the flexibility of the workforce. Within the Chilotan labour movement this implies several areas of focus for 2009-2010. CONATRASAL continues to build relationships with national level government, working to get the labour statutes as an integral part of the LGPA; they work further to educate and capacitate new unionists in new parts of salmon producing Chile. The federations forming part of CONATRASAL are working to help the unions at company level to maintain percentage of workers unionised and in collective negotiations.

7.4 Upscaling

In an article in the Norwegian economic newspaper Dagens Næringsliv, a salmon analyst states that the Chilean government has to "regulate or die!" (Halvorsen 2008). The Chilean laws,

aiming at creating a favourable environment for foreign investments and entrepreneurship, had led to a situation in which the salmon industry was no longer sustainable, not ecologically nor economically. Hence, central actors begged for the government to create new regulations. This led to the work of a revision of the law on Fisheries and Aquaculture, la Ley General de Pesca y Acuicultura.

The political left have tried to promote a revision of the law for about 15 years, but has been met with refusal by the right-winged members of parliament and senators. However, due to the crisis the companies in the salmon industry experienced first hand the pressing need for better regulations, and thus begged the politicians to change the law. Hence, the ecological crisis served as a trigger not only for the local actors on Chiloé, but also for the politicians in centralised Chile to act.

A revision of the law, which was to improve the situation and bring stricter regulations on the industry, was thus prepared. Although the salmon industry in the worst affected areas in periods seemed to be on the verge of total collapse, the industry and observers have had faith that with the right measures and better regulations and laws salmon production will be revitalised in Chile. Additionally, the industry has started to establish operations in the regions further south, which are even more vulnerable than the waters surrounding the tenth region. Hence a revised law with stricter regulations was very important, and the labour movement has seen this as a unique chance to press claims to get labour issues integrated.

To the labour movement on Chiloé this came to be their first opportunity to articulate claims at the national level. Their demand was that labour issues should be included into the new law, issues such as hygiene, health, systems of remunerations and organisational freedom. Of course, for the salmon workers with a basic level of education this has been a tedious labour, and unrealisable without the participation from the different organisations of OLACH. Through Oxfam the organisation had the economy to travel back and forth to the capital, practically once a week, meeting with politicians and government officials. In these meetings they worked to get more financial support for the ever increasing numbers of dismissed workers, educational

programs for the unemployed workers and of course, pressing to get a labour statute to complement the revised law.

However, some of the unionists express to be insecure about the possibilities of upscaling, as the sentiment that the truly powerful, the *empresarios*, will over surmount the labour movements efforts:

> "Now at least they are paying more attention to us due to all this about the new labour statute which is going to be made for the salmon industry. But I am not sure how far it will go, because in the end it is always the companies who decide. Because if they say we do not agree with this and that, as point of departure they will win. In other words, you can state your opinion but we don't have the strength to say if you don't approve this we won't work."
>
> Informant 13, unionist

7.4.1 Political links

As part of the work towards improving the labour issues in the law, CONATRASAL has cooperated and sought help from a senator, the president of the Socialist Party, Escalona, to increase the chances of successfully pressing the claims. The confederation has also signed a treaty with the ministry (notes from an OLACH-meeting). Part of the strategy facing the revision of the most influential law concerning the salmon industry was that of forming alliances with central and powerful actors; presenting a labour statute to be implemented in the new law and using all channels and resources available to be present in the capital, showing the distress and preoccupation of the workers.

It is important to note here, that 2009-2010 were election years in Chile, with the first round of presidential elections in 2009, and second and determining rounds in 2010. This might have been part of the decision by part of the senator because showing extensive interest in the rights and the situation of the workers prior to an election might increase the support for his party, and his coalition from the workers, not only in the salmon industry but nation wide. Some of the informants mentioned this as a kind of political manipulation, the unions are both inexperienced,

but also very aware of their geographical and political position in the periphery of Chile, and are thus quite accepting to the outstretched hands of powerful politicians.

