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Agribusiness Facing Its Limits: The Re-Design of Neoliberalization Strategies in the Exporting Agriculture Sector in Chile

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Abstract: The core neoliberal strategy of Chilean agrarian politics has lasted now for more than 30 years. Despite minor reforms, its fundamental pillars remain in place. While members of the agribusiness sector consider this strategy to be a role-model for food production leading to explosive economic growth, the last decade exposed its socio-ecological limits, such as declining water availability and increased conflicts over land. Taking critical literature on neoliberalization as a theoretical approach, we used law and literature reviews as well as qualitative interviews with actors from the public and private sectors to reveal the details of the strategies in the exporting agriculture sector in Chile. From the understanding of neoliberalization as a multi-layered process, we analyzed the data, focusing on three dimensions of agribusiness in Chile: (a) regulation, (b) spatial fix, and (c) ideological paradigms. In doing so, we uncovered how far the coping strategies chosen by the state and private sector have re-designed and strengthened the process of agriculture neoliberalization in order to push its own socio-ecological limits.

Keywords: agribusiness; Chile; neoliberalization; access to land and territory

1. Introduction

In Chile, a neoliberal agricultural strategy has remained in place for more than 30 years. Throughout its trajectory it has undergone different modifications but retained its fundamental pillars. The main actors of Chilean agribusiness often claim to be exemplary role models in food production, which has achieved an explosive growth of non-conventional agricultural exports, thereby positioning Chile within the global food market. However, in the last decade there has been growing evidence of limitations to the expansion of this activity due to the decrease in the water availability for crops and the increase in territorial conflict over the impacts of the current agribusiness model.

Studies on the Chilean case focus mainly on the metamorphosis of the agrarian question referring to the inequalities that neoliberalism has caused among farmers [1], the loss of previous forms of peasant existence [2], and the changes in the structure of work in rural areas [3]. However, one aspect that has been researched little is the limitations that the agribusiness model experiences in Chile and the strategies that private and state actors are deploying.

The objective of this article is to characterize the main strategies of the implementation and the consolidation of the neoliberalization process in Chilean agriculture. Particularly, we focus on two questions: What are the limitations, difficulties, and/or conflicts that occurred during its

implementation trajectory? What are the strategies deployed by the supporters of the agribusiness model to face this scenario? Understanding how neoliberalization of agriculture tries to solve the problems generated, inter alia, by its own operation, is a research challenge that social sciences in the Global South have paid little attention to. Therefore, we consider that answering the above-stated questions by analyzing not only the original design of neoliberalization, but also by comprehending its constant re-creation, is important to achieve a more complex understanding of the installation of the agribusiness model in Chile and other countries of the Global South that have gone through similar processes. Additionally, we consider that this approach allows us to highlight the presence and key role of the State in establishing the pro-market model in agriculture.

Against this background, we create a theoretical framework that builds a bridge between the contributions from the analysis of neoliberalism inspired by Foucault's theory of governmentality and the works of Marxist critical geography regarding neoliberalization. Furthermore, this article uses documentary and qualitative interviews analysis to explore the development of the agribusiness model in Chile from three dimensions: (a) regulatory frameworks—de-regulation and re-regulation process through laws, trade agreements, and subsidies; (b) spatial fix—geographical expansions and restructuring guide by capital interest in the agriculture sector; and (c) rationality—discursive strategies that seek to shape social relationships and subjectivities under the principles of neoliberalism related to the agribusiness model.

Following upon this, the article will detail how far the state and private sector have gone in contributing to maintaining the neoliberal paradigms of the regulatory framework, going on to discuss the subsidiary role of the state in encouraging the transformation of space for the purposes of agricultural export, and identify the spreading of a binominal narrative aimed at strengthening the rationality of neoliberalism by the private sector.

Characteristics of the Agribusiness Model in Chile

Inaugurated by the agrarian reform of 1967 to 1973, Chile went through a radical transformation of its agriculture sector that changed the structure of its land, which had been cultivated since the 18th century [4]. By this, the relationship of the tenant farmers with their landlords was dismantled, turning the focus from production towards the importance of the farmers' access to the land.

However, this process of farmers' organization and land redistribution in Chile changed after the coup d'état in 1973. Although the civil-military dictatorship denied the legacy of the previous governments, the agrarian reform inaugurated by the former government offered economic advantages. Specifically, the process of land restructuring presented an opportunity to push the modernization of agriculture and its greater integration within the dynamics of the international markets (OCDE, 2008).

During the rural transformation taking place in the civil-military dictatorship, different phases of agricultural politics surfaced [1,4]. It began with a period of neoliberal orthodoxy spanning 1973 to 1983. During those years an agrarian contra-reform was applied that gave back a third of the expropriated land to the former owners, auctioned or sold another third to entrepreneurs, and assigned the remaining third to farmers who were involved in neither workers' unions nor in left-wing political parties. This period opened doors for a processes of land commercialization. Moreover, private ownership of water rights was established. From then on, water has been treated as an economic good tradable on the market. Similarly, a process of food price liberalization emerged by lowering the tax hurdles to food importation.

Because of the economic crisis in 1982 and 1983, the state then adopted politics of neoliberal pragmatism by rearranging the economy to the advantage of the agriculture sector [1]. Specifically, mechanisms of protection and tax incentives for agricultural exportation were installed as well as the Law 18.450, which was written to create subsidies for the encouragement of private investments in irrigation facilities [5].

Later on, the post-dictatorship governments maintained the core focus of previous agriculture politics. They installed methods to increase technical support for the agricultural sector (mainly

through the program of irrigation improvements) and promoted the export of agricultural goods, strengthened by free trade agreements instituted in the 1990s. Those measures aimed at incorporating small-scale farmers into the modernization and internationalization processes by providing technical assistance and access to credits. Moreover, through externalization politics, the role of the private sector was enhanced [6].

One of the fundamental pillars of the economic boom in the agriculture sector was incentives for non-traditional agriculture exports. The production of fresh fruits emerged as a promising activity due to the comparative advantages of Chile in the globalized market, such as climate conditions and the contra-seasonal character compared to the importing countries [1]. The available data on planted surfaces reveal the expansion of fruit production in Chile. While in 1975 the total area planted with fruits was 89.488 ha, in 2016 the total area had increased by 252% to 315.375 ha [7].

However, the current agribusiness model has been criticized in recent literature [7,8], pointing to the socio-ecological impacts on the territories caused by large-scale agricultural production. Currently, one of the most discussed topics in both political and scientific circles is water, due to the decrease in water availability that has become a growing concern on the national level. Water scarcity is considered to be a root issue in both precipitation decrease—especially in north and central Chile—and the intensification of water use [9]. According to the National Water Directive (Dirección General de Aguas, DGA), in the year 2011, out of 238 analyzed "hydrogeological sectors", 106 were declared to be "restricted areas" and 6 were declared to be "zones of prohibition" [10]. In other words, 47.05% of the area was affected by heavy diminution of water in its aquafers.

Aggravating the situation, an over-granting of water rights was incentivized by the process of water neoliberalization in Chile, which aimed to accelerate the economic activities associated with water use for productive purposes [11]. Recent studies on water rights show that on the national level the water rights granted to the private sector are six times as much as the available water in the basins. This means that in fact rights have been granted on water that does not exist [12].

Furthermore, potable water has been negatively affected by the increasing scarcity. Water in rural areas in particular must be provided by trucks. Data from 2014 indicate that in 13 of the 16 regions of Chile, water had to be delivered by trucks, affecting a total of 400,000 people [13].

In this context, the debate on water use for different productive purposes, among them agriculture, have become more audible in political deliberations. The topic of the relationship between fruit production and water issues in particular was raised because of the vast amount of water used by agriculture, both in Chile and the rest of the world. Official data indicate that about 73% of water use in Chile is associated with the agricultural sector [13].

2. Conceptual Framework

What is the nature of neoliberalism? What are its principle characteristics? With the growing popularity of the term, interest among academics has increased, leading to an extensive debate about its conceptualization. In this paper, neoliberalism is understood as (a) a rationality [14] and (b) as a process of spatio-temporal adjustment [15–18].

