

Public Servant identity at work in Chilean State
bureaucracy: a Lacanian interpretation.

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Abstract

This thesis inquires over the process through which public servants construct an identity during the organisation of bureaucratic work. Using a qualitative approach, this process is observed empirically in the case of the Chilean State, where the implementation of neoliberal policies is commanded by policy-makers. In particular, drawing from a Lacanian theoretical framework, this study analyses the inconsistent fashion in which identification unfolds discursively. On the one hand, public servant subjectivity is viewed as articulating and enacting cohesive self-meanings during the conscious coordination with bureaucratic objects. On the other hand, however, the experience of public servants during the articulation of their identity is seen as driven unconsciously towards achieving excessive amounts of embodied, affective satisfaction or what Lacan calls *jouissance*. Overall, from this standpoint, the construction of identity within the bureaucratic realm is appreciated as a paradoxical and un-determined project, featuring interrupted yet sustained narrations of self and/or distorted yet committed narratives on workplace reality. The main finding of this study is that public servants develop a strong affective attachment to bureaucratic labour while attributing contradictory and inconsistent meanings to their own professional self and to the experience of ‘translating’ policy into bureaucratic work. In short, public servants enjoy their commitment to policy-commanded-bureaucracy, even though and precisely because they cannot articulate why consistently. In some instances experience is narrated as promising in its effectivity yet fragile and hindered, while in others it narrated as self-developing yet at the same time wearing and insufficiently effective. The main contribution of this study is to introduce a gendered, critical understanding of the ethos and vocation sustaining subjectivation and work within public sector bureaucracy, one that needs but at the same time subverts assumptions about the primacy of rational reflexivity in subjective self-experience and about the hegemonization of State administration by neoliberal, entrepreneurial discourses or ‘governmentalities’.

To Andrea Caorsi, my wife and best friend, hoping she will always enjoy rescuing me.

And to Jaime Coloma Andrews and Juan Andrés Pucheu, the only two members of the one school of thought I have belonged to.

Fortunately, in the future their voices will return to interrupt mine.

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Cover picture: “Office in a small city” by Edward Hopper (1953)

We now place ourselves under the auspices of he who sometimes dons the philosopher's garb, and who – ambiguous - is more often to be sought in the comedian's banter, but who is always encountered in the politician's secretive action: the good logician, odious to the world.

JACQUES LACAN

Logical time and the assertion of anticipated certainty

F. VILLEGAS (COMMENTATOR): Look, you are very articulate, but you are following classical ideological lines ... Universities profit so that they can pay for their operation and allow more young people to be part of Higher Education ... Stating that profit should not play a role in education is both ideological and abstract...

C. VALLEJO: Tell me, is there a study proving that profit generates or guarantees quality?

Excerpt of a television interview with Camila Vallejo, 23-year old leader of the Chilean student movement for education and member of the Chilean communist party

All literature, in a certain sense, is political. I mean, first, it's a reflection on politics, and second, it's also a political program. The former alludes to reality—to the nightmare or benevolent dream that we call reality—which ends, in both cases, with death and the obliteration not only of literature, but of time. The latter refers to the small bits and pieces that survive, that persist; and to reason. Although we know, of course, that in the human scale of things, persistence is an illusion and reason is only a fragile railing that keeps us from plunging into the abyss. But don't pay any attention to what I just said. I suppose one writes out of sensitivity, that's all.

ROBERTO BOLAÑO

Interview with Carmen Boullosa for BOMB magazine

Acknowledgements

The true meaning of the work invested into putting a PhD thesis together can only be known retroactively. It is only after the thesis is finished, examined and approved, that the status of its presence on some bookshelf or electronic repository (or an ‘academic conversation’) can be affirmed, by declaring the past meaningful and narrating the trajectory of the writing effort as if it had always followed some kind of linear pathway. Because of this structural necessity – called the ‘division of the subject-researcher’ – the present section can only be written last, when one is standing on what appears to be the end of the road.¹

Sadly, yet inevitably, such retrospective comprehension of ‘progress’ tends to cover the traces of struggle and failure that have been part of a long four-year process, over the course of which dead ends have been encountered repeatedly. Many worlds are forged, lived and combusted during the writing of a PhD, often without purpose. As all candidates know, this is a turmoil that can only be experienced by confronting others. I am referring to all those kind adversaries alongside whom the everydayness of procrastination, data analysis and literature discussion unfolds rather tragically.

Despite of successes, the heart of researching will forever be fuelled by these precious belligerent souls, who strive to delay any hasty pursuit of ‘progress’ so that ideas can be worked out. To honour them as they deserve, I will do my best in the following paragraphs to acknowledge their loving assaults during my PhD years. I sincerely hope this tells history as it was actually made: that both the thesis and the author were manufactured with them, against them and all over them, painfully and relentlessly, day after day, after day, after day, after day. For their support, both symbolic and material, I will be forever grateful. Thanks for keeping me alive.

* * *

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¹ Or is it the beginning?

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Thank you for rescuing the thesis and myself from the ashes.

I love you like that too.

St Albans, Herts.

July 2016

Chapter 1 – On the identity of (neoliberal) bureaucracy

In this chapter, I will set the stage for my inquiry over public servant identification with State bureaucracy; particularly, the kind of identification that takes place when bureaucratic work is organised following the command to implement policy. To accomplish this, I will outline and discuss specific debates in the academic literature on organisation studies, public administration and sociology of work, among other fields. The aim of the chapter is to clarify some of the theories and empirical insights that can and should inform my particular inquiry, and more importantly, to delimit the contribution that my inquiry can make to the study of organisation in general and of public sector organisation in particular. Simply put, this chapter seeks to frame and orientate my effort of research.

Yet, despite of my concern with academic concepts and encompassing debates, I have chosen to frame my research inquiry over public servant identification in an inductive way, firstly considering my own identification, as a Chilean researcher-to-be, with the research effort itself (for a similar effort see Imas, 2005).

This gesture calls into attention the work of Gabriel Salazar, a Chilean historian who has written extensively on the trajectories of social struggle and political conflict in my country. Just like I did, Salazar received doctoral training in the UK, but unlike me, he did it because he had to go into exile, following the *coup d'état* launched by Pinochet's CIA-backed, right-wing *junta* in 1973. It is

precisely from the perspective of that experience, of having lived in and benefited from the industrialized 'first world', and of having been banished from home territory because of his 'subversive' Marxist political views, that Salazar wrote an article called "The State trap", published in 2010 in the Chilean newspaper "La Nacion". This is a piece on the complex trajectory of the Chilean State administration and its constraining of the social and political struggles in the country. His arguments on this article, particularly the section that I quote below, had an impact on my subjectivity and led me to embark on an academic journey whose results are now being read as a thesis. Salazar (2010) explains:

"Because the [Chilean] State conceived in [the Constitution of] 1925 was not a development-oriented one [since the 1940's], diverse 'developmental prostheses' were implanted around the executive branch. Small windows and portholes to govern from the inside out and from the top down. This way ... [the government] became technocratic. And politicians became 'State entrepreneurs' ... But that was not all: the technocratization [of government] based on centralized prostheses accentuated the begging and pleading stance of the street masses. The State was engorging through its small windows, demanding respect, credibility, support and sacrifices. The popular sovereignty, abandoned to its dwelling on the streets, turned into a militant and obedient mass, was left waiting. Expectant. Faithful. ... A great demanding monster emerged then on the streets in the 1960's, roaring at the ('enterprising and socially-beneficial') State, which in its impotence, was only able to keep expanding, truly turning into a technocratically obese and historically castrated monster ... it was inside this State trap that ... Allende attempted to play [his] 'revolutionary' cards, with total respect and absolute loyalty to the Constitution ... And the State trap caught him, strangling

him with all its tentacles. And the rule of Law of 1925 did not suffice. Those on the right plotted ... and broke the law. And there was not industrial development, but instead a record inflation rate. And the People in the street cried for Assembly. But Allende kept trusting, to his last day, in the sacredness of the Law. And in the climax of his honesty, the armed bacteria of the State armour fired upon him ... He was the first heroic victim of the State monster of 1925. The People, who waited in vain, were the second”.

Despite of its length and density, this quote sets a definite stage; namely, the stage of the struggle for social justice and economic equality in the recent history of Chile, a history marked traumatically by the breaking and subsequent suspension or de-legitimation of the rule of Law between 1973 and 1989, while the right-wing military dictatorship lasted and insisted on its violence, and then, as a consequence, by the experimental ‘total overhauling’ of State administration according to the principles of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). Yet, in parallel, the quote sets another stage, one that is related to the evolution of what Salazar (2010) calls the ‘technocratic’ State and its role in mediating the social and political struggle, particularly, the desires of social subjects situated in positions of power. These include, on the one hand, the government; on the other hand, the People, which Salazar sees as progressively assimilated to a mass form that ‘dwells on the street’. One conviction intersects these two stagings: a conviction about the political economy of capitalism in a peripheral, not-fully-industrialized country like Chile. It is the conviction that the State was the only one capable of guaranteeing the socio-political order, even despite of its historically proven incapacity to level the playing field and generate social justice, because of its role as the major, almost exclusive

productive force amidst a dispossessed territory (Harvey, 2014). This is why Salazar deems the State a trap. It is because the State offers unlimited (and engorging) ‘technical’ resources, that is to say, resources for the optimal administration of economic sustainability, that promise to solve social conflicts determined by the economic structure of capitalist exploitation with means that are neither economic nor social, but rather ‘technocratic’ or scientific (Silva, 2009; Springer, 2012; see also Daly, 2006).

Salazar’s critique of the Chilean State (2010) opens a series of questions for the study of State administration, particularly about its fundamental relation with political and economic processes. Is the State a political domain, regarding the ‘rule of law’ and the validation by subject-citizens of the power to govern and regulate the social, a position which can and should be contested as Salazar (2010) points out? Is the State an economic agent proper, in charge of arranging the ‘domestic’ or economic order of society and thus of assuring the provision of livelihoods and opportunities for subjects-citizens? Or is it both?

More importantly, and in a subtle way, it opens a broad questioning about the trust that the State can elicit in ‘critical’ agents concerned with social change, about its own capacity for social transformation, despite of its evidenced shortcomings or ‘impotence’. The figure of Allende in Salazar’s account, the socialist president leading the government overthrown by the *coup d’etat* in 1973, is set to represent this process of gripping. This is not just because Allende aligned his whole ‘revolutionary’ political project with the project of strengthening State administration, but also because Pinochet, the military

lead who overthrew Allende, aligned his own political project, in response to Allende's Marxist Statism, with the project of optimizing State administration according to the socioeconomic principles of neoliberalism as advised by Milton Friedman and his Chicago School (Silva, 2009). This way, Salazar's provocative view foreground the modern status of the State as an overdetermined field, marked by the impossibility to reconcile, solve or master the tensions between the political and the economic, but still widely, if not universally, considered as an absolute necessity for the organisation of society. Either for political reasons (e.g. Constitutional) or economic reasons (e.g. capitalist industrialization) the State seems to have only consolidated its power over the years of post-industrial modernity, a power based on its capacity to rationalize reality, rendering it manageable and administrable, and on its capacity to persuade, 'entrap', discipline or even interpellate subjects on its moral validity and the necessity of its programmes (Lemke 2007).

At this point, once this general viewpoint on the Chilean context has been laid out, it is important to go back to the purpose of understanding public servant identification with the bureaucratic structure of State administration.

Salazar's local insights allow an inductive thematising of this process as a general inquiry over subjectivity and its relation with hegemonic discourses on the 'need for a governmental rationale', particularly in contexts like the Chilean, where technocratic values and practices had been gradually diffusing in political discourse throughout the course of the twentieth century and were totally embraced after the neoliberally-inspired, full technocratic re-vamping

of the State (Silva, 2009; Imas, 2005). The question is: how to understand the production of subjectivity as aligned with the need for values, technologies and practices of government? (Gordon, 1991) In other words, how to understand the experience of self, amidst social, economic and political conditions that are discursively structured under the premise of being necessarily administrable? (du Gay, Salaman & Rees, 1996) More specifically, how does the subject make sense of his/her position in a world where social processes are seen as mediated bureaucratically in a potentially optimal way? (Binkley, 2011; Ball, 2003)

Posing these questions is fundamental to gain an understanding of the link between public servants and bureaucracy. This is because they signal the contemporary hegemony of administration and management as a legitimate way of (prescribing) life, which subjects have come to embrace as part of their own intelligibility. Crucially, this represents a hegemonization that stems from yet transcends the disciplinary authority exerted by the sovereignty of the State (McKinlay, Carter & Pezet, 2012: 5; Lemke, 2007; Springer, 2012). Following McKinlay, Carter & Pezet (2012), it is actually a non-hegemonizable one, which renders the administration of government as a multifaceted exertion of power, semiotic/representational but also practical, technological and mundane; an insidious rather than a disciplinarian one, which is perhaps underestimated by Salazar, who sees the 'entrapment' of the subject by the State's technocracy when it is really about the understanding of the subject's own self in rational, calculable, administrable terms, in other words, about the subject's

technocratic 'government' of his/her self, the 'conduct of his conduct' (Miller & Rose, 1990).

As hinted above, this approach carries the argument to the Foucauldian field, specifically to the field delimited by the notion of governmentality (Lemke, 2001).