> "There are some NGOs, without mentioning names, which work aligned with deputies, with senators, and when elections are coming up they intensify their approach to the NGOs and share information, and there is a compromise amongst the NGOs and the candidate to mobilise the workers. Sadly this is an open manipulation and people can see this situation. It happened in the last presidential election, where one of the senators was elected with a wide majority due to the support he had from the labour movement (…) however, this senator, I have never seen him referring to the unemployment situation that the salmon industry is living."
>
> Informant 11, NGO representative

Nevertheless, the work with senator Escalona has brought about some increase in commitment from the senator, who has visited the area on several occasions, also after the elections, in which the candidate from the right, Sebastian Piñera won.

7.4.2 The revision of The General Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture

The General Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture (LGPA) of 1991 states the regulations as to who can and how fisheries and aquaculture can be performed. It states who can hand out permissions, the duration of these and how they are to be used. The national environmental movement has been critiquing the law since it was approved despite its lack of consideration of the capacity of ecosystems; the law does not put time limits to concessions or limits to quantities of production. With the arrival of the virus ISA, it became obvious to others other than the environmental activists that this law might have contributed to the situation:

"I believe that the law approved in 1991 in fact privatised the ocean. That is, it gave concessions to anyone who asked for one; the maritime authority was obligated to give one to whoever asked for one, without questions of his antecedents … and secondly it gave out concessions without time limits; that is, anyone could make use of the concession ad eternum."

Informant 3, National politician

March 10 2010 the revised law was approved. The labour issue was to some degree incorporated in the law. Concessions will now be given with a time limit: 25 years, and no one company can hold more than 20 % of the concessions. *A concession will not be renewed if there have been three sanctions for disloyal or anti-union practices in the centre of production during three continuous productive cycles* (Prensa OLACH 2010c). The right to unionise is part of the general labour statutes of the Chilean law; however, with the incorporation of this into the law and aquaculture, the anti-union practices are given more severe consequences for the companies than what has been the case until now. Hence, even though the labour movement express disappointment concerning all the other aspects they had worked to get in the law or in a labour statute to the law, it must be seen as a major victory, when regarding the position of labour in Chile and the extremely superior business sector.

The first reaction from the Chilotan labour movement was somewhat ambiguous:

"this law does not exactly adjust to the interests and expectancies we as workers had, but there are certain aspects which leaves us content … [this regulation allows] in one way or another to regulate the salmon industry in sanitary matters, from now on forward, and of course we hope and we will be on the alert, that this will help improve the labour issue and the treatment of the workers, which is not a minor theme" (Javier Ugarte interviewed in Prensa OLACH 2010c).

As mentioned in chapter 3.9.2, the labour statute that the labour movement has worked hard and pressed to get integrated as statute to the law, is being treated after the law has been approved, and at the time of writing this thesis it had not yet been dealt with by the congress. However,

since the approval of the law there has been a change of president in Chile, and the new government is not as labour-friendly as the previous was. The unionists express fear that the labour statute, which, if approved, is to contain regulations concerning working conditions, wage levels and workers' rights, will not be approved.

The work with the new law and generally the claims articulated to get benefits and programs in support for the unemployed salmon workers has been a rapid way of upscaling action for the Chilotan labour movement. The government has been in need of a reliable and steady workers' representative, and found that in CONATRASAL, which quickly led to a legitimisation of the organisation as the voice of the salmon workers. Additionally, their line of negotiation and dialogue has also led to a bettering in the relationship with the local and regional governments (notes from an OLACH-meeting). Whether this would have been the case for the organisation established in December 2006 if it had not been for the crisis is an issue worth reflecting on. In Chile, the workers of the salmon industry have not received much attention all the time the industry had its boom, generated huge incomes and was labelled a successful story of a truly internationalised industry. Although the presence of a broad network through OLACH did give the confederation a possible entry to institutions and politicians willing to listen, they might not have had an agenda obvious enough in Chile for it to become a national and even international issue on the political agenda. Their link to sustainability thus created the opportunity to be heard, also abroad, as will be discussed later.