The former understanding refers to authors that draw attention to the diverse areas of life that are impacted by neoliberal principles, its profound penetration, and the complexity of the mechanisms used to reach hegemony. For this reason, neoliberalism is treated primarily as a rationality. By this token, neoliberalism is seen not just as a destroyer of rules, institutions, or rights; it is also a producer of certain social relationships, certain ways of living, and certain subjectivities [14] (p. 14). The authors proceed from the theory that neoliberalism is a process. As a consequence, they consider it to be impossible to entertain a monolithic vision of neoliberalism. Peck at al. [15] stressed that neoliberalism consists neither of a unified and static structure, nor of a final condition. They used the concept of neoliberalization to focus on the transformational process of social life which happens in different places under the domination of neoliberal policies. Brenner et al. also referred to neoliberalization and defined it as "a particular form of regulatory reorganization: it involves the recalibration of institutionalized,

collectively binding modes of governance and, more generally, state-economy relations, to impose, extend or consolidate marketized, commodified forms of social life" [16] (p. 330).

How are these processes of neoliberalization being analyzed? A number of analyses looked to the work of David Harvey, specifically his theory of uneven geographical development, as a reference [18]. The foci of those studies point in two directions [15–17]. Firstly, they analyze the regulatory transformation of neoliberal politics, which aim to homogenize the regulatory framework and legal system in order to facilitate entrepreneurial activities on different scales (such as regional and national law or free trade agreements). Considering the importance of regulatory transformation, attention must be drawn to the processes of deregulation and re-regulation that neoliberalism displays in multifarious ways; almost universally, it is in the processes of deregulation that neoliberalism is identified.

In truth, both deregulation and re-regulation are permanent features of these processes. The latter, however, seems to be consistently overlooked. Re-regulation consists of the interventions of the State in facilitating privatization and the creation of markets that control an increasingly comprehensive chunk of both the social and environmental sphere [19]. Following the classic works of Polanyi [20] and Wallerstein [21] concerning economic liberalism's place in the historic formation of capitalism, this article's emphasis is on the re-regulatory aspects of neoliberalism, as it allows the identification of the permanent presence of the State in building the "free market".

A second aspect of neoliberalization is what Harvey theorizes as spatial fix [18]. According to him, the production of space has been strategic to capital accumulation. This was accentuated during the mid-twentieth century, where everything related to space, for example, construction, urbanization, investments in territories, the sale and purchase of space as a whole and, of course, speculation [22] (p. 220), became of major interest to capitalism. The term "fix" refers to the fact that capital accumulation needs infrastructures such as roads, ports, highways, or dams that tie or fix capital for a certain time to specific spaces [23]. Hence, what seems to be a contradiction of capital due to its characteristic of mobility and instability becomes a need when capital surpluses are absorbed in long-term investments embedded in the land [18].

Particularly in the case of activities that are based on the exploitation of natural common goods (water, soil, biodiversity, etc.), such as agribusiness, this process has led to the deepening of socio-metabolic pressure on territories already occupied by extractive activities. Likewise, new territories have been occupied that until then had not been substantially integrated into the production cycle of capital. In this way, the spatial fix occurs when new works are built in space to overcome the barriers to capital accumulation [18]. Continuing with the example of agriculture, spatial fix occurs when intensive water use exceeds the existing infrastructure and requires the construction of larger works (such as larger reservoirs or desalination plants for irrigation). Again, using agriculture as an example, it is when intensive water use overstrains existing infrastructure that the construction of larger works (such as larger reservoirs or desalination plants for irrigation) becomes an absolute necessity.

Neoliberalism and Agribusiness

How does this broader discussion of neoliberalism relate to the dominant form of food production? As stated by various authors [1,24–27], in recent decades, food production has been systematically subordinated to the processes of agricultural commodification, the focus of which is to guarantee profits throughout the expansion of capitalist production and circulation [26].

This transformation has led to a new logic of production under an agribusiness model [27] that implies: i) the intensification of the role of capital in each of the production phases, circulation, commercialization, and consumption of food, ii) the overlapping with the chemical and biotechnological sector, together with the progressive substitution of agricultural products by agro-industrial products, iii) the organization of world production controlled by oligopolies and centered on the global consumer to the detriment of local consumers, (iv) the ongoing encroachments of land grabbing and concentration

in the countries of the Global South, and (v) the deepening on a large scale of the production of monocultures, which implies intensive uses of energy, water, soil, and agrochemicals [28].

How then was this consolidation through the agribusiness model made possible in Latin America? In the specific case of the countries of this region, Kay states that the central objective of neoliberal policy has been to strengthen private land ownership in order to create a more flexible and active land market [25]. Thus, with liberalization and the development of a competitive market, those farmers who do not invest in the "modernization" of their production will not be able to survive and will be forced to sell their land to the most "competitive" producers [25,29,30]. This process has led to important land re-concentrations throughout Latin America and has added to the trends of land grabbing due to the crisis of the global food regime which was caused by the increase in food prices between 2007 and 2008 [31].

Another central component of the neoliberal change in agriculture in Latin America is the changes in the organization of work. As Kay pointed out, the economic restructuring was accompanied by an increase in temporary and precarious wage-earning work. In particular, this increase has been significant in the countries where the export market for soybeans, fruits, and vegetables increased the most [25].

Finally, another key feature was the structural adjustment policies enacted in order to encourage agricultural exports. Farmers began to shift their production to the now profitable export market and in so doing transformed their traditional production patterns. This process deepened the inequalities between those "enabled" farmers who managed to integrate into the export market and those who did not manage to participate in the global food production chain [25]. In addition, it also deepened the dependence on large-scale farms and transnational corporations [30].

Particularly in the case of Chile, four decades after the beginning of neoliberal policies in agriculture, the scenario is deeply contradictory. While macroeconomic indicators tell of a success story thanks to agricultural exports, the consequences have been the progressive re-concentration of land ownership and proletarianization of the peasantry [3,29]. The small-scale farmers who survived have been precariously integrated and subordinated into the productive chain dominated by the large landowners and agribusiness speculators [1].

Within this discussion on the conformation of the agribusiness model in Chile and Latin American countries as a whole and starting from this understanding of neoliberalism, this article proposes an analysis centered on three dimensions that, according to the authors, are part of the process of the neoliberalization of agriculture in Chile: (a) the regulatory dimension, (b) the spatial fix, and (c) the rationality.

3. Materials and Methods

The study that gave the basis to this article had a non-experimental qualitative design, of an exploratory nature. Two information production techniques were used in its development: documentary analysis (Mc Donald and Tipton, in Valles [32]) and semi-structured interviews [33].

For the documentary analysis, institutional documents from various entities related to agribusiness were reviewed and selected, taking into consideration criteria of heterogeneity. In particular, 43 documents available on institutional websites of the various entities were reviewed and classified into four types: (i) public services, which contain policies and program guidelines; (ii) legal documents, which contain laws, regulations, and legal documents; (iii) reports from public-private institutions, which contain various types of reports and minutes; (iv) documents from private bodies, which include balance sheets, reports, speeches, and other types of documents. Table 1 summarizes the types of documents analyzed according to the four types of institutions indicated above. This information is presented in more detail in Table A1 (see Appendix A).

Table 1. Analyzed documents according to the type of institution.

Type of Institution	Type of Document	No
Public Service	Policy, program documents, reports	12
Legislative	Laws, legal documents	9
Public-private	Reports, minutes	6
Private	Balance sheets, reports, speeches	16

Source: own elaboration.

For the semi-structured interviews, a convenient sample was prepared according to the master criteria of sampling, namely relevant contexts, heterogeneity, and accessibility [33].

The criteria of relevant contexts and heterogeneity led to determine interviewees according to their place of work. On the one hand, public officials from three services linked to the agrarian issue were chosen: the General Water Directorate, the National Irrigation Commission, and the Directorate for Hydraulic Works. On the other hand, a person was chosen who is in charge of legislative monitoring on agricultural and water issues. In addition, two large-scale agricultural producers and two small-scale farmers were chosen. Finally, two social leaders of Movement for the Defense of Water, Land and the Protection of the Environment MODATIMA, a civil organization that has denounced irregularities and abuses by agribusiness companies at the local and national levels, were selected. The criterion of accessibility was applied insofar as there was the possibility of contacting the informants and their willingness to be interviewed.

Most interviews were conducted in 2019 for the purposes of this document. The E5 and E6 interviews, however, were conducted in 2016 and were taken from Roose's doctoral research [34]. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and in accordance with academic standards required for interaction with human subjects, including the use of informed consent. All citations used in this article were translated by the authors.

The sampling criteria indicated led to the consideration of diverse actors related to the research problem, as expressed in Table 2. It should be noted that the limited number of interviews corresponds to the fact that they aim to complement the information collected for the documentary analysis rather than to elaborate an extensive interpretative or discursive analysis of the social representations of the informants. In that sense, the diversity of these interviews allowed a greater context to be given to the analysis as the interviews provided relevant information for the study, which was derived from the environment of each interviewee.