Engaging with Foucault's ideas implies initially assuming his general theory of discursivity, which regards the definition of subjective positions through the stabilization of recurrent meanings through the use of language, not just in a semiotic way but also practically. Subjectivity in this sense designates both the origination of discursivity but also its effect, thus becoming a term for an extended social process through which the meanings of shared realities are co-constructed, enacted, spoken about and insisted upon, while also resisted and re-constructed (Howarth, 2000). From this perspective, subjectivity is seen as always 'produced', prompted and regulated, by the discursive prerogative of specific agents, who dispose of signification to generate stable effects, and further, to normalize and even invisibilize their discursive mastery. The social as a whole can be rendered a non-linear, dynamic and historical co-construction, within which 'discursive formations' are set to produce subjects and practical effects.

Such an understanding of subjectivity leads to a conception of power that is on the one hand based on discipline, imposed coercively by agents whose truthful position of rule has been already discursively declared and validated, and on the other hand, based on obedience, as a form of compliance with the apparent

truthfulness or validity of the disciplinary procedure and its justification, as discursively established. Consequently, Foucault's idea of power as discursivity can be associated to a critique of modernity, a regime of truth sustained by subjectivities produced and disciplined through the invoking of 'knowable normalities', that is to say, of constructions of reality regarding which a pretension of rational validity had been established (Howarth, 2000). However, the notion of governmentality, elaborated in the late stages of Foucault's intellectual trajectory (Lemke, 2001), contributes to thematise a series of other more nuanced approaches to power and subjectivation (elaborated by Foucault in different ways), specifically in light of key features of late modernity, including the consolidation of the liberal State in the face of growing populations and social complexity, and of the ascension of a neoliberal ideology at the centre of the liberal State's governmental programme (as representation and practice).

In recent years, the notion of governmentality has been placed at the helm of a Foucauldian tradition of critical scholarship on political economy, history, sociology and also organisation (Gordon, 1991; McKinlay, Carter & Pezet, 2012). It builds over the Foucauldian genealogical tradition, in which the constitution of disciplinary power, which allows the institution of sociocultural truths and of the subjects to realize them, is accounted for, by historically tracing the myriad of discursive gestures that have led, in non-linear fashion, to its configuration. Specifically, the notion of governmentality terms the particular discursive regime that a genealogy of the political economy of the

liberal State in late modernity has revealed (a method which was in a way grasped by Salazar in his comments on the trajectory of the Chilean State). In his lectures on this topic, Foucault delves on the general notion of government from antiquity to the emergence of 'liberalisms' on the nineteenth century, focusing particularly on the coalescence of social configurations into a programme of neoliberal economics, and particularly, of neoliberal governance. The latter in the Chilean case has been the object of study for a multitude of scholars (Olavarria, 2003), including Salazar, who coincide on the fact that the *coup d'état* in 1973 led directly to the swift and violent replacement of previous political and economic guidelines, based on State-run enterprising for welfare purposes, with the economicist programme of neoliberal governance as conceived by the Chicago School.

For the interests of this study on public servant identity, the importance of the governmentality conceptualization is related to its indication of the emergence of new modes of subjectivity due to the evolution of the conception of the art of governing in relation to the sovereign State, from a politically authoritarian logic to an economicist, neoliberal one.

Schematically put, following Lemke's (2001) review of Foucault's work, the institution of neoliberalism as a consistent regime was enabled by the deviant ideas of schools of economic thought in both Germany ('*Ordo*-liberalism') and in the US (the Chicago School, directly linked with the Chilean government).

For Foucault (Lemke, 2001: 192), the project of the German School drew from Marx's and Weber's critiques of the miseries produced, respectively, by the

contradictions and ‘irrational rationality’ (or what Weber, according to Kalberg, 1980, saw as a lack of ‘ethical substantive rationality’) of the capitalist model for domination. According to this view, the German School’s proposition was to tackle these issues by not intervening over social rationality (as the Frankfurt School proposed) but rather over economic, capitalist rationality. From the German School’s perspective, liberal political values were seen as expressed economically in the form of a free-market, which they believed did not juxtaposed with the State, establishing a relation of mutual dependence and co-regulation with it. This position assumed that capitalism was a ‘social order’, politically arranged, and which needed to evolve to a well-regulated yet sustained, liberating free-market form. Crucially, for Foucault (Lemke, 2001: 195), this meant that the bureaucratic structure of the State had to be preserved but re-oriented towards the institution and administration of market-like competition in social relations through the definition of efficacious ‘social policies’ prescribing entrepreneurial values and pro-competition legal constraints.

Yet the Chicago School in Foucault’s account brought the conception of free-market economics to a different level in relation to the social and the ‘art of government’ (Lemke, 2001). While the German School proposed an differentiation and inter-dependence between economic and social domains, with the idea of enterprise mediating between them (not unlike the pre-1973 Chilean State proposed in Salazar’s view), the Chicago School sought to clear all ambiguity about the political ‘policing’ of the pro-enterprise State and the

politics of rendering the social a field for entrepreneurial competition. As Lemke points out (2001: 197), for Foucault the “key element in the Chicago School’s approach is their consistent expansion of the economic form to apply to the social sphere, thus eliding any difference between the economy and the social”.

From this standpoint, Lemke (2001: 197) explains, the social sphere was not to be governed in the name of the economy but rather to be “redefined as a form of the social domain”. What this implies is that the model for rational-economic actions becomes the sole principle for limiting governmental-action, and that the (art of) government itself becomes an enterprising endeavour whose purpose is to universalize competition and invent market-shaped systems of action for individuals, groups and institutions” (Lemke, 2001: 197). The result is a conception of the economy that encompasses all human action and behaviour, conceived as the competition for scant resources, and a conception of the State that situates it not as defining and monitoring market freedom, but conversely as an entity entirely organized and regulated by the principles of the market. As Lemke puts it (2001: 200), “Neo-liberalism removes the limiting, external principle and puts a regulatory and inner principle in its place: it is the market form which serves as the organizational principle for the state and society”. Crucially, this calls no longer for the re-orientation of State bureaucracy, but rather for its suppression, or at least its overhauling and shrinking, as a politically-swayed order, enabling the exertion of regulatory State power.

In sum, Foucault's genealogy of the liberal State, leading up to the consolidation of the neoliberal economic programme as the rule of government, indicates the constitution of a different mode of subjectivation and institution of power. This mode is one that could be called 'post-disciplinary' (Valverde, 2004) and can be seen as basically based on the assumption of economic, free-market rationality as the sole principle for political government, that is to say, as the sole principle justifying the action of agents concerned with the art of governing.

For Lemke (2001), this implies not only the institution of a 'programme' for the diffusion and enforcement of economic rationality in social practice, but at the same, the institution of a 'govern-mentality' proper, devised to produce subjects that understand their own social experience, now guided in economicist terms, as a an experience of rational-economic government. As part of this experience, 'technologies of the self' are invoked to render life optimal and more efficient in rational-economic terms. Subjects are construed as responsible for their own lives, having to 'calculate' the economic (i.e. domestic) viability (i.e. affordability, profitability or optimization) of their multiple social involvements, with the State abstaining from intervening in any regulatory way and the subject abstaining from invoking any kind of regulatory instance different than the 'laws of competition'. In this view, State, subject and society are supposed to be rendered senseful by neoliberal governmentality, the principles thematising a single depoliticised and technocratic way of making sense of social reality. The subject's own

intelligibility has been rendered technical and economicist, and his/her whole life a 'human capital', whose exchangeable and ethical value s/he is responsible for wisely calculating and efficiently administering (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005).

Regarding the problem of bureaucracy, which is central for this study, Foucault's insights on the new governmental realization of the social can offer vital insights. Following Lemke (2001), bureaucracy under the framings of governmentality can be seen as shifting in its status, insofar as its political dimension has been refused while its organising function has been preserved and radically re-defined. Within the institution of governmentality, as values, norms, practices and technologies, bureaucracy can be seen as fulfilling a function of facilitation of 'participatory citizenry', through which the expert making, implementation and administration of policies is set to foster the citizens' involvement in purchasing and even improving services for the purposes of the rational-economic optimization of their own individual self (Barratt, 2014). The bureaucrat is supposed to recognize him/her and others as enterprising agents, pushing not only for the strengthening of the neoliberal governmental programme's results, by working to outsource or relocate internal/external services to the private sector and cost-optimizing public sector management, but also by insisting in the entrepreneurialization of his/her own self (Clegg, 2007). Bureaucracy no longer administers and thus ethically enforces the (political) regulation of conduct; it merely facilitates the 'conduct of conduct' or govern-mentality, for others and for itself (Clegg,

2007), and not just in a rational, self-disciplinary way, but also affectively, through the psychology of self-motivation (Street, 2012).

Overall, it could be said that neoliberal governmentality implies the end of bureaucracy as a politically-swayed social order effected by the disciplinary power of rationality (O'Neil, 1986) but rather as an economized social order effected by insidious post-disciplinary power, through which bureaucratic technique and expertise is introjected into the bureaucrat-subject's own life experience while reduced to an optimal minimum as part of the State.

At this point, an answer can be provided to the questions posed previously, regarding the experience of subjectivity under contemporary forms of neoliberal, technocratic government (like the one Salazar spoke about, based on his experience as a Chilean intellectual). Following Foucault's lead, subjectivity under technocratic neoliberalism can be seen as emerging as governmentality, that is to say, as a complex devising of technologies, discourses and practices for the optimal government of self.

For the purposes of this study, such an approach to subjectivity would provide a useful framework to understand the process through which public servants, who operate formally as professionals in the bureaucratic structure of the public sector, construct their identity (Barratt, 2009). The process of identification would be considered in its discursive complexity, identifying key narratives and practices sustaining the production of subjectivity. The latter would be seen as enacted by public servants and agents in their context, and as signalling strands of articulation in policy texts and bureaucratic technologies

that would account for local varieties of governmentality programmes (e.g. Fardella & Sisto, 2013). In turn, this perspective would allow a critique of the neoliberal economic programme and its influence over the contemporary State, particularly the Latin American State this study is empirically concerned with, providing conceptual tools for comprehending its depoliticization and technocratization.

However, there are a number of limitations in this approach that somewhat thwart this study's intent to understand the experience of public servants, limitations this study sets out to elaborate upon, thus contributing to the literature on governmentality studies, Foucauldian discourse analysis (and his theory of subjectivation) and the political economy of State administration. Among these limitations, I would like to mention two, one theoretical, and the other political or 'critical', both of them interrelated. I will briefly outline both of them as follows, starting with the latter.

The political limitations of the abovementioned framework are related to the definition of neoliberalism as a problem of political economy, that is to say, a problem concerning the social process that leads to the ordering of the economic. For some interpreters of Foucault's work, like Miller and Rose (1990) governmentality is expressed through programmatic forms, a specific set of governmental technologies devised to secure control over State administration. In this sense, neoliberal governmentality is conceived as a problem of hegemonization, in which regimes of truth/knowledge about the validity of economic rationality have been situated, by advantageously-situated

economic elites, as the legitimate, commonsensical understanding of society, and State administration in particular. This hegemonization, as argued previously, is ‘softened’ and practically invisibilized by a series of governmental technologies of the self which render domination into an insidious form of self-persuasion. From this understanding, the political sphere is seen as weakened, yet able to be re-activated through a systematic critique of its discursive conditions. However, following Springer (2012), a proper discursive understanding and critique of neoliberalism, like the one this study intends to contribute to, aiming at actively politicizing its contingent construction and legitimation, cannot rely solely on the insights provided by a genealogy of western, first world liberalism.

For Springer (2012: 135), any ‘monolithic’ conception of neoliberalism fails “to recognize the protean and processual character of space and time” and “neglect internal constitution, local variability, and the role that ‘the social’ and individual agency play in (re)producing, facilitating, and circulating neoliberalism”. This includes the conception of the political economy of the State and its administration, a domain whose material and symbolic reality, according to Lemke’s reading of Foucault (2007), cannot be fully captured by any forms of governmentality, because of its macro-political dimension beyond the ‘micro-physics of power’; the State is only a mobile effect of ‘governmentalities’ or ways to make practical sense of presumptions of economic rationality by a myriad of subjects. For Springer (2012), neoliberalism, and the neoliberalization of State administration, should thus

be understood as (effected by) governmentality(ies), but also as an “hegemonic ideological project”, as a “policy and program” and as a “State form” or ideal organisational structure proper. What these insights indicate is that a political critique of neoliberalism, from a discursive perspective, should account for ways other than governmentality through which the politics of the economy are arranged. This is what Salazar seems to suggest when he vindicates the “begging and pleading stance” to which “street masses” were put, as these are the ‘masses’ that are ‘combusted’ by an exploitative, dispossessing capitalism, historically administered by the State in the Chilean context.