One of the main reactions to the LGPA by part of the environmental movement is that this is de facto a privatisation of the ocean, the same argument used about the original law by politicians. They have been critiquing the focus on creating better conditions for the companies, instead of protecting the environment and the people:

> "The appearance of the severe environmental and sanitary crisis which is affecting the salmon industry, which can be attributed to its own responsibility, has not been sufficient for the legislators to adopt effective and proportional measures to the magnitude of the problem. This law emphasises the creation of more favourable financial conditions to this

economic sector, and not in realising profound changes to protect the ecosystems and the health of people" (Alex Muñoz, director of Oceana, in Hoffens 2010).

The statements from both the labour movement and the environmental movement shows that the two argues for a view of issues concerning health, safety and the protection of ecosystems as interlinked. Thus, even though the two strands have different areas on which they place focus, there seems to have been established a form of common ground, at least when commenting the crisis and the regulations concerning the industry.

7.4.3 Global scale

The international environmental movement concentrating on salmon activities has been active for years, working on issues related to the danger of extinction of wild salmon and, in the case of Canada, linking this to threats to the traditional way of life of indigenous groups (www.puresalmon.org). Every year a large group of activists travel to Norway to participate in the Annual General Meetings, AGM, of the two largest salmon producing companies in the world: Marine Harvest and Cermaq. In 2009 they also invited the director of CONATRASAL, Javier Ugarte, and director of OLACH, Alejandro Salinas. This created an opportunity for the unionist to press claims at an international level, directly to the CEO of Marine Harvest.

As the quote in the introduction to the thesis states, before asking about the company's responsibility towards the workers, he expressed concern for the environment, and stated the need "*to study the conduct of the company, in relation to the diseases, according to an environmentally responsible management*". Thus he clearly showed that the workers of the industry are not only concerned about their jobs, but also about their environment, as the waters surrounding Chiloé is their immediate surroundings and possible work-place, whether or not the industry recuperates or not.

This opportunity to go to Norway involved a clear position to the environmental movement, as the two formed part of the delegation composed by Pure Salmon Campaign. The companies in Norway do not approve much of this campaign; neither do the unions in the industry, as they are seen to be extreme, and with the wish to paint a gloomy picture of the industry at all costs. In

some of the meetings the two Chilean delegates had, this sentiment was expressed. However, for them it would not have been possible to go to Norway if it had not been for the financial support from the environmentalists.

One of the issues discussed, and which CONATRASAL later presented to the regional management in Chile, was the possibilities of Marine Harvest to contribute with financial support to the extreme social situation due to the massive dismissal of workers. In March 2010 the director human resources in Marine Harvest Chile presented the companies initiatives of Social Corporate Responsibility related to the crisis in Ancud (Prensa OLACH 2010d). Hence, the claim made at international level, and later restated at national level led to the development of a program in which former Marine Harvest workers can get education and help to start micro companies. To the confederation this meant a major victory, and implied a new arena and scale, in which they express great hope.

Part of the aspirations for international work is cooperation with Norwegian unions. They experience, and one might claim rightfully, that the Norwegian unions are miles and centuries ahead of them in every aspect: union rights, wages, contracts, working conditions, transparency from management and so on. Many of the unionists expressed a deep feeling of injustice at the fact that a Norwegian worker, working for the same company as them, has a salary several hundred percent higher than them.

> "What we basically wish is that the unions here are at the level with those in Norway. I proposed this to the unions leader there [Norway] that it should not be possible that with the same surname there can be such great differences, this can not happen."
>
> Informant 6, unionist

However, as a Norwegian unionist commented: "They are getting there, we have to remember that we were struggling a lot in Norway too in the thirties when the workers started to organise, things take time" (Informant 8, Norwegian unionist).