Furthermore, a semi-structured interview guideline was developed. In doing so, the categories developed a priori were taken into consideration in relation to the objective of the study and the conceptual framework used. All the interviewees were asked a group of general questions, linked to the objective of the study and related to their vision of the following areas: (i) the Chilean agro-export model; (ii) the role of the State and public institutions in agriculture; (iii) the characterization of the instruments for promoting agribusiness; (iv) the general characteristics of agricultural entrepreneurship, its actors and networks; (v) the strategies and tools used by agribusiness to expand its business; (vi) the relationship established between agribusiness entrepreneurs and small-scale farmers.

Likewise, in order to obtain specific information related to the context of the interviewees, certain particular aspects were investigated. The interviewees linked to the public service and the legislative sphere were particularly asked about the mechanisms of incidence used by the actors of agribusiness in matters of legal reforms. Large-scale farmers were consulted about their vision of the reforms underway and the support they receive from the State. Finally, small-scale farmers and social leaders were consulted about their vision of State support, the effects of subsidy policies, and their view on the inequalities in the context of such policies.

Table 2. Interview sample.

Background	Interviewee	Code
Public service linked to agricultural issues	Professional of General Water Directorate (Direccion General de Aguas, DGA)	E1
	Professional of National Irrigation Commission (Commision Nacional de Riego, CNR)	E2
	Professional of Directorate for Hydraulic Works (Direccion de Obras Hidraulicas, DOH)	E3
Legislative	Legislative advisor on water and irrigation	E4
Large-scale agriculture	Large-scale farmer	E5
	Large-scale farmer	E6
Small-scale agriculture	Small-scale farmer	E7
	Small-scale farmer	E8
Civil society organization MODATIMA	National leader	E9
	Local leader	E10

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding information analysis techniques, content analysis was carried out. The analysis was done by a process of defining a priori categories based on conceptual criteria, which were uploaded as codes to the qualitative data analysis software Atlas Ti. Subsequently, an open coding was carried out, based on the information from the interviews conducted and the review of the documents indicated. This process resulted in the elaboration of different codes, that were classified into dimensions based on conceptual arguments and into sub-dimensions of code families, which emerged from the coding process itself. This coding is summarized in Table A2 (see Appendix A).

Once this exercise had been carried out, the main categories were extracted to enable the results of the study to be ordered. In all, the analysis showed differing discourses according to the type of interviewee. This allowed for a differentiated understanding of the study phenomenon, according to the context of the interviewee.

4. Results

As indicated in previous sections, this article understands neoliberalism in agriculture from three dimensions: as regulatory designs for capitalist expansion, as spatial fix, and a rationality. The results of the analysis based on these three dimensions are presented below.

4.1. Neoliberalism as Regulation in the Expansion of Agribusiness

The first domain that ensures permanent agro-export expansion corresponds to the regulatory level, which is about regulations and institutional arrangements designed to maintain productivity and growth. The results of the study lead to the conclusion that the current regulatory framework is strengthened through four basic pillars: (i) the State's subsidiary nature in the agro-export activity; (ii) the private ownership of the productive factors: soil and water; (iii) the guarantee of trade opening through the signing of agreements, treaties, and diplomatic relations; (iv) labor flexibilization and precarization.

The last of these points is not elaborated on in this article, since it is an area that has been thoroughly explored in several studies that investigated the model of labor relations, precarization, flexibilization, low wages, the system of subcontracting and seasonal work, the absence of social protection or the weakness of agricultural unionization, among other issues [35–37]. Therefore, this section will address the findings regarding the first three points.

4.1.1. The Subsidiary Role of the State

The subsidiary character of the State has been manifested in the promotion of growth and expansion of fruit business and forestry, be it through the financing of medium and large hydraulic works, irrigation, as well as a consistent network of infrastructure, road networks, and ports for the circulation of products. One of the interviewees for this study, who works for the General Water Directorate, makes this phenomenon clear: "there is a subsidiary vision of the State, absolutely, in the sense of generating infrastructure and the facilities so that agriculture can be developed" (E1). In the same sense, another of the interviewees, who works for the National Irrigation Commission, adds "what makes this policy effective is the subsidiary State promoting this agro-export policy or giving conditions so that the productive dynamics of agribusiness can be developed" (E2). Both statements underline that the agribusiness model is based on economic transfers from the State.

Under this vision of subsidiarity with respect to the agricultural sector, since the 1980s a diverse offer of instruments has been developed to promote agro-export expansion. Specifically, they correspond to the Law on Execution of Irrigation Works by the State (DFL No. 1,123 of 1981), the Law on Concessions (DFL MOP No. 900 of 1996), and the Law on Promotion of Private Investment in Irrigation and Drainage Works (Law 18,450 of 1985) [38]. Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of these three instruments.

Table 3. Comparison of subsidiary instruments facilitating agribusiness expansion.

	Law 18.450 of 1985	**DFL* N° 1.123 of 1981**	**DFL* MOP N° 900 of 1996**
Responsible body	National Irrigation Commission (Comisión Nacional de Riego, CNR)	Ministry of Public Works. Directorate of Hydraulic Works (Ministerio de Obras Públicas. Dirección de Obras Hidráulicas, DOH)	Ministry of Public Works. General Directorate of Concessions (Ministerio de Obras Públicas. Dirección General de Concesiones, DGC)
Purpose	"Increase the irrigation area, safety and efficiency of water resources for irrigation through the construction of irrigation works, medium and small, postulated to Law No. 18.450."	"To ensure the availability of water for irrigation, in quantity and opportunity", in order to "increase the potential agricultural area with high irrigation security".	"To provide, safeguard and improve public infrastructure works and services, within the framework of public-private partnership."
Benefits	Finances medium and minor works through public tenders. The subsidies can be classified according to size into two types: minor works, whose construction cost does not exceed 15,000 UF; and medium works, whose construction cost fluctuates between 15,000 UF and 250,000 UF. * UF: Unidad de Fomento. Equivalent to CLP$28,318 as of January 6, 2020. Its dollar equivalent at the same conversion date is equivalent to USD 37.36 (CLP$758).	Finances (i) large storage works, with projects with a volume of more than 8 million m^3, (ii) small water storage and regulation works (small reservoirs) for small agriculture, outside the financing of Law 18,450. It finances works with a volume between 50 thousand and 5 million m^3; (iii) other types of irrigation works; (iv) irrigation services; (v) technical support in irrigation law.	Covers the development, tendering, construction, and operation of infrastructure and public works projects. For the agricultural sector it is associated with the construction of reservoirs, road networks, improvement of ports and airports. Its principle is based on public-private partnership.
Beneficiaries	Small producers who benefit from the Agricultural Development Institute: financing of up to 90%. Small agricultural entrepreneurs: up to 80%. Medium and large agricultural entrepreneurs: up to 70% of the cost of the work. Water User Organizations: financing up to 80%. Small farmer organizations: up to 70%.	Irrigators organized in water user organizations, large farmers, small farmers.	The country in general (DGC-MOP, 2019)

* Decree Force of law (Decreto Fuerza de ley, DFL) is an exceptional type of law dictated by the president of the republic. Source: own elaboration.

When analyzing the information contained in Table 3, the expansive nature of the two instruments associated with irrigation becomes evident. That is, in a context of growing water crisis in the entire central zone of Chile, both instruments do not aim at ensuring irrigation for the current agricultural area, but rather at expanding it. In this sense, the objectives of both are compatible, because both aim for an increase of the irrigation area as a quantitative indicator of agricultural expansion.

Furthermore, in the case of Law 18.450, there is a tendency to reproduce inequalities between types of producers. According to Tamayo and Carmona [39], despite the large number of farmers and organizations that received subsidies, the main beneficiaries of this law since its creation in 1985 correspond to a select group of large agricultural entrepreneurs, many of whom have been linked to various political sectors. Table 4 summarizes the nine agricultural enterprises that have benefited the most since its creation.

Table 4. Main companies benefited by Law 18,450.

Company	Area	Amount (CLP$)
Viña Concha y Toro	Winery	5% of the total resources delivered by Law 18,450 since 1988
Agroindustrial Siracusa S.A	Olive Oil	400,000,000
Agrícola Ancali	Dairy and livestock	283,000,000
Agrícola Stud El Mirador	Fruit and vegetable	262,000,000
Viña San Pedro-Tarapacá	Winery	242,000,000
Viña Conosur	Winery	209,000,000
Viña Los Vascos	Winery	209,000,000
Inversiones Balzac Ltda.	Avocado	204,000,000
Empresas Altamira	Winery	189,000,000

Source: own elaboration based on Tamayo and Carmona (2019).