The theoretical limitations of the governmentality framework are connected to the political limitations mentioned above, and are the most crucial for the specific inquiry this study is concerned about: the identification of public servants. The main problem in this regard concerns the assumption of the social as a field in which identities are constructed/constructable and re-constructed/re-constructable through the intricate interplay, at symbolic and practical/technical levels, of discursive mastery. For authors like Barnett (2005) such discursivist, constructionist understanding, although immensely resourceful, presents the same shortcomings as the Marxist theory of ideological super-structural domination, insofar as they both “assume that subject-formation works through a circular process of recognition and subjection” and “treat ‘the social’ as a residual effect of hegemonic projects and/or governmental rationalities” (2005: 7). For Barnett (2005), the ubiquitous invoking of ‘neoliberalism’ as a discursive regime and ‘truthful

programme', regardless of its insidiousness, not only underestimates the nuanced socio-cultural and material dynamics of State administration, but also and more importantly, it provides a 'consolation' for those interested in criticizing it. In this author's view, it is the consolation of gaining an understanding or a 'genealogical traceability' of how the supposed discursive structure of 'neoliberalism' has been worked out, one that:

"supplies us with plentiful opportunities for unveiling the real workings of hegemonic ideologies in a characteristic gesture of revelation; and in so doing, it invites them to unproblematically align their own professional roles with the activities of various actors "out there", who are always framed as engaging in resistance or contestation" (Barnett, 2005: 10)

Barnett's claims show their pertinence when an empirical research project such as the one carried out by Chilean organisational researchers Fardella & Sisto (2013; also Fardella, 2013) is considered. In their studies, part of a research project funded by the Chilean State, these authors use the framework of governmentality to interpret what they call 'new forms of control', articulated by educational quality assurance, accountability and career development policies and systems. Certainly, theirs is an approach which relates directly to my empirical inquiry, as they focus on the production of subjectivity and the identification of public servants, particularly, teachers working for the Chilean public sector. In one of their research reports, after the discourse articulated by legal (policy) texts has been analysed in its explicit contents and the technologies of governmentality characterized in their

capacity to prompt self-governance, Fardella & Sisto (2013: 144) provide a schematic interpretation of what the governing of public servant implies:

“Governing as Foucault conceives it is the meeting point between technologies of power and technologies of self. Educational policies prescribe those particular forms through which teachers must know and master themselves, by creating a *game of truths* about what a good teacher is and what a bad teacher is and the social and subjective implications of being one or other. The career development policy for teachers *is above all a construction of truth*” (emphasis mine)

Adding to this general conclusion, Fardella (2013) insights on a companion article enrich the picture on the ‘construction of truth’ by thematising the idea of resistance:

“Reforms to the [Chilean] school system in recent decades *situate teachers* as a key figure for the functioning of educational policies and the assurance of the offering of quality public education ... According to our study, we can *evidence* that the prescriptions of certain professional practices take place in a local field that *puts political devices into play*. Quotidian spaces interact with the dispositives and render the sense and genuine purpose of new educational regulations nuanced, through local practices. In this sense, *local practices function as resistance practices* ... one of the main achievements of these practices has been to know how to hide, without disappearing, working invisibly and silently ... Behind structures, regulations and reforms to schools *there is a silent majority, everyday re-inventing the school*. It’s necessary to find concepts and methodologies that allow appreciating resistance practices in their creative potential” (emphasis mine)

What comes across in these quotes is a clear illustration of what Barnett (2005) sees as the ‘consolation’ obtained through ‘neoliberal governmentality

diagnostics'. For Fardella & Sisto (2013), the command of policy over public servant experience is 'game of truths' whose 'exact' structural composition, diachronically dynamic and fluid but synchronically stable, has been 'revealed' (interpretively) to be 'constructed', and thus, can be seen as re-constructable. Moreover, for Fardella (2013), these structures are 'evidenceable' in their capacity to 'situate teachers', whose local practices become 'resistant' as a necessary, spontaneous response to the prescription of devices into the quotidian. Overall, for Fardella such critical set of interpretations of neoliberal governmentality is able to foreground, in the most consistent manner, the inevitable determination of a 'silent majority', the resisters, an interpretive gesture which is able to call, on its own, for the continuity and strengthening of what they consider to be the critical research effort.

The impact of the theoretical limitations of the governmentality framework, also related to its political limitations, is signalled by this brief analysis of 'neoliberal consolation'. This impact is related to the establishment of a critical interpretive perspective of the social that is able to not just account for and explain but also disrupt the political economy of State administration, as it is sustained by the subjective experience of those who take part in it. What is at stake in this is perhaps what Salazar suggests with his notion of the 'State trap', as for him the trap was ultimately about the 'trust' that Allende had (and that any other critical agent would have had) on the capacity to 'understand' and 're-construct' the technocratic discourses that oriented the State. For Salazar, Allende, like many others before him, sought his own 'consolation' in the

efficacy of the Law. And like many after him, particularly organisational scholars promoting the critique of subjectivity as framed by the State-administered political economy of neoliberalism both in Chile and in other contexts, have declared their own version of trust in the efficacious order of discourse.

Crucially, as Salazar conveys, what this position misses is the dimension of antagonism in the social, as expressed primarily in his Marxist view through class struggle and the structural contradictions that underpin capitalist exploitation, segregation and dispossession (Harvey, 2014). Yet what is ultimately missed, in more general terms, is the antagonism of the political, understood precisely as the inexorable incapacity of discursivity to fully suture the institution and organisation of (the practically enacted) meaning or truth-value of society (Vighi & Feldner, 2007; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001); and thus, of its capacity to re-imagine it radically as an incomplete, inconsistent order rather than a completely determined/determinable 'game of truth-construction'. This is about the theoretical (and methodological) enabling of a capacity to critique and subvert positively and radically (Glynos & Howarth, 2007).

The latter argument sets the foundations from which my research inquiry will be built. From the theoretical perspective of neoliberal governmentality - perhaps the most accurate and compelling genealogy of the modern liberal State in late capitalism, and certainly a kind of magnetic resonance imagery of the socio-economic tissue in Chilean context - there is no room for a critical

understanding of public servant experience beyond the consolation of decoding the network of knowledges through which a supposed 'neoliberalism' is maintained. Yet the insidious, quotidian subjectivation that governmentality scholarship has proposed as the central policy-technology instituted by neoliberalism - particularly in the Chilean case where a pure Chicago School neoliberalism has colonized State administration and virtually all spheres of social life - cannot be left out from an account of identity.

How then to set up an inquiry of subjectivity without endorsing the premise of a positive ontology in the discursive production of meaning, truth, identity, and ultimately, society?

One mode of answering this question, the mode chosen to orientate this research project, relies on psychoanalytic theory, originally conceived by Sigmund Freud, and particularly on the re-conceptualization of it carried out by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan over the course of almost 40 years of therapeutic and academic practice.

An appreciation of such a mode of inquiry about the experience of subjectivity as exceeding the taken-for-granted ontology of a given order of truths can begin by considering the way in which Lacanian theory has been included in discursivist approaches to the critical study of the socio-political, by influential scholars like Laclau and Mouffe (2001) and by those who intend to follow their work like Glynos and Howarth (2007). In schematic terms, following these authors, the contribution of Lacan's appropriation of Freud's work to discourse analysis is based on a particular understanding of signification as related not

only to the conscious 'sense-making' capacity that can be interpreted on a subject, and linked/linkable to overarching power/knowledge discursive stabilities/narratives (i.e. positions) previously or simultaneously configured by other subjects, but also to the unconscious desire of the subject as an embodied discursive function. The latter, crucially, is not assumed as determined by a (neuro-)biological-emotional dynamic (as post-Freudian, Kleinian psychoanalytic scholars would argue), but rather as effected by the impersonal, socially-shared, structural properties of discursivity, towards which the subject develops an irrational, passionate attachment (i.e. love).

From this perspective, subjectivity is seen as prompted (i.e. taught, even seduced) by the structural discursive guarantees that maintain the social order, yet this prompting is at the same time considered as the result of a desire whose supposed 'spontaneous' reality is corroborated by the subject's affective experience. The result of this theoretical rendition is a conception of the intersubjectivity of the social as constituted yet gapped by the function of desire, and thus, as always open for the contingent, politicizing action of the interpretation of desire in subjective experience, which calls for but also exceeds the discursive conditions of possibility that warrant the fabric of society and the supposed 'normality' of its components.

Going back to the abovementioned reflection about the limitations of a Foucauldian reading in this case, what this Lacanian-influenced version of discourse analysis can offer is the foregrounding of desire and thus of the dimension of ethics as the crucial elements for a radical critique of the political

economy of neoliberal 'governmentality', thus emphasizing the need to consider the intimate and yet institutional production of desire, and more generally, the desirous antagonisms (and excessive idealizations) that constitute the inter-subjectivity of the social and yet risk the unity of meaning in the 'game of truths' that appears to govern it.

Relating back, once again, to Salazar's account of the 'State trap', an inquiry in these terms would not be about the constituted ontology of the trap, but about the entrapment of those who desire to sway State bureaucracy politically but prefer to assume the necessity and normality of its technocratic, economicist ordering of practice and selves, rather than face the traumatic social antagonisms that have held such normality in its place (Camargo, 2013). This would be an inquiry about the paradoxical function of desire in neoliberalized discursivity, as it implies acknowledging an identification with what appears most coherent about neoliberal governmentality – what Lacan termed the 'Other' - and at the same time interpreting the irrational, affectively-driven search for satisfaction in such narrative mastering of self (i.e. 'governmentality'), which can only exceed the boundaries of such a stable coherence and thus reveal the antagonisms at the core of the neoliberal social order. In one word, it would be an investigation of the 'fantasmatic' dimension in the discursive composition of neoliberalism: an interpretation of the subject's fantasy about a beatific 'conduct of conduct' (i.e. the entrepreneurial organisation of life), which prevents him/her from realizing his/her responsibility in cultivating a desire for key significations in the discursive

formations that reproduce the oppressive logic of neoliberal power/knowledge (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Clarke, 2012).

Yet it is crucial to note that the adoption of a Lacanian theoretical stance in the context of this thesis is justified not only because of its consideration of the embodied dimension of experience as inextricably linked to the re-production of (neoliberal) discursivity, that is to say, of its conceptualization of desire as an affective-semiotic process at the heart of subjectivity, following a research strategy adopted by scholars working in what has been recently called ‘psycho-social studies’ (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Lapping, 2011; Fotaki & Kenny, 2014). The use of Lacan’s theory is also justified because of its unique capacity to conceptualize the desire of the researcher/analyst as part of the research process itself, because of its understanding of the act of interpreting as itself mobilized yet gapped by desire (i.e. as a fantasy in its own right), as an inevitably active and politically-charged component of the discursivity network to be interpreted, and as an open and often failure-prone question about the researcher’s embodied experience of researching and his/her ethics (Lapping, 2013; Wozniak, 2010; Jones & Spicer, 2005).

Accordingly, and although a detailed justification of the a Lacanian theoretical framework will be provided in the final section of the following chapter and also recurrently in the data analysis chapters, at this point it is important to briefly mention the central function that the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* plays in articulating the capacities of Lacanian theory. Considering the abovementioned Lacanian understanding of discursivity as mobilized

fundamentally by a fantasmatic dimension, that is to say, by the desirous fantasies of both the public-servant-subject to be interpreted and the researcher-subject who is to carry out an interpretation of public servant identity, the concept of *jouissance* serves to pinpoint the instances in which fantasy fails to (discursively) master the efforts to corroborate (practical) reality as highly coherent project (of neoliberal organisation). While the notion of fantasy denotes the subjective prompting and patterning of inter-subjective discursivity according to the impulsivity of desire, *jouissance* denotes the specific, paradoxical instance where the epistemological validity of the desired – what Lacan called the ‘Other’ - is supposed to fail so that desire is re-launched forwards, as part of an affectively satisfying, never-exhausting process (Stavrakakis, 2008).

From this perspective, *jouissance* is conceived as the constitutive failure of the constant strive for meaningful discursivity, located between the embodiment of the subject and the structural properties of discourse, and simultaneously in the experience of the researched subject and the researcher-subject (Hoedemaekers, 2010; Wozniak, 2010). Crucially, since the concept of *jouissance* allows to articulate the constitutive limits of fantasy, it also allows to consider modes of subjectivity that seek to reap satisfaction beyond its well-patterned, regulated possibilities. Consequently, this contributes to a much more nuanced understanding of the affective-material grounds of identity and of the possibilities for politicizing, desirous critiques under organised neoliberal regimes (McSwite, 2001).

At this stage of this framing chapter, the theoretical and empirical contributions of this twofold inquiry to the field of organisation studies and more generally to the scholarship on contemporary social processes can be outlined. It is important to note that a more detailed discussion of the particular literatures and traditions will take place in the data analysis chapters, in light of empirical findings, and schematically in the discussion/conclusion chapter. I have arranged the text this way, also placing a 'frame' and not exhaustive list of knowledge sources in this chapter, to emphasize the openness of the question about subjectivity (Jones & Spicer, 2005) and desire of the researcher (Lapping, 2013).

First and foremost, this study on public servant identity seeks to contribute to debates on the constitution of subjectivity during the implementation of neoliberal, managerialist, and entrepreneurial policies in the organisational structure of the public sector. Particularly, it seeks to contribute to an understanding that refrains from assuming the rational reflexivity of the subject and the discursivist determinability of his/her position (e.g. Thomas & Davies, 2005), and instead embraces a psychoanalytic understanding of the subject as overdetermined and decentred in its socio-symbolic emergence by the affective dimension of experience. This is a discussion that has been held in organisation studies literature by authors such as Fotaki (2010, 2006), Hoggett (2006), McSwite (1997a), Glynos, Speed & West (2015) and Hoedemaekers (2010), among others. In particular, this study draws from Lacanian theory of discourse and subjectivity in order to foreground how the

conscious process of public servant identification is supported yet at the same subverted (i.e. transgressed and/or interrupted) by the subject's unconscious, affective attachment to objects of desire (i.e. narratives) in the bureaucratic workplace. As argued previously, these premises supporting the Lacanian framework enable a more radical critique of subjectivation within neoliberalized bureaucracy and of the ideological function that public servant identification plays (Parker, 2014). In this sense, the study makes a contribution to more general debates about the workings and implications of public servant identity and its 'vocation' towards the bureaucratic realm (Schofield, 2001; Horton, 2006).