7.5 The impact on the trade unions

It is important to remember two aspects of the Chilotan labour movement when dividing between how the crisis is affecting the different scales differently. First, very many of the unionists acting at higher level of the organisation, such as federation and confederation, also serve as union leaders at company level. Second, the labour movement is very fractioned, and there are a lot of internal conflicts, both within and amongst the various levels and entities. Thus, as will be discussed in the following, parts of the analysis done by the labour movement together with the representatives from OLACH is adopted and carried out also at the local level, however, it may seem as if the respect and the legitimisation the unionists have acquired at national and even international level is not automatically passed on to the local level and the unions local articulation of claims.

7.5.1 Rhetoric in collective negotiations

The crisis in the salmon industry necessarily leads to changes in the ways the union leaders approach the negotiating table, and the strategies they develop to try to bring about a positive development in salaries and working conditions even in difficult times. One of these rearticulations made use of the crisis in their building of arguments to place on the negotiating table. The company in question was one of the larger companies, stricken by ISA but without loans in the banks, and a general surplus in company holdings. The advisor and the groups unionists thus articulated their line of reasoning on the fact that the outbreak of the ISA virus is not the workers fault, but the company's, and hence that decline in production should not affect the wages of the workers. They also wanted to use the fact that the company has a quite bad reputation, especially concerning sustainability and treatment of workers, and argue that through listening to the workers and their needs in times of crisis might be a good strategy by part of the company in matters of managing their reputation (from field notes and conversations with unionists).

It is important to make note of the fact that most of the smaller companies, with loans and which are active only in the region, have gone bankrupt or has been bought by larger companies. Thus, the salmon companies which still have some production in the area are mainly large multinational companies. As briefly mentioned in chapter 3.6, it is being discussed whether it was the

multinational companies who brought the disease with them from other salmon producing countries, which is something also the unions claim. To the labour movement then, this implies that the companies have a particular responsibility, and that the costs of the crisis should not be paid by the workers, but by the companies.

7.5.2 Increase in union work: *Comité de cesantes*

The past two years approximately 20 000 people have lost their jobs in the salmon industry in Chile. On Chiloé where salmon farming has been one of the main, and one of the very few, ways of having salaried work this has made an enormous impact.

> "Its been difficult, very difficult, because I am not only the union leader of a big sector of the company, but I am also the solicitor of the work for the people who have lost their jobs, so we formed the committee for the fired (comité de cesantes), and we established it because a lot of the people who lost their jobs had been part of our union. It would look really bad if we would leave them to themselves after having given union support, leaving them on the streets with nothing to do. So we have two contingencies. I hope that this process will help us to be more on line with the workers."
>
> Informant 7, unionist

As the informant expresses, there is a hope that the crisis and the unions position in assisting the dismissed workers can bring about an increase in the sense of identification by part of the workers to the labour movement. In chapter 5.2.2 the lack of such identification and the implications due to this was discussed, and this is something the unionists are very concerned with. The massive dismissing of workers led to a certain increase in relative membership in the unions. Of course, many unions lost their entire base for membership and do not exist anymore, but the ones that are still vital, where the companies are able to continue some production, the workers have experienced that most of their benefits have been cut. The wages are down to an absolute minimum and hard-earned measures such as aid for the children of the workers education for example, are all taken away. This has led to a certain degree of awakening amongst the people who are still employed concerning the possibilities when organised in a union. The

union leaders recognise this, and are both happy that their unions are relatively growing, but are also a bit critical of the sudden decision organise:

"Imagine if people had understood this at a different time, when the industry was actually making money! We could have been talking about a decent salary: a worker earning 400 000 pesos [approximately 4000 NOK]. Today we could never reach such figures."
Informant 7, unionist

"When they were faced with the fat cows, how good it was to have the company, and how bad is the union because the union was seen to be out to make trouble. But today, when the cow is thin, and the belt has been tightened, then the union has been missed because the unionised are the ones who fight for us [the workers]."
Informant 12, unionist

Although the unionists are a bit ambiguous about the sudden interest in unionism by a part of the dismissed workers, this might become a positive change for the labour movement on the long term. If the workers see and experience the positive impact organising as workers can have on their everyday lives, this might give rise to longer term commitment with these kinds of social organisation. As theorists within labour geography have discussed, a wider form of unionism, including the informal work sectors and a broader look at the local bases for membership and alliances is a way to approach the many challenges in the future of the labour movement due to economic liberalisation and internationalised industries (e.g. Lier 2007, Herod 2003; 2000).