In conclusion, the so-called Irrigation Promotion Law (Ley de Fomento al Riego) tends to perpetuate the basic inequalities established by the agrarian counter-reform. This inequality is also perceived in the territories, as made clear by one of the interviewees: "Yes, because the government always helps the rich, it helps the richest, because the rich are supposed to give jobs to the poor and help them, they help them with I don't know how many millions passed to them so that they could buy water and so much more" (E7).

This becomes more evident with the reform to this law, approved in 2013, which sought to increase the amount of funding for irrigation and drainage works that fluctuate between 30,000 UF and 250,000 UF. This modification included works of multipurpose use, in order to extend their function to the production of hydroelectricity, drinking water, and aquifer recharge, among others [38].

A significant aspect of this reform is its promotion by political and business actors with historical links. The reform was encouraged by the government of the time through the Minister of Agriculture, who was also president of the largest agricultural business association in Chile: the National Agricultural Society (Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura, SNA). Furthermore, it was unanimously supported by the Government's parliamentarians at the time and by trade organizations such as the SNA itself [38]. These circumstances may well reflect the strategies used by the dominant sectors of agribusiness in Chile to promote regulations favorable to their expansionary interests.

Although, to date, there has been no evaluation of this reform, a study by the Budget Office came to an interesting conclusion [40]. They identified an absence of a diagnosis of the "market failure" that would justify the intervention of the State through this investment subsidy. In other words, the agency responsible for ensuring the proper use of public resources in Chile questions the justification for this subsidy.

However, beyond analyzing the reforms with the greatest public impact in this area, it is worth mentioning the role played by the business sectors in promoting various initiatives and instruments. For example, the current Minister of Agriculture and agricultural entrepreneur, Antonio Walker, made a suggestion which sought to exempt large hydraulic works—irrigation reservoirs—between 50,000 and 300,000 cubic meters from environmental assessment through the general discussion of the National Budget Law for the year 2020. This strategy was denounced by many social organizations and, finally, taken to the Constitutional Court by opposition parliamentarians, who rejected the indication presented by the government [41].

With respect to the Concessions Law indicated in Table 3, it is worth noting the role that this instrument played in the development of public works and infrastructure in various productive areas, particularly in the agro-export sector. Works that received a higher percentage of expenditure correspond to interurban roads (54%), urban highways and infrastructure for public transportation (31%), airports and public buildings (8%). The concessions system is characterized by placing the public-private partnership at the center, aimed at optimizing State investment and promoting productive development [39].

As a document from the Ministry of Public Works indicates, to date there have been four moments or generations in road project concessions. The second of these, which covered the period 1995-2000, was designed to improve roads of significance for the export sector, "selected for accessibility to ports and to Argentina" [42] (p. 102), whose overall investment exceeded US$100 million.

Infrastructure and construction works are becoming a key factor of the export-based model. In this sense, the agricultural sector is no exception. In Chile, interest groups were formed, such as the Infrastructure Policy Council, a private corporation made up of former authorities from different governments and infrastructure specialists, which promotes public investment and public-private partnerships in this area, or the Chilean Construction Chamber, a trade organization with over 70 years of history, whose purpose is to promote construction, understood as a "lever for development". In this line of subsidy to the private sector, the current government promoted the creation of a corporation called Fondo Infraestructura, aimed at managing national infrastructure projects in an "economically sustainable" way for the State [43].

The examples presented demonstrate the role that the State has assumed in the agricultural sector—and in production in general—whether in promoting irrigation, infrastructure, roads, or in other areas, such as improving access and connectivity to the Internet in rural areas, or promoting innovation or agricultural research. As indicated by one of the interviewees, "in truth, the private sector does not invest any longer in infrastructure; it is the State that invests so that they can produce" (E1).

4.1.2. Defense of Private Property over Productive Factors

As indicated in the first chapter of this paper, the growth of agribusiness is also based on the control of the main production factors that allow its development, namely, soil and water. The agrarian counter-reform was centered on the incorporation of capitalist relations into national agriculture. This implied transforming the vision that was previously held of both land and water. This transformation was undertaken to ensure the right of ownership over both goods, in order to guarantee legal certainty to agrarian investors over these goods.

In the case of land, through Decree Law (DL) 208 of 1973, the entire process of land distribution pushed by the agrarian reform (Law 16,640) was set back. Its main focus was on the re-appropriation of land, reassigning ownership to the former holders, as well as to new actors associated with more modern corporate agriculture. The aforementioned DL 208 prohibited the handing over of land to those who had benefited from the agrarian reform, which laid the foundation for a selective process of exclusion of large masses of small-scale farmers. Likewise, it reincorporated the centrality of private property and was the basis for promoting a modern land market [29]. However, in the words of Bengoa [4], an original accumulation of land was established in the Chilean countryside.

At present, legal certainty over land rights instituted by the agrarian counter-reform continues to be a fundamental element for the deepening of the agribusiness strategy. Likewise, there has been a rise in the value of agricultural land [44], which has made access difficult for small-scale farmers and favored land concentration [45].

In the case of water, however, a new Water Code was drawn up and promulgated in 1981 which designated water as an economic good. It also separated ownership of water rights from ownership of land, aiming to create a water rights market independent of the agricultural sector [46,47]. As one of the interviewed small-scale farmers indicates: "because at the time of the agrarian reform they [small-scale farmers] were given their rights, they were given land and water rights, that is why in 1981, as a result of the dictatorship, they changed the use of water, they separated the water from the land, you have water and you have land on one side, or suddenly you can have land and not have water" (E8).

In addition, the Political Constitution of 1980 gave water rights the status of property rights. This is stated in the last paragraph of the article related to property rights: the rights of individuals over water, recognized or constituted in accordance with the law, shall grant their owners ownership over them [48].

In this way, the Chilean water model became the most liberal on an international level, and it was unprecedented in the establishment of water rights as property and designing a water market in accordance with neoclassical theory [7,11,39,47]. This laid the groundwork for the emergence of dozens of conflicts over water in Chile, as well as disputes over inequalities of access: "access to water is in a direct relationship to the economic capacity of the farmer" [39].

That said, different business sectors have strongly promoted strategies to defend the model of privatization of water rights in Chile. In effect, the proposal for the reform of the Water Code by the second administration of Michelle Bachelet, in 2014 (Bulletin 7543-12), which, among other modifications, sought to change the status of free and perpetual water rights to temporary concessions, was blocked by the main agricultural unions of the country. Through diverse mechanisms they impeded the possibility of any legislative change in the matter of water.

In more specific terms, the main corporate lobbying bodies were the National Agricultural Society (SNA) and the Chilean Confederation of Canal Operators (Conferederación de Canalistas de Chile, CONCA). In conjunction with unions from other sectors, such as the Mining Council (Consejo Minero) or the Association of Electricity Generators (Asociacion de Generadoras Eléctricas), they promoted a strategy of lobbying, pressure, and dissemination against the reform, which gradually allowed these sectors to gain ground.

Through this strategy, they achieved very significant achievements, such as the fact that the reform was not retroactive, but only applied to water rights that had not yet been registered (equivalent to less than 10% of available water). As one of the interviewees indicated, "their role is very powerful and their pressures are constant and on all issues, not only in agriculture, but also in hydroelectric power, also in the forestry sector, as well as other issues that the DGA deals with, is powerful, as is the lobby and its economic weight" (E1).

As indicated in an article by Arellano [49] in the CIPER newspaper, between 2014 and 2017, representatives of the agricultural, mining, and hydroelectric sectors held more than 60 lobbying hearings with ministers, government authorities, and parliamentarians to install their complaints about the reform. The main sector that has prevented transformations to the Water Code is the agricultural sector, which has been highlighted in various media, such as CIPER: "The crusade of the business world has been led by the agricultural sector, which holds more than 70% of the water rights at the national level. Their most visible faces have been Patricio Crespo Ureta, who until April of this year was the president of the National Society of Agriculture (SNA)—an entity that brings together more than 50 agricultural associations—and Fernando Peralta Toro, leader of the Confederation of Canal Operators of Chile (Conca), which represents 32 irrigation boards, mainly from the central zone of the country" [49].