Secondly and consequently, this study seeks to contribute to sociological debates on the 'ethics of office', the values of bureaucracy and the critique of managerialism and enterprising in State administration and the organisation of public sector services, as signalled by authors like du Gay (2000a, 2000b, 2005, 2013), Hogget (2006), McKinlay & Taylor (2014) McKinlay, Carter & Pezet (2012) and Barratt (2009, 2014), among others. These debates on the identity of bureaucracy as a social order follow the tradition inaugurated by Weber (du Gay, 2000a) and developed by authors like Crozier (1964) and aim at understanding of the socio-political and economic conditions that sustain contemporary bureaucratic discourse and practice, particularly under the hegemonic positioning of 'post-bureaucratic' programmes (Hopfl, 2006; Parker & Bradley, 2004; Rhodes & Milani Price, 2010). By analysing the way in which public-servant-subjects identify inconsistently with the target-object

of policy, for instance, the object of ‘quality assurance’ or more generally ‘market enterprising’ (Jones & Spicer, 2005), this study is also able to provide insights on the impossibility of a full managerialist and entrepreneurial revamping of bureaucracy *via* policy, and thus, on the nuanced construction of ‘hybridized’ forms of bureaucracy (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Bourgault & Van Dorpe, 2013). By the same token, following Fotaki’s lead (2006, 2010; see also Fotaki & Hyde, 2015) the study is able to generate nuanced insights on policy implementation failure.

In sum, this chapter has presented a series of arguments on what can be called the identity of (neoliberal) bureaucracy. The aim of the chapter has been to set a stage for the inquiry on public servant identification, accounting for some of the debates on the political economy of State administration, and particularly, on the production of subjectivities within it. Particular emphasis has been placed on the idea of subjectivation through governmentality, because of its analytical potential and resonance with the Chilean case this study will be concerned with. However, theoretical and empirical shortcomings of this approach have been discussed. In consequence, an argument has been made for the interpretive and critical potential of a Lacanian approach.

The next section will present and justify the methodological decisions that have orientated this inquiry. Emphasis will be placed on the justification of the research question, the interpretive strategy, the characterization of the empirical case and the discussion of the concepts that guide the Lacanian analytical framework.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

This chapter will present the methodological assumptions that I have made as a researcher to enable the study of the empirical case and also discuss the concerns that have risen as a result of those assumptions. The aim of this chapter is therefore to delimit a research position from which the analysis of the empirical can be evaluated in its technical, theoretical and ethical justification.

Yet at the same time, the aim of the chapter is to foreground the contingent and even precarious status of the research position in relation to the production of knowledge about public sector management and organisation in general. Based on the Lacanian premises this study is based on, the latter aim implies that this chapter on methodology will seek to outline not only the definition of interpretive and critical gestures, but also the relative failure of those definitions themselves.

In other words, this chapter will not only outline the decisions that have been made to establish a research position that is interpretive of the conditions of possibility of an organised order as it appears and feels realistic for the subjects who inhabit it, and that is critical of the origins and effects of such organised order as it is lived and sustained by subjectivities. It will also outline the decisions that have been made to establish a research position that can be interpretive and critical of the conditions of possibility of research itself (Ybema et al., 2009; Lapping, 2013). As Lacanian scholar Parker (2005) warns,

the analysis of discourses and practices, in this case of an organisational kind, should not be only about naming or mapping a reality but about specifying the rules of production of the difference between names and reality, defining both of them as contingent and potentially conflictive, albeit truthfully spoken. Accordingly, this chapter will outline what is the starting point for a particular analytic gesture, a gesture which is assumed to be loose some of its consistency as the data analysis unfolds and actually intervenes interpretively on the collected data. Hence, methodological considerations will also be presented and discussed throughout the thesis, as analysis and argumentation progresses. This intends to capture the inductive and exploratory nature of a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach that aspires at bringing the embodied, gendered desire of the research(er) to the fore.

In what follows, I will outline and justify different methodological aspects/components. Firstly, I will present the research question. Secondly, I will present several methodological decisions made concerning the collection of empirical data, including sampling, access and data collection techniques. Thirdly, I will present a brief characterization of the empirical case studied, including its socio-political context and history. Fourthly, I will discuss the main concepts that inform the analysis of data and its procedures.

Research question and its justification

The formulation of the research question for this study responds to the main problems or challenges defined in the previous chapter, in consideration of selected debates in the existing literature in organisation studies.

There are three main problems or challenges to be considered: firstly, the understanding of public servant identification with the procedures and values of bureaucracy during the process of organising the implementation of policies devised according to neoliberal, entrepreneurial and 'post-bureaucratic' discourses (like educational quality assurance policy) (Schofield, 2001; du Gay, 2004, 2005, 2013); secondly, the nuanced understanding of policy implementation (rather than policy-making) as a socio-cultural process of organisation and re-organisation that takes place discursively in relation to the existing bureaucratic structure of the State or public sector (McSwite, 1997; Fotaki, 2010); thirdly, the understanding of public servant identity as the result of a process of subjectivation *via* discourse, which is seen as taking place not only at a representational, semiotic level but also and simultaneously at the level of embodied, affective experience (Hoedemaekers, 2010; McSwite, 2001; Kenny, 2012).

Accordingly, the research question is defined as follows:

How exactly does the public-servant-subject experience his/her identification with the organisation of bureaucratic work following the command for policy implementation?

There are several assumptions behind the components in such succinct formulation of the research question, which aims at capturing singlehandedly the three main problems or challenges that this study is concerned with. These assumptions permeate the terminology used throughout the rest of the thesis and orientate the analysis of data. They are outlined and explained below:

First, the question assumes that ‘public servant’ is both the colloquial and technical name that is given to any role in the professional structure of the public sector. It is seen as the general label (signifier) that designates the image of those professionals who operate within the public sector structure, whether they are seen by others and themselves as employees, consultants or advisors, among other roles. Usually, and as the data corroborated, the term is not used for non-professional roles in charge of conducting administrative tasks of low-complexity and/or providing support to professional roles. It could be said that the ‘public servant’ term or signifier signals the visible ‘face’ of the public sector, certainly the one with which professionals working in the public sector will identify implicitly or explicitly.

Second, the formulation of the research question assumes that the notion of ‘public-servant-subject’ designates the subjectivity of working professionals over whom the label ‘public servant’ could be placed, either by other agents (like colleagues, counterparts or the researcher) or by themselves. The notion of ‘public-servant-subject’ will be used recurrently throughout the thesis and can be assimilated to the ‘gesture of discursive articulation by individuals occupying professional roles’. Considering the Lacanian theoretical framework this study engages with (see Cederström & Spicer, 2014; Parker, 2005), the notion of ‘subject’ in the research question can be seen as a signifier that designates the temporary coherence/consistency or of the narratives articulated by public servants regarding the organisation of policy implementation work and its associated contents/meanings (e.g. accounts of

self and others, everyday tasks, managerial tools and resources, etc.). ‘Public-servant-subject’ thus can be seen as designating a position from which something is legitimately declared; a temporarily stable ‘stance’ or even a ‘character’ around which the inter-subjective flow of discourse is set to be arranged. The idea of a process of subjectivation, in relation to which a ‘subject position’ represents only a temporary instance or fixed arrangement, will be discussed later on this chapter, when the concepts that serve the analysis of data are discussed.

Third, the formulation of the research question assumes that the ‘organisation of bureaucratic work following the command for policy implementation’ is a process that takes place discursively, as an inter-subjective construction and temporary fixation of shared meanings about workplace (material) practices and representations (and about the general social, cultural and political context) through the use of language (Fotaki, 2010; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000, 2011; Thomas & Davies, 2005; Howarth, 2000; Cederström & Spicer, 2014; Müller, 2012). This is an assumption under which the reality of material elements involved in the ‘organisation of bureaucratic work’ is conceived as relevant only in terms of its meaning for inter-subjective, discursive practice. In broad terms, this assumption thematises recent debates on policy implementations that have addressed the problem of generating desired policy outcomes as an organisational challenge proper, including the discursive co-construction of representations (e.g. organisational values) and practices from the bottom-up as well as from the top-down (Crosby, 1996; Peters, 2014; Hupe

& Saetren, 2014; Hupe, 2014). From this perspective, the notion of an 'organisation of policy' indicates a process of discursive 'translation' of legal texts or rulebooks into workplace practice that takes place not only in normative, teleological terms. It also indicates one that takes place in transformative and adaptive terms, through the inter-subjective (micro-political) negotiation of the meaning of non-technical dimensions of policy like power mechanisms, stakes, values, symbolic aspects (Hupe, 2014) and affective, emotional (irrational) processes operating at individual and collective levels, like that of fantasy (Fotaki, 2010: 704). Overall, following Hupe (2014: 178), the research question assumes that all these issues can be treated in a clinical and grounded way, by "looking at 'what happens' rather than 'what should happen'". Certainly, this 'clinical' approach resonates with the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework this studies draws from.

Fourth, the formulation of the research question assumes that it is the abovementioned understanding of organisation as discursivity which, in turn, determines the understanding of the process of 'identification' of public servants with the 'organisation of bureaucratic work'. Public servant identity from this standpoint is seen as the construction and regulation of meanings about the experience of self within a dense network of meanings about workplace practice (Brown & Humphries, 2006; Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002). Crucially, from the Lacanian theoretical framework this study aligns with, and differing from other sociological and psychological accounts of public servant identity (e.g. Bourgault & Van Dorpe, 2013; Horton, 2006; Rondeaux, 2006;

McKenna, Garcia-Lorenzo & Bridgman, 2010; Ainsworth, Grant & Iedema, 2009), the identification of public servants with bureaucratic work is appreciated as inherently failed and inconsistent (Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010; Fotaki, 2010). This is because discursivity itself, as an exchange through the means of a symbolic structure whose signifying components do not amount to a unified entity, is conceived as an endless displacement or deferral of meaning (Driver, 2009a; 2009b; Müller, 2013; Cederström & Spicer, 2014). The notion of identity will be discussed further later on this chapter when the concepts that serve the analysis of data are discussed.

Fifth, the formulation of the research question assumes that the process of identification is grounded as an 'experience'. The inclusion of this signifier in the research question serves the purpose of preventing the reduction of the construction of identity or identification to the prescriptive discursive assignment of a set of beliefs and behaviours that the individual must be disciplined to act according to and display before others, as many organisation studies based on (some of) Foucault's ideas have proposed (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011: 1130). Following the Lacanian framework that guides this thesis, the capacity of discourse to 'discipline' a sense of self and embodied practice should not be seen as the working reality of the social – in which all discourses are effective in their prescriptive capacity and only contestable by the wielding of another discourse - but rather as part of an emotional, affective experience of a particular body which includes yet exceeds the coherence of meaning that discursive articulation generates. The notion of 'experience' as

expressed by the research question thus intends to explicitly convey the prevalence of the body in the analysis of subjectivity and the need to conceive of identity as a process that disturbs rather than masters the fabric of human affectivity. It is the embodied experience, with its affected desire for satisfaction or enjoyment, which is assumed to prompt identification, not the other way around, and it is such assumption which leads to a better understanding of the inconsistency of the symbolic order of discourse mentioned above. The experience of the real can only be rendered senseful through the sustained articulation of discourse, in order to ascribe a sense of wholeness to the self, yet it also calls for the emptying of the ontological substance of discourse so that the experience of seeking (i.e. desiring) real satisfaction is never exhausted and always reinvigorated (Cederström & Spicer, 2014).

Sixth, the formulation of the research question assumes that the 'command for policy implementation' refers to the process through which politically-swayed government agents, indirectly or directly involved in the process of designing policy, prescribe public servants in senior management positions (usually located very high in the public sector hierarchy) to develop or reform procedures for professional work. This process of prescription is seen as taking place legally, through the use of texts issued by parliament, which are officially published and subject to enforcement by monitoring agencies. Yet the idea of a 'command' is not assumed only as unidirectional prescription from the top down. More importantly, it is also assumed as an active interpretation and

‘translation’ by public servants of very broad specification of purposes and practical limitations into a language that can serve the operationalization of an organizational structure composed of roles, tasks, skills, coordination criteria, hierarchical representations, budgets, among many other features (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). In this sense, the idea of an ‘organisation of work’ following a ‘command to implement policy’ is assumed as not reducible to an object of management; at least not a purely formal and rational one (Fotaki, 2006, 2010). Rather, the ‘command to implement’ is assumed to prompt the organisation of public servant subjectivities within a network of social interactions mediated by the symbolic structure of discourse. The ‘commandment of policy’ is thus assumed as the subjective experience of public servants who desire to take responsibility for interpreting the broad and rather vague meaning of policy prescriptions and ‘translating’ them into meanings of bureaucratic work and public servant self (Fotaki, 2010).