7.5.3 Boomerang effect?
As mentioned previously in this chapter, the issues concerning standards of health, hygiene and systems of remunerations were not included into the new law, and the trade unions are thus facing the same panorama in collective negotiations as they did before the work with the new law started, in which what is negotiated is the basic standards as set by the Chilean labour statute. However, if one manages to effectively make use of the regulations concerning persecution of unionists, this might lead to a bettering for the conditions the unions are working under, and one can speculate about whether this can have a positive effect on the work at local level, especially

collective negotiations. Thus, the answers to whether there is truly some sort of positive boomerang effect one has to evaluate what happens with the labour statute, as it is in this appendix to the law that the locally posed claims are integrated.

7.6 Changes in the political space caused by the crisis

As discussed in this chapter, the main change for the labour movement on Chiloé considering their possibilities has been the upscaling of articulation of claims. This has been possible through the social fields they act in locally, primarily the alliance with the NGO Canelo de Nos and the umbrella organisation OLACH through which they have made use of the channels provided by environmental and social organisations. As they state themselves, the most important accomplishment the past couple of years has been the legitimisation of the confederation CONATRASAL as the voice of the workers, and thus a natural partner in discussions on the future of the industry and the regulations to be put on a revitalised industry. This legitimisation has brought about a shift in the power relations in the social fields, however, this can not be claimed to happen at local level.

Locally the crisis has predominantly negative effects; huge numbers of dismissed workers, thus weakening the membership base for the unions; poorer negotiation grounds in relation to the company managements. Nevertheless, there are tendencies showing that a local understanding of unionism and the potential for bettering the workers' conditions through such organisation is increasing.

One of the major accomplishments of articulated claims is the integration of sanctions on anti-union practices in the revised law on fisheries and aquaculture. Even though the unions and the NGOs working with them had worked for and hoped for more thorough regulations as to labour conditions, levels of remunerations and unionisation, the clause of non renewal of concessions where there has been three cases of anti-union practice in three consecutive production cycles should be seen as a successfully pressed claim. This is a case where the union has managed to upscale their activities through networks, in this case social and environmental NGOs. As the unionists themselves express, they would not have been able to travel back and forth to the capital if it had not been for the economical support from Oxfam; and they would probably not

have been able to shape as effective alliances without the political know-how and insights of the environmental and social NGOs.

At global scale the environmental discourse is one of the movements which has successfully articulated claims in the globalised context, whilst the labour movement is seen as one of the "losers" – due to labour's strong territorial bonds, it has had problems in globalising activities. This can be explained through a look at the dichotomy between claims of redistribution versus recognition and what has been argued that the past few decades claims of recognition have won grounds over claims of redistribution (Fraser 2000; 2003). Thus, adapting to, or perhaps, adopting some of the lines of argument from the environmental discourse can be a strategy for survival of the labour movement. This has probably not been an intentional strategy of the Chilotan labour movement, but might be part of the explanation of the partially successful upscaling of both organisation and pressing of claims.

However, for the unionists, who are intrinsically linked to their towns and territories, this might not be experienced as adopting certain discourses, but rather an increase in claims pressed. As discussed in chapter 5, with the expansion of the labour movement on Chiloé from trade unions and federation to a national confederation claims of sustainability for the region were integrated into the demands of the confederation. If the environment in which the workers live their lives and find work is severely degraded, this has multiple implications for them; jobs will disappear, alternative sources of income are also likely to be affected by severe ecological degradation. Hence, what might be argued is that the ecological crisis opened spaces of engagement which might not have led to the same opportunities to articulate claims as what might have been the case of a different kind of crisis, say for example a purely economic crisis.