As noted, this whole strategy deployed by the main actors in Chilean agribusiness reproduces a fear of change. In this regard, one of the interviewed large-scale farmers put it clearly: "I have a terrible fear of the State assigning rights, because that gives the State a level of power that makes no sense" (E5). As a consequence, this fear translates into a corporate defense of the pillars of the water market and of the existing agro-export model in Chile.

4.1.3. Deepening Trade Openness and Promoting Exports of Agricultural Products

Although trade opening as an economic strategy in Chile comes from the neoliberal restructuring of the late seventies, it was in the mid-nineties that the strategy of signing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as a way to boost the flow of goods with other countries began in earnest. Since 1996, when the FTA with Canada was signed, until today, 29 trade agreements have been signed with 65 countries (SUBREI https://www.subrei.gob.cl/modulo-de-acuerdos-comerciales/), achieving tariff advantages for accessing markets involving more than four billion people [50].

With regard to the relationship between FTAs and agribusiness actors, the position of this sector has been diverse and has altered over time [51,52]. At first, the SNA and other agricultural business organizations were opposed to the signing of the economic agreements with Canada and Mercosur, accusing them of being bad agreements that weakened the country's agricultural sector, benefiting the import of agricultural products (although there were nuances among the agricultural organizations). This generated an important mobilization of the sector in order to pressure the government to modify the terms of these agreements.

This position changed over time and according to the market type of the country with which the FTAs were planned (manufacturing or raw material exporting countries). In addition, a dispute of forces developed within the agricultural organizations, where the sectors linked to the export market (wine and fruit, among others) managed to successfully push their pro-market positions in organizations such as the SNA. Its influence is reflected in the State Policy for Chilean Agriculture 2000–2010 [53]. In that document, the State defined a series of actions to incorporate the agricultural sector in the expansion of the foreign market. Some measures were: (a) creation of a permanent consultation commission with the private sector to incorporate its points of view in trade negotiations; (b) expansion of the Government's diplomatic lobby by expanding agricultural attaché offices in embassies and consulates; (c) expansion and improvement of the operation of the Agricultural Export Promotion Fund (Fondo de Promoción de Exportaciones Agropecuarias, FPEA), so that it would be in synch with the Government's strategy of trade opening, agreed upon with the actors of agribusiness. In the first decade of the 2000s, there was greater pressure on the FTA negotiations from agricultural organizations such as the SNA, which was reflected in the free trade agreements reached with the European Union (2003), India (2007), and Japan (2007).

An important landmark in this trajectory is the signing of the FTA with China in 2006. As it has been stated in several analyses, the greater insertion of China in world trade influenced a reconfiguration of the geopolitical scenario at a global and Latin American level [54–56]. In the case of Latin America, China's expansion led to an increase in exports of raw materials to satisfy the demand of that country. Agribusiness organizations in Chile, such as the SNA, had early identified a key opportunity to expand agricultural business in the Chinese expansion. This led to a strong commitment to the signing of the FTA with China, such as the holding of a SNA board meeting in this Asian country. This was the first time in the history of this organization that it did not meet as a board of directors within Chile [52].

The results of the FTA with China in the agricultural field are significant. Between 2006 and 2018, Chilean food shipments to China multiplied almost 30 times in value, reaching US$2.376 billion [50]. In the case of fresh fruit, the export boom to China was even more explosive, rising from US$13 million of exported fruit in 2006 to US$1.376 billion in 2018. With China taking a leading role in economic relations for agribusiness, the government raised political advocacy efforts to deepen relations with that country as well. An outstanding example of this is that the current Chilean ambassador to China is Luis Schmidt Montes, who was already president of the SNA and is also president of the Fruit

Producers' Federation (FEDEFRUTA). This "export leap" led to the fact that in 2018, for the first time in history, Asia became the largest destination for Chilean fresh fruit exports, with a 35% share, relegating North America to second place with 32%, and then Europe (20%) and Latin America (11%) [57].

In short, the FTAs consolidated the agro-export emphasis on agriculture, especially the treaties with Asian countries, the European Union, and the United States. This opinion is shared by some of the public sector actors interviewed (E1, E2). In the words of the institutions themselves, this is an essential axis for Chilean agriculture, inasmuch as it "allows for the preferential opening of other markets (before Chile's competitors do so), the assurance of access for our exports, the elimination of trade restrictions, the protection of investments abroad, and the development of exports with greater incorporated technology" [53]. As the current Minister of Agriculture has pointed out, all this is opening doors, opening markets for Chilean agriculture. Chile does not have a domestic market, it does not have a local market, it has the world as its big market [58].

4.2. Spatial Fix

Following our analysis, we operationalized spatial fix, analyzing the geographical expansions led by capital interest in the agriculture sector. For that reason, we researched the main infrastructure projects executed by the State that are related to the exporting agriculture sector, such as improvement of roads and ports and construction of wells and water reservoirs (specifically projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of PublicWorks). Our results are that two central categories of spatial fix support the growth of agribusiness export in Chile: i) logistical infrastructure for product circulation, and ii) water infrastructure for irrigation. One interviewee working at the States department for Hydraulic Works confirmed this observation: "the irrigation law is always taken care of (. . .) but there are also a lot of other constructions generated around agriculture. . . when roads are improved or when complete highways are improved in order to reach the ports" (E1). Background on these two pillars is given below.

4.2.1. Logistical Infrastructure for the Circulation of Goods

As stated in the previous Section 4.1.1, the works that represent a greater percentage of expenditure correspond to interurban roads related to agribusiness. This is because of the need to improve the movement of goods to the ports. The link between interurban roads and port infrastructure is central to the agenda of major transport infrastructure projects [59]. To analyze this link between agribusiness and logistics infrastructure, we reviewed Chile's projects of the recently ended Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana, IIRSA). The IIRSA project, through an alliance of the region's states focusing on key infrastructure proposals, sought to facilitate the export of commodities to the emerging political-economic powers of the Asia-Pacific region, particularly China. When reviewing the national project portfolio of this initiative, we found the following projects linked to agriculture on the Mercosur-Chile axis. This axis consists of a corridor from southern Brazil, through Uruguay and Argentina to the central macro zone of Chile (the area where agribusiness exports are concentrated in Chile, cf. Table 5):

Table 5. National projects of the Mercosur-Chile axis linked to export agriculture.

Project Name	Amount in USD
International Route CH-60 (Valparaíso–Los Andes sector)	447,000,000
Improvements to the road access to the port of Valparaiso	105,000,000
Fruit route: San Antonio–San Fernando	600,000,000
San Antonio Port Improvements	370,000,000
Valparaiso Port Expansion	560,000,000
Total investment	**1,147,000,000**

Source: own elaboration based on data from the portal cosiplan.org.

It is noteworthy that of the total investment in national projects in the portfolio of the Mercosur-Chile axis (US$3.921 billion), projects linked to agriculture for export (Table 4) account for 29% (US$1.147 billion). The project with the highest investment is precisely the improvement of the main road linking the fruit exports of the metropolitan regions, O'Higgins and Maule, with the port of San Antonio. This is the main port through which these products are exported. Because of its leading role in agricultural activity, this road is known as the "fruit route".

4.2.2. Water Infrastructure for Irrigation: Wells, Reservoirs, and Transfers

The most common spatial fix for export agriculture has been the increase in irrigation infrastructure. The construction of irrigation infrastructure is a historically significant practice in Chile's Central Valley, dating back to the colonial period. The design of irrigation systems at that time focused on the importance of "putting water on the land" as a way to strengthen private land ownership in the Central Valley in a more effective and substantive way [60]. The use of technical intervention in river flows so as to encourage agricultural production enabled the consolidation of the hacienda system. Those haciendas (big farms) established a power structure headed by the bosses ("señores") through the domination of land and water in central Chile [60].

At present, under neoliberal agricultural policies, the increase of the surface cultivated for export food has been enabled by the irrigation works. This is because intensive agricultural activities such as fruit growing mostly require greater investment in irrigation.

Considering the information collected on technologically-enhanced irrigation since the last Agricultural Census of 2007 to the year 2018, an increase of 88.25% in the technified surface has been registered (measured in hectares) [40]. In addition, the same government report states that the regions where irrigation infrastructure increased the most, namely Bio-Bio and Araucanía, also registered the greatest increase of surface cultivated for fruit export [40].