Seventh, and finally, the formulation of the research question assumes that the identification of public servants with bureaucratic work, the dynamic that is central for the interests of this study, unfolds with ‘exactitude’. This is expressed in the question through the use of the signifier ‘exactly’, which qualifies the question on how public servant identification proceeds. As a researcher drawing from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, I consider of most importance to declare the need to include this signifier in the question that orientates this study in its entirety, and yet at the same time, to declare the

impossibility of achieving any level of exactitude. This is due to the particular conception of the 'experience of identification' that Lacanian theory proposes.

From this standpoint, the notion of 'exactitude' serves to designate the defensive nature of identification, assuming that identification aims at generating a sense of self unity and coherence to subjective experience (what Lacan calls 'imaginary consistency') against the lack of consistency of the symbolic order or structure through which identification discursively unfolds. In this sense, the signifier 'exact' ('exactitude') in the research question alludes to the fundamental Lacanian conception of identity as a 'synchronized mirroring' of the speech and behaviours of other agents with whom the subject closely interacts, actions which have been socially sanctioned as legitimate, meaningful and efficacious over reality (Lacan, 2007a; Roberts, 2005). This conveys the idea that subjectivity is fundamentally about the desire to represent and experientially feel an identity of self that is 'exact' in relation to other desirable social objects. Therefore, it signals what could be called an ethnographic alignment of the research with the experience of public servants, of the objects of their workplace and of themselves, as it is lived by them in their own semiotic and affective terms (Volich, 2007; 175; Kenny & Gilmore, 2014). Elaborating on Harding's terms (2007: 1771), this assumes that the studied organizational 'becomes' along with the studied 'selves' that become, and thus, that the research 'becomes' as the studied 'organisational self' becomes.

Yet at the same time it is crucial to declare at this point in the methodological outline that the signification of 'exactitude' in the research question does not refer to an effort of generating scientific knowledge of rational validity. This is why the research question is formulated using the adverb 'how' instead of the pronoun 'what'. As a researcher, in this study I do not assume that positive knowledge about public servant identity can be discovered or produced with any degree of exactitude. In my view, aligned with the Lacanian conceptualizations that have been foregrounded by organisation studies in recent years (Wozniak, 2010; see also Contu, Driver & Jones, 2010; Fotaki, Long & Schwartz, 2012), knowledge cannot be assumed as a stable object, indexable by a noun. Quite the contrary, I assume that knowledge is an effect of the contingent process of constituting identity and organisational self (with 'exactitude' according to the subject involved in it), which can only be indicated by a verb (in the case of this study, the verb 'identify') and qualified by an adverb. In this sense, the research question assumes that the phrase 'how exactly' corresponds simultaneously but implicitly to the phrase 'how inexactly'; in other words, that the answer to the question 'how exactly' can only be answered negatively, foregrounding the Lacanian theoretical conviction that there cannot be 'exactitude' in identification even though, and precisely because, subjectivity sustains itself by invoking 'exact' terms.

It must be re-affirmed of course that such infusion of negativity in the formulation of the research question does not imply that the research effort itself is an invalid one according to the scientific parameters of the 'social

sciences'. Rather, as pointed out earlier, it implies that the truthful knowledge about the subject's being within a reality of organising - in this case, as argued in the previous chapter, prompted by neoliberal policies - is about an inexactitude of naming, and hence of answering, that can only be grasped through the form of a persistent questioning (Parker, 2014; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; see also Lapping, 2011). This expresses the fundamental contribution that Lacanian theory can make to organisation studies, which, as Wozniak puts it (2010: 408), is about encouraging researchers "to take a closer look at the desire animating their relationship with the object (either empirical or theoretical) of their investigation as well as the consequences of the scientific propensity to obliterate this relationship" (see also Parker, 2014). This research issue and the associated problem of the desire and the affectivity of the researcher will be discussed further later on this chapter when the concepts that serve the analysis of data are discussed.

In sum, the formulation of the research question encompasses the three main problems found in the selected literature on organisation and public administration, outlined at the beginning of this section. In general terms, the research question addresses the identification of public servants with the objects of bureaucratic work as an organisational dynamic in the broad context of policy implementation.

This section has outlined and justified the formulation of the question that drives the research effort. The next section will outline and justify the selection of an empirical object that can be observed as data and then analysed from a

Lacanian theoretical perspective, so that answers to the research question can be provided.

The collection of empirical data

This section will outline the decisions made to define a research design and a strategy for data collection within it, including sampling and collection techniques and negotiation of access. Additionally, the data collected will be described and issues of translation will be discussed.

Design and strategies of inquiry

Regarding the general research design, for the purposes of this study I have chosen to implement a qualitative research design, which allows observing and comprehending the lived experience of public servants and their inter-subjective generation or co-construction of meaning about workplace objects *via* discourse (Creswell, 2013). The use of qualitative methods relies on a definition of social reality as distinctly perceived and actively transformed by subjects and inter-subjectively negotiated through an interactive process with ethical implications and political consequences (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). In the case of this study, such understanding of social reality, underpinning the selection of a number of qualitative research tools, assumes that social linkages take place discursively through the symbolic order of language, simultaneously at two levels. On the one hand, social linking is seen as taking place at the semiotic, representational level, where linguistic elements, arranged structurally, are operated. On the other hand, it is seen as taking place at the material, affective level, where concrete acts of arrangement and exchange of

semiotic elements are embodied by agents and performed before others and themselves.

The qualitative approach to the study of public servant identification in this research can be further characterized as interpretive, rather than descriptive or exploratory, drawing from a particular conception of interpretation found in the psychoanalytic tradition (Hoedemaekers, 2010; Lapping, 2013; Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Cederström & Spicer, 2014). This characterization is needed to differentiate this project from other approaches to the construction of public servant identity, and the process of policy implementation in general, which focus on either exploring the general situation of public sector bureaucracy (for instance, influenced by a broad ‘post-bureaucratizing’ trend, a phenomenon studied by Josserand, Teo & Clegg, 2006), or on describing the aspects and components involved in the operation of an already detected process of identity construction (Horton, 2006).

Diverging from these approaches, a psychoanalytically-informed qualitative interpretive approach focuses on describing social phenomena but also on reflexively evaluating those descriptions, and the researcher’s capacity to make them, in relation to a theoretical framework that accounts for the production and effects of social interaction in a particular way (Creswell, 2013). Drawing from the Freudian notion of interpretation (Freud, 1999) (which played a foundational role in the history of psychoanalysis) this understanding of an interpretive qualitative approach emphasizes the unconscious register of individual and social experience, which disturbs the conscious register where

inter-subjectively instituted meanings are sought and consolidated. The interpretive nature of this study, therefore, is associated with the evaluation of observations of public servant experience, conducted in both semiotic and material terms, in light of the unconscious over-determination of experience at its conscious level. This implies that the narrative reports, performative acts, documents and other forms of data accessed by the observer-researcher will be analysed in search of the fundamental contrast between intended (conscious) and unintended (unconscious) gestures of signification by the public-servant-subject leading to and sustaining a sense of self and an intelligibility of his/her experience (Pepper & Wildy, 2009). This broad psychoanalytic understanding of the interpretive research design will be further elaborated later on the section on data analysis.

Finally, following Creswell's distinctions (2013), the qualitative research design of this study, of an interpretive kind, can be seen as engaging with two main data collection strategies: a narrative strategy and an ethnographic strategy. These two strategies are seen as complementing each other and producing effects in parallel during the data collection phase and the data analysis phase.

On the one hand, a narrative strategy allows situating a relevant theme or problem as a central focus of attention before engaging with the subjects whose speech and acts will be observed and studied. This allows guiding the interactive observation process itself, usually involving the subject's narration (or 'storytelling') of his/her experience and the researcher's inquiry over it,

around the contents of that theme. In this case, such narrative strategy is justified by the importance previously assigned to the active engagement of public servants with bureaucratic work (Schofield, 2001). The interest and involvement of public servants in the organisation of bureaucratic work was thus taken for granted by me as the researcher, an assumption which influenced my elaboration of questions for interviewees, the style of my rapport with them and the contents of our mutual conversations and the premises (or even biases) about the general functioning of the public sector, which influenced, in turn, my writing of field notes. Overall, this study assumes that the situation of observations takes place within a world that is being constantly narrated or thematised in bureaucratic terms, as if the diversity of events in the public sector workplace conveyed only varying strands of the same bureaucratic nature. Such assumption is what allows the inquiry over public servant identification to focus on the 'grammar' and affective intensity of the subjective 'attachment' to the bureaucratic order, indicative of unintended or unconscious meanings and/or desires according to the interpretive perspective the inquiry aligns with (Hoedemaekers, 2010; Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010). As it will be outlined below, this strategy is primarily pursued through the use of semi-structured interviews with individuals.

On the other hand, the ethnographic strategy allows the research inquiry to appreciate bureaucratic work as experienced by public servants in their own semiotic and material-affective terms. This is crucial in allowing the focus to

be placed on the intent rather than the outcome of public identification, and thus, to analytically foreground the ongoing process of subjectivation during an engagement with bureaucratic work rather than the relation between the subject and an object of bureaucratic reality. Such shift of focus is what distinguishes the ethnographic strategy from the narrative strategy, as the latter pays attention to subjective experience in its meaningful relation with a narrative object, in this case, a narrative on bureaucratic work. Consequently, the main contribution of the ethnographic strategy for the research design, complementing the contribution of the narrative strategy, resides in its enabling of an observation of the failure or inconsistency of identification itself; in other words, to the constant interruption and re-launching of the project of a public servant identity in the subject's experience, amidst a context (such as State bureaucracy) where power struggles, overworking, stress and precariousness are prevalent (Hamera, 2013; Holstein & Gubrium, 2013).

An ethnographic approach in this sense not only allows appreciating the nuanced and often failed process of identity construction 'as it unfolds', capturing all sorts of details and particularly the impact of unaccounted material elements (such as emotions, actions, spatial arrangements, time, smells, among many others) in the generation of a meaning of self. Additionally, and more importantly, especially in consideration of the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework that guides this study, it allows capturing the embodied, gendered and contingent nature of identity construction, foregrounding the affective conditions that enable it but also that unintendedly

or unconsciously prevent or resist (in psychoanalytic terms, that 'defend') the effects of its full realization (Kenny & Gilmore, 2014).

Overall, an ethnographic approach allows including the subjectivity of the researcher in the research design, shifting his/her position from that of an interpreter of narrative meaning, and a general sense-making process through story-telling, to that of an interpreter of his/her own gendered desire within a concrete, complex worldly situation (Lapping, 2013). As Hamera points out (2013), the boundaries between definitions and ethics, as well as those separating the theoretical framework from the methods blur from an ethnographic perspective; there is no clear theoretical or empirical position (whether interpretive or not) from which to distil a certainty of the difference between the researcher and the researched (see also Miller, 2003). This is paramount in an understanding of the experience of identification as an embodied one, as it is only through methodological definition that the researcher can decide over the impact s/he has over his/her body and that of the subjects s/he studies. From the particular Lacanian perspective this study aligns with (Miller, 2000; Parker, 2005; Fotaki & Harding, 2013; Nobus & Quinn, 2005) an ethnographic approach is indispensable. It is so because the affectivity involved in the embodiment of subjective experience can only be appreciated by introducing the affectivity of the researcher's own embodied experience. The latter is an affectivity that can only be seen as open to surprise and failure during the act of researching and as 'twisting' all pretension of discursive stability and/or valid knowledge through reflexivity over the

effectuation of theoretical and empirical meaning (Wozniak, 2010; Kenny & Gilmore, 2014).

This section has presented and justified the methodological decisions made regarding the design of the research and the strategy for the inquiry over data collected. In the following section I will discuss sampling and data collection techniques as well as the access to the empirical source.

Before proceeding to next section, however, it is important to re-affirm the definition of the type of data collected. The data for this study can be succinctly defined as instances of public servant engagement *via* discourse with diverse aspects of bureaucratic work, considering the notion of ‘discourse’ to encompass not just semiotic/linguistic elements but also inter-active practices and emotional/affective processes taking place at the level of embodied subjective experience.

Sampling

Two sampling techniques were used in consecutive stages of this study. They can be defined in accordance to Patton (1990).

Initially, a theory-based sampling was used. The theory that informed such sampling regards the implementation of policy in the State bureaucracy as a process of organising, particularly, as a process of organisational structure development, in which individuals were being enrolled, role-specific tasks were being defined and coordinations between roles and procedures were being established, among many other developments (Crosby, 1996; Brunsson

& Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). Four different departments/autonomous agencies of the Chilean state (whose exact location and characteristics cannot be revealed in order to comply with self-imposed confidentiality standards) were selected to take part in the study. These 'components' of the State bureaucracy structure were selected due to their similarity with the organisational process described by the theory, and because of their formal interrelation as part of the emerging National Educational Quality Assurance System, the major organisational object that was being implemented at the time of collection following the target policy command for educational assurance². Groups of individuals within these branches/departments/autonomous agencies were selected as potential participants, also in accordance to the abovementioned theoretical criterion. All candidates, regardless of their job title and location in the bureaucratic network, were deemed as 'public servants'³, insofar as the professional work they intentionally and committedly perform contributes directly to the implementation of policies whose purposes have been explicitly defined as related to the benefit of citizens and communities. The category of public servant, which orientated the sampling, was thus selected in accordance to vocational and professional aspects of bureaucratic work.