This argument also explains the upscaling to international level: the international environmental movement's main claims concerning the salmon industry are centred around the need for a focus on how to address issues of sustainability. Local voices from the periphery of the salmon producing countries, as is Chile, is thus welcomed when they can share the narrative of how the industry developed towards an ecological collapse.

Hence, I argue that an ecological crisis as the one witnessed in the salmon producing region of Chile, has served as a trigger to open up spaces of engagement for local civil society, in this case the labour movement, both at national and international scale which had not been accessible to them prior to the crisis. The inaccessibility can be explained both through the structures of the country and its centralised government; the level of development of the labour movement and the social fields the actors participated in.

8. Conclusion

In this, the last chapter, I will draw the lines made throughout this thesis, from the theoretical perspectives and the development of a framework based on political space to the analysis of data collected. I will start by briefly summing up the theoretical foundations and operationalisation and relevant context. Then I present the most central findings, before evaluating the approach in light of the case. Finally I make some remarks regarding potential further studies.

8.1 Theoretical foundations and context

It has been argued that labour movements and workers are facing a number of difficulties in the age of globalisation. Challenges include competition between labour regimes and neoliberal political systems lowering minimum wages and taxes and facilitating the flexibilisation of labour to attract foreign investments. It is claimed that demands for redistribution are falling behind, whilst those who press for recognition have a greater possibility of succeeding. Within this scenery labour geography argues for a view of labour and workers as agents who have the capability to actively shape the economic landscape, despite their undoubtedly weaker position compared to capital.

Through the operationalisation of the concept political space I have aimed at developing a tool for analysing the agency of labour, with specific view to the possibilities and constraints the actors face when attempting to press claims. The view of political space as *a system of social fields at various scales, in which meaning is produced in the shape of claims with importance to the actors' and the system's rights – and material interests*, gave way to the operationalisation with focus on social fields, power relations and scale. My particular focus has been to take a closer look at how a political space with its scenery of possibilities and constraints can change and shift in times of crisis. Or in other words, how an ecological crisis can serve as a trigger to open up for new spaces of engagement for actors to press claims to improve situations in their spaces of dependence.

The salmon industry was first introduced to Chiloé, and it has been said that the industry brought a sudden modernisation to the island which prior to salmon cultivation was quite isolated from mainland Chile and people were mainly subsistence farmers and fishermen. However, as my

informants and several studies confirm, what the industry also brought along was low wages, poor working conditions and weak labour rights. During the late 1990s and until 2007, the salmon industry in Chile experienced a tremendous economic boom, and became the second largest producer of salmon in the world, coming very close to passing Norway in world production. The success of this industry and its importance in the Chilean economy in the aftermath of the dictatorship is argued to be one of the reasons why its negative implications have been paid so little attention to, both by scholars, until recently, but also by Chilean national politicians.

The Chilean and the Chilotan labour movements are weak. They act and press claims within a context of profound neoliberal laws and regulations which deregulate labour in order to attract investment and economic growth; the prevailing business culture is the culture of the economic elite and of the company leaders. The neoliberalism of Chile is not, as with many other countries, the result of globalisation and the flow of capitalistic ideas and structures, but stems from the dictatorship of general Pinochet (1973 – 1990). This is an important fact in the context of this thesis as the very authoritarian dictatorship forbid unionism and being an active unionist thus involved threats to one's life. Thus, in this context it is not surprising that what the labour movement on Chiloé, and the actors and NGOs working with them state to be their main great achievement is their bare existence.

8.2 Review of the findings

The findings of the virus ISA in 2007 was the beginning of what was to turn into a huge crisis. With this ecological emergency came a lot of attention, not only national media but also international newspapers and TV-channels were interested. Thus, a space was opened for the labour movements to make their voices heard, and to place their concerns on the national agenda. The crisis was profound in many ways, and the obvious failure at managing the salmon production in a sustainable way has led to a socio-economic catastrophe within the region.