In the same way, the increase in the area cultivated with fruit trees that we mentioned at the beginning of the article (from 89,488 ha in 1975, to 315,375 ha in 2016), has been accompanied by an expansion of technologically-enhanced irrigation capacity and an increase in the surface area of reservoirs. In so doing, the increase in investment in irrigation works was presented as one of the State's great solutions to the water problem for private agricultural actors. The interviews conducted with large farmers reflected this perception of water infrastructure: "the solution is major irrigation works that must be undertaken by the state with a real willingness to solve the problem of drought (. . .) whether it is a reservoir or bringing water from other rivers. I don't know, but there is a lack of irrigation works" (E6).

1. Concessional Reservoirs

Currently, the compulsion to build reservoirs is reviving under neoliberal readjustments. Unlike the so-called "Keynesian hydro modernity" of the mid-20th century, which was strongly financed

by the public and international multilateral organizations in the countries of the Global South [61], this new phase is based on private participation throughout the process of building and managing the reservoirs. The second Bachelet administration and the second Piñera administration both decided to implement the system of franchises to private companies in order to accelerate the construction of reservoirs in the country. Whilst this form of construction began with the "El Bato" reservoir (the first reservoir built under franchise in the world, inaugurated in 2012), since 2016 there has been a boost to the franchise systems in this sector [62]. Following this system, the State opens a tender for a private company to finance part of the work and build the reservoir. To recover its investment, the company is granted the operation of the reservoir for a certain number of years previously agreed upon and charges users for the provision of water. This payment is supposedly not a charge for the water itself [63].

In this way, the Piñera government announced a portfolio of 26 priority reservoir projects for US$6 billion in 2019. According to the government itself, these projects would guarantee 285,000 hectares of irrigation and incorporate 120,000 new hectares of irrigation [58].

2. Inter-basin transfer works

In addition to increasing resources and accelerating the construction of water infrastructure, one of the major long-term strategies proposed by agribusiness actors is the construction of inter-basin transfer mega-projects. Among the various proposals, there are two projects of this type that stand out for their level of pre-design progress and for the support that business sectors give to these projects.

The first project is called Aquatacama, owned by French investors who formed the company Via Marina. This plan consists of a 1350 km underwater pipeline from the mouth of the Bio-Bio River to the city of Copiapo (Atacama region). This pipeline would transport water from the south to north of the country and would cost more than US$ 8 billion. It is defined as a multipurpose transfer project aimed mainly at the provision of mining, agriculture, and drinking water in the north of the country. The project was submitted to the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) in December 2018 to be declared of public interest, which would allow it to continue moving forward with state support.

The second project is called "Carretera Hídrica" (Water Highway) and promoted by the "Reguemos Chile" Corporation. It consists of a large irrigation channel that would transfer water from the Alto Bio-Bio in the Biobío region (south of the country) to Huasco, in the Atacama region, covering a total of approximately 3900 km of channel. The aim of the project is to make water available to irrigate a million new hectares in seven regions of the country. This expansion of the irrigated area would allow "that the dry lands can be transformed into sustainable agriculture, which by making them productive and cultivable (. . .) would double the current production of fruits, vineyards, and vegetables for internal consumption and export" [64] (p. 7). The project's promoters estimate that it would allow agricultural exports to increase from 35 to 64 million dollars a year. Regarding the resources for this work, Reguemos Chile estimates that an investment of between 25 and 30 billion dollars is required for the five sections of the project. These would further involve public-private financing according to the franchise model explained earlier [64]. The Water Road project was submitted to the Ministry of Public Works in August 2019 to await its declaration of public interest. Among both initiatives, this project generates most adhesion within the actors of the agribusiness sector in Chile. There is even a direct connection with this sector, as Juan Sutil, the president of the Reguemos Chile Corporation, also serves as second vice president of the National Agricultural Society.

Although the proposal of large inter-basin transfer works in Chile is not new (historical precedents show that these proposals have arisen since the 1960s [65]), the novelty is that in the last decade these projects have advanced rapidly in their quest to materialize and have increasingly gained visibility on the public agenda in the face of the water crisis affecting the country. As one of the interviewees stated, these projects are "the latest great invention of the large agricultural associations to force the State to finance a mega hydraulic project so that they have water to continue exporting more and more, but their effects can be enormous" (E9).

The connection of these projects with the agricultural and construction business sectors is a relevant aspect that also appeared in the interviews conducted. For example, one subject affirmed that the water transfers are sold as initiatives "to be able to deliver water to agriculture, however behind it hides a big business of the Chilean chamber of construction, which is led by this guy Sutil who is also a farmer" (E1). In this way, the spatial fix of this type of project not only allows its materialization to continue the process of capital accumulation, but the construction process itself makes it possible to rotate available capital that increases the profits of companies in the construction sector.

4.3. Neoliberal Rationality in Agriculture

The neoliberal rationality was operationalized through analyzing documents related to the actors of agribusiness. This process allowed the identification of two discursive logics of neoliberal rationality. These logics manifest themselves not only in concrete public policies, but also in the configuration of a business raison d'être that tends to be transferred from large agricultural enterprises to medium and small producers. They can be read in two opposite ways. On the one hand, an affirmation narrative is applied that establishes the idea of projection, progress, and modernization of Chilean agriculture as an eminently positive factor. On the other hand, a discourse of negation is revealed which implies a rejection of measures, policies, or stories that attempt to contradict the interest of agribusiness.

4.3.1. Chilean Food Power as an Expression of the Affirmative Narrative

A clear expression of the first direction can be found in the narrative of transforming Chile into an "agro-food and forestry powerhouse". Since the early 2000s, agribusiness, supported by the public sector, began to push this slogan, which advocated the importance of the agricultural sector in the national economy and its projection on to the international market. To this end, in 2004 the government of the time, together with the food industry, formed a public-private council called "Chile Potencia Alimentaria", whose objective was to increase agricultural exports from US$8 billion to US$17 billion in ten years [66]. One of its reports reads: "the goal to achieve was defined as being among the top ten food-exporting countries in the next ten years, with exports in the order of 15 to 20 billion dollars/year" [67]. An ambitious goal, which for one of the interviewees represents the vision that has permeated the State for two decades: "Unfortunately, since the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000, this vision of Chile as a food power has prevailed, and this also demonstrates the approach that Chile and the State give to agriculture: to be a power, to be equal to Argentina in terms of tons of wheat production" (E1).

In concrete terms, this narrative, spread by the associations in the sector, was translated into a predominantly economic vision that implied a sustained increase in exports to reach a rank comparable to the world's leading exporters. In 2012, almost a decade after this slogan was instated, the presidential message for the reform of the irrigation law maintained the discourse: one of the objectives of our government is to transform Chile into an agro-food power and place it among the ten most important countries in the world in terms of food exports [38].

Interestingly, this story was accompanied by a series of measures designed to expand the cultivated area: Chile has a great availability of soils suitable for agriculture, which when properly used could double the area currently being exploited [38]. This phenomenon, in turn, sets up national competition for the position of mining as a sector that provides the main national economic support [68].

At present, the discourse of food power has gained new strength, given the promotion of projects such as the aforementioned Water Road, which seeks to expand the country's agricultural area. As one of its promoters indicates: "dry lands can be transformed into sustainable agriculture, which by making them productive and cultivable, will allow Chile to become a real agro-food power by incorporating more than 1 million hectares" [64].

As evidenced in the cited fragments, the positive connotation given to the slogan allows for the construction of an image that generates public support and state promotion.

4.3.2. Campaign against Water Code Reform as an Example of the Negative Narrative

The reverse side of the narrative is shown in the participation of the main actors of agribusiness to stop the aforementioned reform to the Water Code. Along these lines, the main agrarian associations used multiple strategies, such as lobbying the parliament, accompanied by dissemination campaigns to raise fear using various tools, be it radio capsules, posters on the main interurban and rural roads of the country, internet advertising, inserts in regional and national newspapers, or meetings with small farmers, among others. As one of the interviewees described it, the "counteroffensive they launched when the Bachelet government was promoting the water code reform (. . .) began to finance at a national level: the roads, the 5 South, the 5 North, signs that said 'no to the reform' with a strong communicational counteroffensive, or radio or television spots. They are paying for television programs on CNN" (E2).

Another interviewee provided a more specific view, pointing out that the advocacy was carried out in two ways: "firstly, they sought to subdue fear through newspaper inserts, radio advertisements and signs, and that was advocacy upwards, towards the State or towards power, even directly with the ministers of agriculture; and the other advocacy was with the small farmers, who called for the reform to be expropriated of their water rights, which will take away their water rights, so that, in essence, it is to subdue fear" (E4).