² Autonomous agencies are still considered part of the formal structure of State bureaucracy, as they are commanded and evaluated by the same set of laws and regulatory systems. Their autonomy refers mostly to budgetary issues.

³ In the bureaucratic structure of Chilean State administration, the department that fulfils an equivalent function to corporate 'human resource' departments is officially called 'civil service'. According to this nomenclature, all roles operating in Chilean State bureaucracy can be legitimately termed as 'public servant' or 'civil servant' roles.

Later on, an opportunistic or emergent sampling was used. Mainly, this was due to interviewee availability and timetabling problems, and also to the generation of methodological insights during the data collection process. New candidates deemed as able to make a valuable contribution to the data were located (with the willing help of senior officials), then contacted and interviews with them were subsequently arranged. No new branches/departments/autonomous agencies were considered as potential sources of data during the data collection process.

The sample used for this study was composed of 23 public servants, 14 women and 9 men. All of them were professionals, some of them with postgraduate studies, although coming from different educational backgrounds (including engineering, psychology, sociology, education, design, among others). All of them were in charge of organising not-yet-implemented policies into the bureaucratic structure of the department/autonomous agency for which they were working for. Their active involvement in implementation work was being formally instructed and evaluated by their supervisors through already existing bureaucratic procedures, while their effectivity in contributing to the generation of policy outcomes was being informally instructed and evaluated by their supervisors or implementation managers/leaders. The position of sampled public servants in the hierarchical bureaucratic structure was neither considered nor recorded in detail. Attention was paid only to their professional engagement with policy implementation, including their role as supervisee or supervisor during the policy implementation effort. 7 out of the 23 sampled

public servants held supervisory roles. Sampled public servants had been assigned to specific implementation teams, although these delimitations of functions overlapped with traditional bureaucratic divisions. Because of the blurriness in these overlapping of work division maps, only the coordination regarding implementation challenges was considered in its (dynamic) boundaries. The sampled public servants were aged between 26 and 47.

Access and confidentiality issues

Permission to access data was achieved several months before the data collection started. Senior officials in each and every one of the departments/autonomous agencies were contacted formally and informed thoroughly about the aims and potential impacts of the study. In some cases I was invited to present the main features of the research in person before a commission composed of several senior officials. Access was negotiated independently with each department/autonomous agency and to my knowledge they were not aware that I was collecting data in other institutions.

Once access was granted (either formally or informally), senior officials in some departments/autonomous agencies declared their support for the study. While some of them did this in a formal, official way (usually through an e-mail or a letter), others did it in an informal way (e.g. a phone call). In all cases I was assigned a formal counterpart (usually an implementation manager) with whom logistical aspects of research (such as emergent sampling) were discussed and practically arranged. However, this collaboration was not set to be mandatory in any case. Throughout the duration of the study I had the

liberty to arrange interviews with public servants and observations of work on my own, without the assistance of the formal counterpart. The formal counterparts were in some cases interviewed, and the specific rapport established with them prior to the interview was accounted for in the posterior analysis of data. Although some senior officials suggested I should send them some form of feedback on the data collection process, I received no formal request to do so by the end of the process.

It is of most importance to note that permission/consent to carry out this research and access to the specific sample(s) were not granted completely and directly at the beginning of the study. The granting of access was not an immediate response by senior officers, taking place at a single moment in time, before the data collection began; it was rather a constant process of negotiation with officials, during which their expectations about the researcher's persona and behaviour were confronted with the expectations of the researcher about decision making processes within those particular bureaucracies and the relative discretionary power held by senior implementers with supervisory responsibilities.

The notion of trust can be said to have been crucial during this negotiation, which extended until the last moments of data collection. From the perspective of senior officers, the research topic and the researcher's origin and academic profile appeared not to be trustworthy at first. Considering some the comments made throughout the data collection process, both by senior officers and implementing public servants, it seems the notion that a public sector office

focused on education could be of interest for a researcher focused on management and organisation did not make sense to them. They declared to be surprised that something other than education could be a matter of academic interest, considering they had dealt with several educational researchers in the past and that they had no knowledge of the notion of 'organisation' being a real concern for those interested in the public sector.

Yet some of them expressed this sense of surprise in negative terms, by openly expressing worries about educational researchers who in the past had positioned themselves antagonistically in relation to them. Consequently, this led to an expression of their relief about having an 'organisational researcher' observing them, one who they declared to perceive as non-threatening and only focused on everyday work life, which for them was not directly related to the educational objects that so passionately occupied them at a professional level. This reaction can be seen as indicating the emergence of a kind of negative trust, which was placed over the figure of the researcher under the supposed guarantee of him not being identified/identifiable with the educational cause, particularly the educational quality-for-equality cause, which had achieved great prominence around the time of data collection, because of the rise of student and civil protest movements and the public sector reform that ensued. This narrative of negative trust, stemming out of the senior officers' identification with the ideal of a bureaucratic making of 'education', was constructed gradually during the data collection process, and its construction took place until the very last moments of observation. At all levels,

there was always a palpable sense of surprise when initiating interviews or interactions with public servants, and a subsequent sense of relief when they attributed the 'organisational researcher' with good academic intentions that they did not consider threatening to their purpose of improving the nation's educational institutions.

From the perspective of the researcher, the constant negotiation and re-negotiation of access led to the consolidation of a different kind of trust; namely, a trust on the viability of an interpretive study of psychoanalytic inspiration. This is directly related to the senior officers and public servants' own expectations, which were focused on the study not being a threat to their educational purposes. Once senior officers felt reassured that the research effort was not going to jeopardise their own professional efforts, they gradually but surely suspended the active monitoring of the researcher's activity as an official academic inquiry, and continued to behave more or less as usual, considering the researcher as a neutral visitor. As a consequence of such attribution, which was based mostly on the researcher's credentials as a business school academic, the multiple layers of hierarchy and the complex, informal, and often ambiguous coordination between enrolled professionals inhabiting them were made available for the researcher's observing eye. This, in turn, allowed a trust in the researcher's own capacity to collect interpretable data, as the activity that was unfolding before him was able to be considered as more or less spontaneous and not a 'show' put on for the researcher, and as

one that could be intervened over in order to obtain further access to new public servants as sources of data (in snowball-like fashion).

In this sense, the basic expectations mobilizing the research, about public servant discourse being able to be traced in its organisational diffusion and interpreted in its symbolic and affective conditions of possibility, increasingly appeared to be satisfiable during the course of data collection, thus fostering a sense of trust in the research design and in the researcher's decision-making while in the field. This confidence, in turn, seems to have provided senior officers with the idea that the presence of the researcher and the research effort itself was justly motivated.

Yet despite of the relative success of this negotiation of expectations between researcher and those whose activity was being researched, concerns about confidentiality operated as limitations for the study, not only in terms of access but also and more importantly in terms of the breadth and depth of interpretation. Understanding this limitation is crucial when researching the public sector, because the access to and intervention over the data collected is not just about the trust that emerges out of a negotiation of expectations. As Lavenchy (2013:679) points out when referring to what she calls a dissonant alignment experience of researching State institutions:

“Once blessed by the hierarchy, the job was far from being done. Aiming at understanding insiders' perspectives required the building of close relations. Negotiating productive conditions of collaboration has been addressed by scholars through topics such as trust, fieldwork alliances and disclosure. Ethical

issues arise regarding the constitutive tension between the necessity and the extent of disclosure, and the way to deal with the instrumental character of a relation motivated by the necessity to produce (useful) data”.

Following Lavenchy’s indication (2013) from a Lacanian standpoint, the inquiry over the experience of public servants, as it is told and acted by them before the researcher, should always consider the fact that collaborative rapports built are ultimately put to serve the programme of a scientist-subject (see Wozniak, 2010), who can only follow his/her self-imposed command to generate useful (and thus new) data, in this case about the underbelly of bureaucratic activity carried out by public servants, by disclosing (some of) their hidden and/or unconscious conditions of possibility. In this sense, the ‘blessings of the hierarchy’, which can only be persistently sought after by the researcher in order to make the research effort viable, can paradoxically become a kind of ‘curse’. This is because they impede the full disclosure of names, locations and objects-at-play which would boost the validity of critical interpretation gestures enormously. As Lavenchy (2013) points out, betrayal is often inevitable, yet it cannot dominate the researcher’s activity as the conditions of the researcher’s own interpretive desire rely on a previous construction of trust, a trust which in the Lacanian terms of this study signals the fantasy of bureaucracy – of giving and complying with official ‘permissions’ to access data - as a guarantee for the generation of legitimate, enjoyable identities. This represents a particular form of psychoanalytically-informed ethics, which foregrounds the researcher as an active subject who is supposed to take responsibility for the desire of interpreting and not act as a passive

decipherer of 'emerging orders' in the data (Wozniak, 2010; Lapping, 2011). It is one in which the desire to interpret can be assumed as leading to 'cursed' failure as the impossibility of disclosure (potentially leading to fascinating research insights, of a critical kind), and correspondingly, as a form of transference love or respect towards the viability of the State's bureaucratic procedures and symbolic boundaries (McSwite, 1997b).

In practice, confidentiality concerns were raised mostly by the researcher, from the beginning of the research effort. Extensive notes on this were kept on a research journal. While senior officers and public servants made some comments, particularly about the contents in the consent form handed to them prior to interviews, they did not seem to find the research as breaching confidentiality conventions; as mentioned above, they considered the research and the researcher to be quite neutral, once his identification with the business school was clarified.

These confidentiality concerns greatly limit the disclosure of details about the public sector institutions observed (e.g. their names, locations, composition, among others) and the specific roles they played in intervening over educational public policy, particularly the one regarding quality. This implies that interpretations about the relationship between educational policy, in the context of Chile and elsewhere, and the subjectivity of public servants cannot be sustained using the data, which has been presented as unspecific regarding the educational realm where it was collected from. Overall, the 'educational side' of public servant discourse has been blurred due to confidentiality

concerns (in the name of bureaucratic interpretability, which requires public servant trust), and this can be seen as thwarting the capacity to deploy not only a technical but also a political critique of educational reforms as they are being organised by public servants.

Because of this limitation, It is of most importance to acknowledge the need to explore these connections further, and to consider the possibility of degrees of dissonance, ambiguity and even betrayal (Lavenchy, 2013) that could be at stake in future research when conducting such exploration.

Data collection techniques

Data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation (Creswell, 2013). Internal documents were considered as potential sources of data initially but they were not included in the end, so that interview and observation data would be foregrounded more prominently. Group interviews were also considered initially but then discarded as a possibility for the abovementioned reason and also because of the inhibitions that they might had triggered in the public servants, affecting their willingness to share reports on their implementation experience.

It is important to note, as elaborated previously in this chapter, that data collection techniques were selected and implemented in consideration of two strategies for inquiry, one narrative and the other ethnographic. Of these two, it is the latter that provides a more encompassing and coherent frame for the utilisation of data collection techniques, and for the understanding of the former. In this sense, the entire process of data collection can be seen as an

ongoing process of non-participant observation in which the complex process of implementation as a whole, rather than the narrative-object produced by an individual during an interview, was the main focus of attention.

The importance of this understanding is related to the blurring of the separation between the theoretical components and the methodological ones, which the ethnographic approach enables (Hamera, 2013). Accordingly, in this case, an ethnographic approach is associated with a Lacanian understanding of subjectivity, which directly informs the methodological prescription of data collection techniques as well as the analysis of data collected, not the other way around.

It is thus necessary to briefly consider the Lacanian understanding of subjectivity, and the way in which such understanding situates the interactive process of interviewing. As Hoedemaekers proposes (2010: 383), a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective conceives of subjectivity as emerging from the inter-subjective articulation of discourse and assumes identification and the generation of meanings of self as a form of collusion, in which both counterparts, interviewer and interviewee desire to recognize themselves (i.e. their own consistency of self) in the speech of the other. The idea of collusion in this context should be understood as what Lacan considers to be the imaginary register of identification, which designates the conscious misrecognition of self as a coherent image reflected on the other in detriment of the unconscious, symbolic conditions of discourse (in this case, bureaucratic) that grant an identification its social validity and prompt an experience of

affective satisfaction (Roberts, 2005). Overall, in accordance to these Lacanian insights, interviewee situations are broadly considered as instances of ethnographic observation, which are able to prompt live responses from subjects in the studied setting, responses which are valuable and relevant because of their status as real, embodied discursive engagements. In other words, interviews are seen not as indexes of narrative objects, stable in their signification; they are rather seen as live pragmatic encounters that sustain the endless reflective process of the interviewer (Alvesson, 2003; Frosh & Baraitser, 2008) and allow him/her to observe how his/her own affective attachment to the interview serves to 'twist' a straightforward and 'certain' interpretation of the meaning and function of interview interaction.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with public servants by means of an interview guide (Creswell, 2013), which thematised diverse issues/aspects of policy implementation, including the perception of policy purposes, the channels and procedures through which the command to implement policy was given, the criteria and procedures for the coordination of bureaucratic work, the relationship between supervisors and supervisees, the perception of self-efficacy in the workplace, the perception of satisfaction of recipients or 'clients' that used or benefited from the outcomes or products generated, the perception and evaluation of organisational climate, and the description and evaluation of tasks associated to the implementation roles, among other issues. The interview guide also inquired over the evolution of the enrolment of public servants, thematising their previous professional and educational background

and the history of changes in the (formal and informal) definition of their role. Additionally, the guide thematised public servants' general views on the advantages and disadvantages of working in the public sector setting, and on the unfolding of the policy implementation process as a whole.