I argue that the upscaling of articulations of claims was possible due to a number of factors. First, the labour movement had established close ties to an umbrella NGO called OLACH. The organisations which make up OLACH have broad networks in the capital, the know-how of

Chilean political life, and the economic resources to assist the labour movement in their work to demand better conditions and wages. As was discussed and argued in chapter 7, the upscaling of the articulation of claims has to a certain degree been a success for the Chilotan labour movement. In the revision of the law on Fisheries and Aquaculture there has been included a demand on the companies which states that three anti-union practices within three consecutive production cycles will lead to the company not getting their concession renewed. Thus, the legitimisation of the confederation, and this organisation's strategy of dialogue, has led to a bettering for the trade unions in the laws concerning salmon aquaculture, and hence, they have achieved a bettering in the *worker rights* claims (see chapter 2.3.2).

However, at the local level, the unions report that they have the same problems when facing companies in collective negotiations as they had before the upscaling, and additionally of course the material constraints brought about by a crisis, and thus they are not experiencing significant changes related to their *material* claims. It is important to make note of the level at which the unions have developed, and that both for them and in the view of the people and institutions they cooperate with, their main great achievement is their bare existence. Thus, the legitimisation of the labour movement, and in particular of the young confederation CONATRASAL and the view of the latter as a central actor when analysing and discussing the salmon industry and its future, is in itself an achievement which can be related to the spaces opened due to the ecological crisis. Additionally, as many of the informants argued, it can seem as if this crisis and the spaces for engagement it has opened, has increased the sense of identification with a labour movement amongst the workers. This is seen through the fact that even though there are massive dismissals of workers, the percentage of unionised workers is not in decline (with the exception of in Quellon), but is keeping a steady level.

8.3 Review of the approach and conclusions based on the case

With reference to chapter 8.1 I argue that this case shows that the approach was fruitful in that it was scale sensitive and thus revealed how the crisis had very different effect at different levels of the organisation and their arenas for articulation of claims. By analysing the relations of power locally I showed that even though the labour movement managed to upscale the articulation of claims, it has not, at least not yet, had a boomerang effect to the demands pressed locally. The

ecological crisis influences the local society in predominantly negative ways, and has been characterised as not only an ecological but also a socio-economic catastrophe.

I hold that this case demonstrates that there is a potential to access new and wider spaces of engagement for labour movements and with this and upscaling of their articulation of claims. However, the success of the demands pressed depends on a number of factors as the power relations in local social fields, prevailing business culture and political structures. Additionally, the unions must have access to capital and networks, especially in as centralised countries as Chile, where Chiloé and its workers can be said to be the very periphery. Thus, unions can accomplish legitimisation, receive respect and enhance their possibilities and rights, which in the context of neoliberal policies and within a highly internationalised industry must be viewed as a significant achievement. When it comes to material claims, which to most workers is fundamental to their ability to maintain their families, upscaling might not be sufficient. All of my informants stated that to achieve a real change in issues such as salaries and workers' rights, there is a need for a change of mentality, both by companies and from national politicians.

In my point of view this case shows that the level of professionalisation of the labour movement in question and the power relations in their social fields at local scale is central to understand if the workers are able to improve their every-day situation, also in times of crisis. Although an ecological crisis can open spaces for engagement at national and international level, the outcome of demands pressed will not necessarily be positive for the unions. Whether they achieve relevant and positive changes as a result to claims pressed at these new scales in the newly accessed space of engagement, is contingent on structural factors and aspects of culture and the prevailing political regime. All these factors make up how the industry in question is viewed upon and to what degree there is political will to make changes in the direction the civil society, in this case unions, asks for.

Thus, I argue that there is a possibility that an ecological crisis can work as a trigger to open up new spaces of engagement through the increase in attention and shift of view on an industry or an area. However, the actors may not be able achieve significant changes in related to their material claims through these spaces. In my opinion this case shows however, that with adequate

strategies it might enhance their possibilities rather than their constraints in the long run. This strategy can be that of relating the issues to a broader cause, such as sustainability.