Specifically, their campaigns sought to discredit the reform, calling it "expropriation" and undermining the "legal certainty" of private water ownership [64,69,70]. This was clearly expressed in the speech given at the last six annual meetings of agricultural entrepreneurs (ENAGRO), by the last two presidents of the National Agricultural Society [69,70]. In the 2019 meeting, the current president stated: "We are concerned that, through a simple majority law, the right to property enshrined in the Constitution may be modified. If it is approved as it stands, it will end the legitimate water rights of the farmers, generating serious damage to their property" [69].

Another strong example of this communication offensive is reflected in the insert published by the main business associations of the country, in a national newspaper, with a threatening tone: "none of its articles should affect property rights because of the serious consequences that this would mean for legal certainty and the political and economic institutionality of the country" [71].

In particular, it is worth noting the intention to transfer conservative ideas to small and medium farmers in order to create an environment favorable to the opposition to the reform. As can be read in the chronicle of one of the meetings organized by the Confederation of Canal Operators of Chile with small farmers, the objective of the massive meeting was to inform irrigators and farmers about the implications of the Reform, such as the power that would be given to State institutions, weakening water users' organizations and the importance of having all water rights registered [72].

As pointed out by one of the professionals interviewed, agricultural entrepreneurs "installed a distorted vision of reality, arguing, by different means, that this was a threat to development, to agriculture, both to small and large farmers" (E3).

However, the systematic effort to block any attempt at change by elaborating a narrative of fear and discredit with the launching of a disinformation campaign seems to have become the main strategy for preventing changes that might affect the interests of agriculture. Thus, this strategy does not end with preventing reforms or imposing a particular discourse. Above all, it goes beyond the spreading of a neoliberal rationality on the economic field, but further, is imposing a conservative ideology on the value field. As one interviewee pointed out: "Without a doubt the strongest of the associations is the SNA, which plays a fundamental role in passing on conservative values in society" (E10).

In fact, reviewing the mechanisms for disseminating ideas of the SNA, it is possible to identify at least four types: (i) schools and the educational corporation "SNA Educa"; (ii) "Radio Agricultura", which has national coverage; (iii) electronic media, such as the magazine "El Campesino" and "El Vocero Agrícola"; (iv) television programs, such as "Agenda Agrícola" on CNN Chile.

In addition to the above, there are systematic strategies for transmitting ideas to their associated groups, but also to small farmers. In that way they generate an image of agricultural unity and

homogeneity, which tends to blur the boundaries between the different types of farmers and their diverse conditions and realities. This crossover is also expressed by via the means of rural traditions, such as the traditional rodeo: "all [has been done] to stop the reform. And they filled half-moons [Chilean term for rodeo stadium] trying to impose fear" (E3).

5. Discussion

From the analysis of the three dimensions of neoliberalization (regulatory, spatial fix, and neoliberal rationality), it can be seen that these dimensions had a divergent trajectory in their contribution to the agribusiness model. In the case of the regulatory dimension, the trajectory has been mostly continuous since the 1980s. In that sense, it is not so much a redesign of strategies, but rather a deepening of the regulatory benefits that govern at both national and international levels (especially free trade agreements).

In the case of the regulatory dimension, a continuous trajectory has been followed since the 1980s, associated with an economic and political program that radicalizes the essential precepts of classical liberal ideology, expanding its scope into other spheres of social life [18,19]. As presented in the results, the State plays a fundamental role in this expansion. The neoliberal maxim commonly upholds the restriction of the State's role in regulatory terms. In the case of Chile, however, it is worth adding that the neoliberal re-regulation is strongly associated with the State's promotion of export development, as mentioned in the theoretical section [19]. As outlined in the results, this translates into a strong State presence in the economy, not through protectionist formulas, but through regulations that allow a permanent transfer of resources and an assurance of legal certainty regarding private property [14,25], as well as a key role in deepening and expanding trade. This transfer of resources is associated with the subsidiary conception of Chilean neoliberalism. That conception was incorporated into the political constitution and the legal framework of Chile and, by this, translated into a neoliberal mechanism [73].

It is well-known that neoliberal regulations for the expansion of agribusiness have been present during the last forty years, since the implementation of the agrarian counter-reform. The novelty of the analysis presented here is in unraveling how these regulations were accompanied by concentrated and sustained action on the part of the big business community through its different association structures, resulting in the capture of the state by the private sector [74].

With this, it is argued that agrarian neoliberalism is not deepened by a passive expansion of capitalist relations. Rather, it is through a committed permanent agenda of the modern sector of agrarian capitalism, which has made possible its expansion along with the accommodation of regulations in three directions: first, by maintaining the legislation that has been favorable to this sector since the period of military dictatorship until the present; second, by blocking any attempt at reforming these regulatory instruments; and finally, by promoting laws, instruments, and agendas that allow for the deepening of the sectors' economic power. These conclusions on the actions of the agrarian entrepreneurial class find agreement with Avendaño [51] (p. 60), who argues that the relationship of bodies such as the SNA with both the executive arm and the parliament tends to be key in the success of their action, which even goes so far as to lead and define agrarian policy.

In sum, the processes of deregulation and re-regulation instigated by agrarian neoliberalization [19,25] have triumphed ever since its imposition in the civic-military dictatorship. Its forms have varied, tending towards and allowing for the expansion of the processes of accumulation by dispossession [4,18].

A major redesign of strategies can be observed in the dimension of spatial fix and the dimension of rationality. In the case of the spatial fix dimension, it is not only a question of budget increases for road, port, and water infrastructure projects. The ongoing decrease in water availability in the north, center, and center-south of the country have led to more concrete discussions of proposals that have an unprecedented impact on the national landscape. Inter-basin transfer projects would alter the hydro-social cycle in the different regions, producing a new scale in the way water is managed and the institutions that regulate it. Moreover, it involves an unprecedented transformation of the

ecosystems that co-inhabit the territories of the country to be intervened in. Although the study on the process of materialization of this type of project is incipient in Chile, authors such as Swyngedouw [75] have developed analyses of the socio-ecological implications of this type of project and its link with large-scale agriculture in other countries of the world. Particularly in the case of Latin America, our analysis is linked to studies that have shown the relationship between the expansion of agribusiness and water infrastructure projects that are unprecedented in the region, such as the São Francisco River transposition project in Brazil [76] or the Olmos River transfer project in Peru [77].

Linking these results to Harvey's reflection on the spatial fix [18], the increase of the production form of agribusiness in Chile, based on the intensified use of agrochemicals, soil, and water to supply a growing external market of food, generates pressure on the existing infrastructure, which is not able to cope with the increase in the production of agricultural exports. This is a limitation caused by the dynamics of the agribusiness model itself, in addition to the climatic changes currently under way. The most important way to resolve this contradiction is to make a qualitative leap in the type of infrastructure projects that are fundamentally transforming the country's space.

Finally, the introduction of a neoliberal rationality in the agriculture sector seems to form the backdrop of the theoretical perspectives in which the neoliberalization of agriculture was addressed in this article. The notion of rationalization initially defended by Foucault [78] and taken up again by Laval and Dardot [14] tends to question those readings which understand neoliberalism only in terms of economic policies or as ideology. As observed in the results, the neoliberal rationality is associated with the discourses that manage to not only permeate the forms of production in agriculture, but, above all, as a way of conceiving agriculture and rurality in terms of the reproduction of social life that generate certain particular types of subjectivities. As Laval and Dardot pointed out [14], neoliberalism tends to be a totalizing vision, in the sense of "integrating all the dimensions of human existence" (p. 15). This idea of totality was used by Foucault under the concept of "governmentality", who, when analyzing this emergent neoliberalism, associated its governmental action not only beyond the institutional plane, but as an activity oriented to direct the conduct of people. That is, to govern them [78].

In the agrarian case, the binary narrative of the positive and the negative seems to be the principle that enables the subjectivation of the neoliberal mode. In fact, the narrative "Food Power" corresponds to what Laval and Dardot [14] call the principle of "competitiveness". By establishing itself as the meta-purpose of the entire agricultural sector, for 30 years it allowed the imposition of a logic of competition in which only the productive is acceptable. This contributes to the determination to become a powerful (global) force, while those areas that are non-competitive in nature, such as small-scale agriculture, tend to be subjected to increasing pressure to incorporate market logic into their productive dynamics.

In the opposite sense, the logic of negation rejects whatever is contrary to this business rationale. It rejects not only "unproductive" forms of agriculture, but also those discourses that go against the principles of neoliberal agriculture. A concrete example of this is the dismissive discourse used by big business in the context of the water code reform which defines reform as an obstacle to the development of all agriculture.