The specific contents and order of the guide, however, kept changing as interviews were conducted, depending on the rapport established with the interviewees and the specific themes that emerged.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in relatively stable succession, over the course of three months.

Non-participant observations were conducted during formal meetings and presentations and during informal instances of socialization. Some of the non-participant observations were conducted outside the formal spatial limits of the departments/autonomous agencies, for example, during meetings public servants held with school teachers and directors in educational settings.

Data collected

Firstly, 23 interviews were held and recorded in audio using an electronic device. The duration of interviews ranged from 60 minutes to 100 minutes. On average interviews lasted 70 minutes. All interviewees signed informed consent forms that were delivered before the interview session started. All 23 interviews were transcribed by the interviewer-researcher. Following Hoedemaekers (2010), the transcription of interviews noted instances of hesitation, prosodic emphasis, pauses (measured in seconds), silences,

intensification of speech rhythm and incomplete or fumbled words or sentences. Extensive notes were taken during and after the interviews, to record perceptions of the interview rapport, non-verbal communication, informal conversation and material conditions of the interviews (i.e. the location, surroundings and features of the setting where the interview took place).

Secondly, approximately 15 hours of non-participant observations were held. Impressions of and insights on them were recorded in the form of field notes and entries on a research diary, which purposefully included narrations of my own perceived involvement in events and my perception of affective states during my practical (yet non-participant) engagement. Diverse events and situations, formal and informal, were observed, including presentations on new work methodologies, timetabling discussions, introductions between teams working on different tasks/projects, interactions around coffee breaks and lunchtime, resolution of emerging incidents and the coordination of the research effort itself, among others. Also, a 1-day visit to a school, in which new educational-quality-related data collection methodology was being tested through interviews and meetings with school staff, was observed.

The data collected was initially codified and categorised according to emerging narrative themes, that is to say, according to recurrent descriptions made and stories told or heard around work events, which also demonstrated to coincide amidst interviewee reports or observed situations/events. The purpose of the coding was to provide a map of the narratives that seemed prevalent amidst

public servant discourse within the boundaries of a particular policy implementation command being ‘translated’ into organisational practices. The initial coding provided a rough yet encompassing ‘sketch’ of the main narrative themes that concentrated, stabilised and arranged the flow of public servant discourse, which served as starting point for the theoretically-informed categorisation conducted through the data analysis stage proper. Such categorisation will be presented in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Out of the 23 interviews, 9 interviews were selected to feature prominently in the data analysis section. Even though the analysis of narrative themes was influenced by the insights drawn from all interviews, the testimonies of these 9 public servants were quoted extensively and taken as illustrative discursive articulations. The identity of these 9 key interviewees has been kept secret for confidentiality purposes, yet some details about their situation can be provided. In what follows they are briefly characterized:

- Romina is a woman close to 60 years of age who works as a senior implementation manager. She oversees a team of implementation supervisors and reports to politically-influenced senior officials located at the top levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy. She had previously worked in the private sector as an advisor to policy-makers and she was offered her current position mostly for her political allegiances, contacts in the educational private sector and views on administration. She has extensive knowledge of the legal constraints to the policy implementation process.

- Lucia is a woman just over 30 years of age who works as an implementer, mostly around communicational tasks, such as the reporting of information to educational counterparts. She works with a team of other implementers but also autonomously. She has many years of experience working in the educational areas of the public sector, specifically around topics of curriculum and evaluation. Her current position was offered to her as part of a relocation, in which members of a public sector department were assimilated to equivalent roles in another institution.
- Feliciano is a man just over 30 years of age. He works as an implementer, mostly on communicational tasks, like Lucia. He works autonomously, and focuses on presenting finished products to supervisors and colleagues who provide feedback and approve their use. He has a background in art and humanities. His current position was offered to him once he had taken part on a recruitment process conducted by an external agency.
- Fernando is a man just over 30 years of age. He works as an implementer, mostly on research and educational data management tasks. He is part of a team of several implementers who work under loose output-based supervision. His current position was offered to him after he had started working for the public sector as internal consultant. He began as an external researcher and was subsequently promoted by senior implementers in charge of piloting the initial design for policy

implementation. He has close relationships with politically-swayed senior officials.

- Julieta is a woman just over 30 years of age. She works as an implementer, mostly on project management and educational research tasks. She works autonomously, reporting products to her supervisor, with whom she has a close relationship. Her current position was offered to her after she had worked for some time in public higher education institutions as researcher. She has a background in the social sciences.
- Javiera is a woman just over 30 years of age. She works as an implementation supervisor, mostly on project management and research tasks. She works autonomously and reports to politically-swayed senior officials. Her position was offered to her after she had worked as researcher in the private sector. She has established a very close relation with her supervisees and her supervision style can be described as informal and transactional.
- Paulina is a woman of about 25 years of age. She works as implementer, mostly on the construction of instruments for the evaluation of educational quality. She is part of a team of implementers, working under close supervision based on performance indicators. Her position was offered to her after she was promoted from her role as external advisor, a role she had come to play because of personal connections.
- Alberto is a man just over 40 years of age. He works as a senior implementation manager, leading processes of resource and financial

planning. He reports to politically-swayed officials of high stature and has a close relationship with them. His current position was offered to him based on personal connections. He has an entrepreneurial background and was part of the team that undertook the design of the policy implementation effort.

- Ivana is a woman close to 40 years of age. She works as implementation supervisor, mostly focusing on data management and research tasks. She has a background in research. She holds personal connections to politically-swayed senior officials, which led her to her current position. She works autonomously on a role that has not been defined clearly. Accordingly, her supervision style is informal and loose.

Issues of translation

Undoubtedly, the translation of data, particularly interview data, from Spanish (in its Chilean use) to English imposed a challenge to the research effort. Considering the Lacanian theoretical framework that orientates this thesis methodologically, the detailed analysis of particular significations demonstrates to be crucial to gain an understanding of the constitution and also the failure of self-meanings. Such an approach thus calls for the reflective insights on the problem of translating or transposing the attribution of meaning of significations made by the researcher, along with researched subject, in one language, to another.

From the perspective of this study, such process of translation is assumed as an embodied, gendered one, or as Fotaki & Harding propose (2013), a

'hysterical' one (see also Lapping, 2013). What this implies is that the desire of the researcher, rooted in his/her sexual, social, political and cultural history, is taken to the fore in its destabilising capacity rather than suppressed or invisibilized for purposes of interpretive accuracy or consistency, and thus, of knowledge validation in a scientific way. This does not mean of course that this study of organisation is not involved in a social-scientific endeavour, guided in part by the discourse of science, but rather that the interpretive position of the study puts the effects and purposes of the scientific discourse into question from within its own actualization (Wozniak, 2010).

The consequences of the abovementioned assumption for the translation of data are related to the premises that guide the general analysis and interpretation of discourse in this case. From the perspective of this study, the articulation of discourse is not only to be analysed in its temporarily stable patterning, which would be seen as indexing a specific rule for the subjective production of self-meaning. It will also and perhaps more committedly be analysed in its un-stabilizing movement, a movement for which the researcher, as an agent gendered in his/her desire, is responsible, due to his observational and interpretive action (Lapping, 2013; Fotaki & Harding, 2013). Hence, in this case, the destabilizing, entropic nature of translation is considered a fundamental or at least normal part of the research efforts and outcomes, assuming that the 'division of languages' in the researcher's experience of self usefully reflects the subjective division that this study seeks to foreground and understand in its analysis of the empirical data.

In practical terms, measures were taken to deal with issues of translation during the data collection phase and the data analysis phase. Interview notes, field notes and research diary entries were elaborated using Spanish and English language alternately and interchangeably, allowing the meanings (i.e. narratives) and significations observed to be recorded from differing subjective standpoints and the posterior interpretation of them to be made in a more nuanced way. Additionally, the analysis of data paid attention to all cases in which significations made in Spanish could lead to different interpretation of narrative meaning in English, the language in which the thesis was to be written. All cases in which this difference was relevant were reported in the data analysis section through the use of footnotes.

* * *

This section has outlined and justified the selection of design, strategies and techniques for the collection of empirical data. It has also described the data collected and discussed issues of translation related to the collection process and the analytic process it informs.

The next section will situate the empirical case, briefly discussing its history and implications and describing its features.

The empirical case: The implementation of educational quality assurance policy in Chilean State bureaucracy.

The empirical case selected for this study of public servant identification with bureaucratic work following the command of policy implementation is located, spatially and historically, in the context of the Chilean State, particularly, in the Chilean State's involvement with educational policy.

The studied case can be defined as the implementation of a new educational quality assurance policy by means of the organisation and re-organisation of several departments/autonomous agencies of the Chilean State bureaucracy. The organisation of these institutions, and the formal interrelation between them, has been legally prescribed by specific legal texts (policies) as part of a 'National Educational Quality Assurance System'.

In order to situate the case it is important to briefly and critically describe the historical relation of educational policing and State bureaucracy in the Chilean context.

The trends that Chilean educational policy has been recently following can be traced back in its origins at least 20 years back, when Chile was beginning a political transition towards democracy after Augusto Pinochet's 17 year-long right-wing military dictatorship. This transitioning period not only meant recovering proper electoral, legislative and judicial institutions, but also deciding upon the inheritance of an extremely neo-liberalized set of public policies and laws that were developed during the 1970's under the conservative advice of constitutional master-minds and the consultancy of economists

trained in Chicago under Milton Friedman's free-market doctrines. Following a trend seen in several Latin American countries, and certainly in the UK under Prime Minister Thatcher, the main aim of these policies was to decentralize and promote private competition in all basic services deliveries, while strengthening central macroeconomic control from an extremely thinned yet highly efficient state bureaucracy (Kaufman, 1999).

Influenced by the popular demands for achieving life standards of a developed country and the aspirations of a consumer-minded and politically deactivated population (Silva, 2004), among other factors, the 'transition' left-wing governments decided to accept and balance these policies into a viable 'third way' instead of politically confronting them. As a result, by the end of transition all of the main goals pursued by neoliberal policies were practically achieved and all basic services including pensions, health and education were widely privatized in their delivery to the population (Vergara, 1997). This moment of consolidation in the beginning of the 1990's can be seen as the culmination, indeed the triumph, of a de-politicized, technocratic project for reforming the State administration in Chile that had been building up gradually since the 1920's (Silva, 2009).

The evolution of educational policy under these conditions of transition has been marked by a reformist spirit, inspired by the values of democracy and inclusion/participation, which championed the struggle to overcome dictatorship rule. However, it can be argued that the discourses about an ideal democratic education have been instated under "the broad frame of a social

and political model of theories about development and modernization ... relevant to make the whole of education functional to the economic growth of the country” (Ruiz, 2010). This enmeshment meant the progressive overshadowing of “concerns about equity, accessibility, autonomy or the contribution of higher education to social transformation, which were prevalent during previous decades” with “concerns about excellence, efficiency, expenditures and rates of return” (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002, p.429). Such overshadowing was perceivable both at the level of the schools through the establishment of a voucher-system for school choice (Gauri, 1998) and at a higher education level through privatization (Brunner, 1993). Consequently, the ideological support of the educational ‘model’, that is, the masonry of successive policies, triggered over time by different political dynamics, is seen as based on the premise that a technocratic bureaucracy, a neo-liberalized economy and a politics of democracy could all be well integrated into forms of hybridized ideals of government before and after the transition.

This discursive arrangement was best conveyed by the creation in 1991 of the Program for the Improvement of Quality and Equality in Education, officially in charge of driving what was called the ‘first reform’ of post dictatorship education in democratic Chile, targeted at issues of funding, coverage, access and curriculum. The instalment of such project at the core of bureaucracy, namely, the Ministry of Education, in charge of all relevant policies, set a

cornerstone for the institution of ‘quality-for-equality’ as the central *motif* that was to drive the organising of educational policy.

Under this program, the meanings of both quality and equality were explicitly coalesced into an overarching policy which drove the State to modify its working ethos and practices. On the one hand, the industrial origins of the notion of ‘quality’ were signified as measurable representations (processes and results) of the learning needs of the population; on the other hand, the socio-political resonances of ‘equality’ were signified as the fair measurement and assignment of resources in views to compensate (and of course diminish) the precariousness of the population (Cox, 1997). Such signification of ‘equality-*via*-quality’ propelled the Ministry of Education to organize itself as the central planning agency at the service of a decentralized semi-private network of educational delivery, and paved the way for a second wave of reforms in the beginning of the 2000’s, aiming at extending quality-processes-for-equality-results to areas like teacher training and evaluation (Fardella & Sisto, 2013).

Fifteen years after the reforms, however, the bureaucratic project of implementing what could be called ‘(e)quality’ education (Morley, 2003) faced an incrementing sense of injustice and malaise on the population, which seemed to be unsatisfied with the promises of national development included in this project, and also with the political stability and macroeconomic success that was supposedly accompanying them (Bellei, Contreras & Valenzuela, 2010). For Chilean sociologists like Rojas (2012), this constituted a response to the aggravating effects of segregation and the unequal distribution of wealth

produced by the 'third way' that incorporated a neoliberalized, free-market logic to the State administration of social service delivery during the transition. On April 2006 massive student protests were launched on a scale unseen since the late 1980's when resistance against the dictatorship was fervent (Bellei, Contreras & Valenzuela, 2010). An estimate between 400.000 and 600.000 teenagers mobilized into the streets and seized control of their schools, living and campaigning there for almost five months. At first they were blunt in demanding better living conditions in their shabby school buildings and direct economic compensations like free transportation, in search for signs of a more levelled educational playing field. Yet eventually they aimed their demands at a higher political level, requesting an abolishment of neoliberally-inspired educational laws in the Political Constitution, which they regarded as the ultimate cause of all inequalities (Rojas, 2012).