8.4 Final remarks

On the front page of this thesis is a photo where a salmon worker holds a sign that says *Los trabajadores movemos el sistema, pero el sistema nos mata!* – We, the workers, keep the system moving, but the system is killing us! It is from a demonstration arranged by CONATRASAL and CUT in Ancud in April 2009 where the workers and their unions used the streets to cry out their frustration over the continuous dismissal of salmon workers. In this thesis the discussion has been largely about the possibilities of upscaling action to national and international level to make the workers' claims better heard. Whether this is something the workers, who feel they are being strangled by a system working against them, will experience to have an actual effect on their everyday lives and their ability to feed and educate their children, is not something this thesis can possible answer. Thus, my proposal for future studies is to return to Chiloé in a few years time and study the labour movement and their political space once more, and then try to conclude whether the upscaling has been a success and how an ecological crisis can change the possibilities and constraints on long term.

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Appendix

List of informants

Interviews

Informant 1: Unionist, local, regional and national level

Informant 2: NGO representative

Informant 3: National politician, senator

Informant 4: NGO representative

Informant 5: Unionist, regional level

Informant 6: Unionist, local and national level

Informant 7: Unionist, local and regional level

Informant 8: Norwegian Unionist

Informant 9: Local politician, work inspector

Informant 10: Unionist, regional and national level

Informant 11: NGO representative

Informant 12: Unionist, regional, former also national level

Informant 13: Unionist, local, regional and former national level

Informant 14: Unionist, local

Informant 15: Unionist, local, regional and national level

Background information

Representative from the Norwegian Embassy

Professor at University in Santiago

Master student at University in Santiago

Interview guides

Semi structured interview guide to unionists

1. **Biografía del sindicato**
   a. En que sindicato trabaja?
   b. Que rol tiene Usted en el sindicato?

c. Cuanto tiempo lleva en trabajo de sindicato?
d. Cuando se estableció este sindicato?
e. Como?
f. Porque lo establecieron?
g. En que compañía son basadas?
h. Su base de miembros
i. Afiliación política

2. **Demandas**
    a. Cuales son las demandas principales?
    b. A quien proponen sus demandas?
        i. Si se trabaja a varios niveles (e.g. empresa, local, regional, nacional) – en que nivel le parece a Usted que tienen mas éxito/logros?
        ii. Porque cree Usted que es asi?
    c. Que problemas principales encuentran en el proceso de poner sus demandas?
    d. Que estrategias tienen en el proceso de proponer sus demandas?
    e. Situación de la empresa
        i. Noruega o chilena?
        ii. Encuentran diferencia entre el conducto de empresas nacionales y extranjeros?
        iii. Debe haber diferencia? Porque? Como?

3. **Alianzas**
    a. El sindicato es miembro de alianzas de sindicatos?
    b. Se alían con grupos fuera del movimiento laboral? (p.e. Juntas de vecinos, ONGs etc.)
    c. Que estrategias tienen acerca de esas alianzas?

4. **Política**
    a. Acerca de la afiliación política
    b. El sindicalismo, debe ser politizado o no? Porque?
    c. Opinión sobre los nuevos leyes y regulaciones acerca del mundo laboral y medioambiental

5. **El futuro**
    a. De la industria
    b. Del movimiento sindical
        i. En Chile
        ii. En Chiloé
    c. Las elecciones presidenciales de noviembre

Semi structured interview guide NGOs and local politicians

- Su rol hacia el movimiento laboral

- Pensamientos sobre la industria salmonera y sus trabajadores

- El comportamiento de las empresas: que rasgos se puede decir que han habido por parte de las empresas hacia los trabajadores?
    – Diferencia de nacionalidad
- Su punto de vista acerca del desarrollo del movimiento laboral
- La relación entre el movimiento laboral y el movimiento medioambiental
- Mayores logros
- Mayores desafíos
    – Debilidades del movimiento?
    – Desafíos externos – leyes, compañías multinacionales etc
- Visión del futuro?
    – La nueva ley?
    – La crisis?
    – El rol del Estado?

Figure 6: Poster by several organisations"13 arguments for the elimination of the salmon industry" (personal communication)