Consequently, the neoliberal rationality in agriculture has enabled the deepening of capitalist relations. In other words, the binary narrative installed in agriculture, with slogans such as "Chile: an agro-food power", or "the reform of the water code is expropriatory", tends to be the metaphor for taking capitalist relations to all corners of the rural regions [25].

6. Conclusions

This article discussed the controversial nature of the trajectory the consolidation of the agribusiness model in Chile has taken. Our analysis showed that in the face of the difficulties caused by the dominant agricultural model itself, the current strategies of the State and the corporations seek to expand the export agribusiness. Efforts to rethink a more diverse agricultural model which can guarantee principles

such as food sovereignty and/or the concern for the reproduction of the hydro-social cycle, however, were not to be found.

On the contrary, our analysis confirmed that the strategies of agrarian neoliberalism in Chile continue unabated, disregarding the various studies showing the negative impacts and the deepening of inequalities in the rural regions. In particular, the loss of peasant livelihoods is reinforced by this type of agribusiness strategy, leading to a process of proletarianization with rural workers and small farmers conspicuously migrating to the city (a mass movement of people that in other Latin American countries has been called "slow displacement", [79]).

This paper considered the process of neoliberalization in a broad sense, gathering different interpretations and readings that various authors have assigned to this phenomenon. That is, neoliberalism understood as processes of deregulation and re-regulation under a particular ideological mode of production, neoliberalization as a spatial-temporal expansion, and as a rationality that builds a concrete mode of social relations. This understanding of neoliberalization in these three dimensions allowed for a more complex approach to the relationship between neoliberalism and agribusiness, as opposed to other studies, which tended to focus on one of these areas separately.

In this sense, the methodology applied revealed how these three ways of understanding the phenomenon of agrarian neoliberalization are expressed and articulated. For future research, it seems important to investigate how they are expressed in specific territories. Therefore, expanding our understanding through case studies is a thought-provoking possibility worthy of further exploration. In addition, it might be relevant to use a range of other qualitative and quantitative research techniques, which would enable broadening of the scope of research with sample designs of greater scope and robustness. As with the regulatory dimension, it would be interesting to follow through more extensively on its diverse manifestations and, in so doing, achieve greater confirmation of the importance of financing and state benefits to agribusiness, as well as other types of regulations that enabled its consolidation. Regarding spatial fix, the capacity to implement new strategies associated with large water infrastructure projects (especially inter-basin transfers) is still unclear. Infrastructure projects of this type imply an increasing development of the process of collection, treatment, distribution, and supply of water for productive purposes. This process raises production costs, insofar as private actors will have to pay to receive this water (partially through monetary payments, because another significant part will be financed by the State). All these increased costs may present difficulties for its operation in the long term. However, the difficulties for its realization are not only due to the prodigious use of resources that these initiatives involve. Another factor is the fierce opposition that these projects have generated within the communities of the Bio-Bio region from where the water is intended to be obtained. Academics and environmental groups have stated their rejection of this type of project due to its high socio-ecological impacts. The neoliberal rationality, meanwhile, impacts the social relations in Chilean agriculture beyond the system of production anchoring the principles of competition and mercantile dynamics. Further research in order to examine in depth the incorporation of this neoliberal rationality within the different planes of agricultural life would be highly useful.

To summarize, although this article was written to contribute to a disciplinary field that has been previously studied from various angles, it was our intention to open up a line of research that can be utilized to further deepen the analysis of agrarian neoliberalism in Chile today. However, this approach is not restricted to the Chilean context. Rather, we consider that this analysis proposal can be applied to the study of the relationship between neoliberalization and agribusiness in different regions of the world, allowing a multidimensional approach to this issue.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Documents analyzed according to type and name of institution.

Type of Institution	Name of Institution	Type of Document
Public Service	Directorate for Hydraulic Works/Dirección de Obras Hidráulicas	Formulario A-1. Dipres, 2019
		Programa anual de inversiones. 2019
		Evaluación de Programas Gubernamentales Programa Grandes Obras de Riego. DIPRES, 2018.
	National Irrigation Commission/Comisión Nacional de Riego	Formulario A-1. Dipres, 2019
		BGI CNR. Dipres, 2018
		Evaluación de Programas Gubernamentales. Programa de Fomento al Riego y Drenaje. DIPRES, 2019.
	General Water Directorate/Dirección General de Aguas	Formulario A-1. Dipres, 2019
	Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies/Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias	Formulario A-1. Dipres, 2019
		Una Política de Estado para la agricultura chilena 2000–2010.
		Inserción de la agricultura chilena en mercados internacionales. Año 2015
	Subsecretariat for International Economic Relations (formerly DIRECON)./Subsecretaría de Relaciones Económicas Internacionales (ex DIRECON).	Comercio exterior chileno. 2019
		Liderazgo de Chile en las exportaciones mundiales 2018.
Legislative	National Congress/Congreso Nacional	Ley 18.450 de 1985 Aprueba normas para el fomento de la inversión privada en obras de riego y drenaje.
		Decreto Fuerza de Ley 1123 de 1981. Establece normas sobre ejecución de obras de riego por el Estado
		Reglamenta procedimiento para aplicación del DFL 1123/81, sobre ejecución de obras de riego por el Estado
		Decreto Ley 208 de 1973 que modifica la ley 16.640 de Reforma Agraria
		Decreto Ley 900 de 1996, Ley de Concesiones de Obras Públicas
		Decreto 98 del Ministerio de Agricultura de 2011. Aprueba Reglamento de la Ley 18.450 de fomento a la inversión privada en obras de riego y drenaje.
		Decreto Fuerza Ley 1122 de 1981 Fija el texto Código de Aguas
		Principales contenidos y alcances de la Ley N° 18.450
		Historia de la Ley 20.705 Modifica ley N° 18.450, con el fin de fomentar la inversión privada en obras de riego o drenaje, comprendidas en proyectos integrales y de uso múltiple, cuyo costo supere las 30.000 unidades de fomento.
Public - Private	Agrifood Export Council/Consejo Exportador Agroalimentario	Actas del Consejo Nº 1, Nº 2, Nº3, Nº4, Nº 5, Nº 6.
	Chile Food Power Council/Consejo Chile Potencia Alimentaria	Documento base para la elaboración de una agenda pro competitividad. 2006

Table A1. *Cont.*

Type of Institution	Name of Institution	Type of Document
Private	National Agricultural Society/Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura	Inserto periódico El Mercurio: Alerta, Reforma al código de aguas amenaza certeza jurídica y bienestar de la sociedad y las personas
		Discursos Presidente SNA en ENAGRO 2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019
	Fruit Exporters Federation/Federación de Exportadores de Fruta	Association of Fruit Exporters from Chile (ASOEX) Informa Nº 71. Octubre 2019
		ASOEX Informa Nº 70. Abril 2019
		ASOEX Informa Nº 69. Enero 2019
		Por primera vez las cerezas y los vinos chilenos se unen para promover su consumo en China
		Discurso del Señor Ronald Bown Fernández Presidente de la Asociación de Exportadores de Frutas de Chile A.G. con motivo de la celebración de los 80 años de la fundación de la institución, 2015.
	Confederation of Canal Operators of Chile/Confederación de Canalistas de Chile	Informativo semanal 13/10/2017. Reforma al código de aguas Boletín 7543-12
		El respeto al derecho de aprovechamiento de aguas. 2013
		Masivo encuentro de usuarios en San Clemente
	Reguemos Chile Corporation/Corporación Reguemos Chile	Memoria Corporación Reguemos Chile 2015-2018

Table A2. Coding scheme.

Dimension Sub-dimension Code	Dimension Sub-dimension Code	Dimension Sub-dimension Code
Regulation	Subsidiary role	Private irrigation and drainage
		Irrigation works
		Infrastructure concessions
	Labour flexibility	Seasonal work
		Low wages
		Weak social security
		Absence of unionization
	Private property	Water
		Land
	Trade opening	Trade agreements
		Commercial diplomacy
Spatial fix	Logistics infrastructure	Interurban roads
		Port infrastructure
	Water infrastructure	Water reservoirs
		Water road
	Territorial expansion	Area expansion
		Hill planting

Table A2. *Cont.*

Dimension Sub-dimension Code	Dimension Sub-dimension Code	Dimension Sub-dimension Code
Rationality	Affirmative discourse	Agro-food power
		Second sector
		Modern sector
	Negative discourse	Expropriation
		Legal certainty

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