The response of government and congress to this state of social unease was swift, but again in alignment with the 'third way' promoted by the policy discourse on 'equality-*via*-quality'. By the end of 2006 a political agreement between all major Chilean political parties led to a constitutional amendment and the development of a new educational policy to create a 'National Educational Quality Assurance System' (NEQAS) for both preschool, primary, secondary levels and higher education (Bellei, Contreras & Valenzuela, 2010). This policy was conveyed through Law N°20.529 (Ministerio de educacion, 2011), which articulated the idea of 'quality-*via*-equality' in the first paragraph of its first article:

“It is a duty of the State to assure a quality education in its different levels. To carry out such responsibility an Educational Quality Assurance System will be created ... The system’s purpose will be to assure equality, understood as equal access of all students to the same opportunities of quality education”.

By the time of writing, the implementation of this policy is still in progress. The many modifications that it requires from the educational areas in State bureaucracy are still being devised. At the same time, the popular demands that were placed after the NEQAS was announced are still being promoted by large student movements and civil society through recurrent demonstrations and interventions in the media (Rojas, 2012).

The trajectory of the educational areas of the Chilean State bureaucracy that has been briefly and critically presented above allows delimiting the empirical case with enough clarity.

The case of bureaucratic work organisation this research will be concerned with is the implementation of the NEQAS policy, which was agreed in 2006 and which formally began to command bureaucratic work in 2012 after the official publication of laws N°20529 and N°20129 on educational quality assurance, following consecutive processes of stages of amendment.

In particular, the research will be concerned with the experience of public servants during their engagement with bureaucratic work in four distinct but interrelated departments/autonomous agencies of State administration (whose exact location and characteristics cannot be revealed in order to comply with confidentiality standards).

At this point in the characterization of the case, it is of most importance to note that the educational quality policy that this study is centrally concerned with does not provide, in its legal text form, any working definition of the meaning, justification and consequences of educational quality.

Although the signifier 'quality' is mentioned extensively throughout the main text containing policy prescriptions, the notion of quality is not set to be meaningful on its own (Valdebenito, 2011). Rather, the idea of quality serves only to command the creation and administration of a large and diverse number of procedures, defined and characterized with great operational detail in the policy text. These include the definition, measurement and evaluation of learning standards and other relevant educational standards (e.g. about school administration, student and staff health conditions, school climate, gender equality, etc.); the accounting of compliance with legal and financial standards; the monitoring and sanctioning of schools' failure to comply with any of the abovementioned standards; and the reception of complaints about any of the abovementioned procedures by students, members of school staff or members of the general public, among many others.

It is this particular omission of an explicit, rich and meaningful definition of educational quality that calls for the specific Lacanian approach this research project engages with. As argued above and in previous chapters, this can be related to the neoliberal, corporate, technocratic values and practices that have permeated the Chilean public sector, supressing the sway that socio-political narratives had had over it and replacing it with an entrepreneurial rationale

for an effective, efficient and accountable State administration (Fardella & Sisto, 2013; du Gay, 2013). It is the lack of a general, clear purpose or guideline for implementation - one that would be able to make sense of the massive social movement and political conflict around educational reform (as perceived constantly in the media) - which generates uncertainty and turmoil during bureaucratic organisation (Fotaki, 2010). Accordingly, public servant identification can be seen as a constant psycho-social process mobilized by a desire, of a defensive kind, to experience a sense of meaningfulness or 'exactitude' during the policy implementation process. For Lacanian theory this is a desire that can only lead to the hasty discursive construction of a meaning of self, a meaning that will prove to be inconsistent or 'inexact' in relation to the shared network of significations of bureaucratic work.

Finally, in order to complete the presentation of the case this interpretive study is based on, it is important to briefly acknowledge how gender has played a role in the (re-)production of cultural elements and social interactions in the general context of the Chilean State. Taking this dynamic into consideration is vital if a nuanced appreciation of the affective dimension of subjectivity, which this study focuses on, is to be achieved.

Such an understanding of gender must consider two different processes related to public sector management in the Chilean case. On the one hand, the process through which the bureaucratic organisational structure (i.e. the set of defined roles, their assignment and the coordination between them) has been oriented both explicitly and implicitly according to gender-based criteria. On the other

hand, the process of gender acculturation in the general Chilean (urban) setting, which serves to (re)produce a largely male-driven political economy of domestic life, whose values advocate that professional men should identify mostly with the achievement of 'breadwinning' goals and that professional women should identify mostly with the sensitive practice of care (Nuñez, 2015). The analysis of data that will be presented in the following chapters will reveal how these processes have come to play a central role in the case of quality policy implementation this study is concerned with (see Morley, 2005 for an international comparison). It will do so, particularly in relation to the negotiation work that female implementers have to conduct when facing senior policy-making agents and to the intense feelings they develop towards counterparts/clients of their implementation work; for instance, of guilt when facing educational clients/beneficiaries, and of anger when facing counterparts who thwart or delay their implementation work.

The signification(s) of gender available in the general Chilean cultural context, and particularly in the public sector setting where educational policy is progressively organised, have played a significant role in prompting satisfying public servant identities, and more importantly, in guaranteeing the construction of fantasies that allow public servant desire to be affectively regulated. In turn, these identities and their fantasmatic support(s) serve to implicitly and explicitly (re-)produce a male-driven order, where female affectivity is assumed as best suited to work out or 'take good care' of the conflicts and inconsistencies during the negotiation of policy implementation

aims. The forthcoming analysis of data will illustrate this by pinpointing the subjective enjoyment (*jouissance*) on which this reproduction relies. Even though the analysis will not be focused on foregrounding the identification with narratives about gender identity or differences between the sexes, it will certainly serve to visibilize the imperviousness of justifications about a female identification with ‘implementation-as-care’ (among other gender-based understandings), caused by the function of desire as a (discursive) quest for affective enjoyment.

This section has characterized the empirical case this study pays attention to. The next section will provide a schematic presentation of the Lacanian concepts that enable the analysis of data collected from the case.

The analysis of data: main concepts and procedure.

The concept of identification as lack

Drawing from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, this section distinguishes key concepts for the purposes of analysing organizational identification or the construction of identity as a process of signification performed by a speaking subject. This represents a broad alignment with post-structuralist approaches to organization that have addressed the process of signification as an enactment of ‘discourse’, a category that includes not only enunciations-as-text but also practice and action (Cederström & Spicer, 2014).

Lacan’s theory of the speaking subject works over the possibilities of discourse analysis in at least two different ways. It does this, firstly, by introducing a

theory about the never-fixed relationship between the signifier and the meaning or the signified. Secondly, it does this by introducing a theory of the relationship between the subject of discourse (the position of enunciation) and the objects that exceed its capacity to anticipate and appraise itself as a set of discursive possibilities; for example, its bodily affects. Although the itinerary of Lacan's teaching was much nuanced, his complex theory of subjectivity can be understood as an evolution from his initial theory of the signifier to his subsequent theory of the exceeded/excessive subject. Among other things, these engagements allow to elaborate on the excessive or un-conscious side of subjection / subjectivation to power, redefining conceptions of discursive stabilization, reproduction and resistance, and also to conceptualize processes of de-subjectivation in which the subject is prompted to repudiate or empty its own stable self in order to comply with the ideals that orientate contemporary organizational settings (Binkley, 2011; De Vos, 2009).

The evolution of Lacan's theory can be gauged by his categorization of subjectivity in terms of registers, namely, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and the relations between them. Initially, Lacan began by defining how an identity of meaning can only be ephemerally produced by signification, that is to say, by defining the relation between the particular rules of a symbolic network of signifiers that reign over meaning and the partial and illusory identity such network produced. Followingly, Lacan set out to understand the cause behind this ephemerality of identity meaning, which implied the truth for the subject, the clear semblance of its own imaginary of self. The conclusion

he arrived at was that the symbolic network the subject engages with (and emerges from) is constitutively lacking, that the element it lacked was radically outside its possibilities, and that the subject represents the exact instance in which a renewed effort of signification (within the symbolic network) is mobilized with aims to suture the lack and guarantee an identity of meaning (and thus a positive self-shape for the subject). Lacan used the term 'real' to name the dimension that escapes this insistence of the subject in rebuilding its imaginary identity over the lack in its own symbolic foundations, and at the same time, to name the objects that stood for that very impossibility amidst the narratives the subject deploys as part of such insistence.

Regarding the problem of identification, Lacan's theorization can be seen as a journey that commences when the illusory or imaginary effects of identity are distilled from the symbolic structures of subjectivity, and which ends (or at least veers) when the possibilities of the symbolic structures, including the imaginary efficacy of identity, are interrupted and earthed by the co-substantial impossibilities that infiltrate them. This is when identity becomes precisely "what is missing from discourse in which identity is articulated as a definable entity, as this is [in itself] an imaginary construction that necessarily fails". (Driver, 2009a: 488) Nonetheless, following recent studies like Müller's (2012), the relevance of Lacan's theory to the study of identification should not only be understood chronologically but also dialectically, in order to appreciate the constant tension between the former focus on possibility and the latter focus on impossibility. Müller (2012) foregrounds the idea of lack as the key to

understand the articulation between these two stages or instances, taking advantage of the reflexivity in its conceptualization. According to this approach, identification can be conceived as both the process through which the subject 'struggles' with lack and 'works it out' by constantly re-signifying it, one could say by 're-cover-ing' it, (Driver, 2009b), and the process through which the subject is reduced to pure lack by the failure of its struggles to become identity.

Lack is thus a concept that names the paradox of emerging a subject and recognizing one-self as determined/determinable by any discursive truth about reality while remaining always un-determined/un-determinable by any speech that seems truthful. As Lacan (1998) would put it, it is the paradox of the impersonal yet embodied eyes with which the subject looks at and distinguishes himself/herself as part of an organized setting, where others like him/her, who actively gaze at him/her, offer him/her the possibility of an identity (Wozniak, 2010). Accurately, and abstractly, lack is the signifier that designates the place of subjectivity in discourse-as-the-social; the subject is constituted as lack when s/her engages with discursivity, even if, and precisely because, that lack can be filled or covered discursively/narratively. As Driver says, what identity is, is that it is not (2009b: 488); identity is the name that marks a lack and which attempts to fill it by naming and operating it (discursively).

Yet, as Müller emphasizes (2012), another Lacanian concept is required to clarify the workings of this paradoxical relation between subject and lack: the concept of *jouissance*, also called enjoyment.

The conceptualization of jouissance: six paradigms

Essentially, *jouissance* represents the reverse of satisfaction and pleasure. It depends on the latter, but it indicates the dialectical emergence of their opposite. Going back to the Freudian roots in Lacan's theorization, pleasure can be understood as the basic bio-psychic mechanism for the seeking of satisfaction, commanded by the Ego and guided by a functional adjustment to reality. This seeking could be about physical homeostasis, a forgotten memory, love, the hidden meaning of a dream and of course identity, the Ego's garments, as long as it was verified as 'truthful' to desire and hence, really pleasurable. Lacan conceived such mechanism in fact not as a psychological interiority but rather as an effect of discourse, a subjective position, which nonetheless is able to operate over the 'speaking body'.

Both authors coincided in theorizing an excessive dimension to this operations towards pleasure, something beyond or outside the possibilities of the pleasurable in 'speaking one's truth that pushed the psyche towards the unpleasurable and traumatic. However, while Freud (and especially British post-Freudians) embraced the idea that this excess was rooted biologically and ontogenetically, Lacan insisted on understanding subjectivity, and its excesses, as effects of discourse and language. He introduced the idea of *jouissance*, accordingly, to represent what exceeds the symbolic network and its imaginary

efficacy. It is a name to signal the 'real' outside or beyond discourse (and yet within it), a dimension about which a straightforward definition cannot be produced discursively.

While lack designates a void that can be hollowed out and then rightfully filled by identity, *jouissance* designates the pure form of the void: the mute contours of a hole that empties any discourse about identity or the null place of identity within the pure formality of language, where the subject stops surviving (for a brief moment). *Jouissance* is pure negativity; the negativity of identity as a possibility for the subject, which nevertheless ends up enticing the subject with the prospects of the next identification project. This is why the name for this pure instance – enjoyment - remains ambiguous. It is not pure trauma, but rather the purity of the negative form of anything pleasurable, the unconscious core in anything pleasurable or enjoyable for the subject that can turn it into an uncannily painful experience for him in the blink of an eye. True enjoyment, for Lacan, is always-already excessive, and this is a fact the subject will be confronted with sooner than later.

The impossibility of defining *jouissance* as something positive (Glynos, 2011), however, does not mean that *jouissance* cannot be characterized as part of the discourse that makes up subjectivity and human existence. In fact, in the context of organization and management studies, and elsewhere in cultural studies and the social sciences, several characterizations have been proposed. This certainly is a consequence of the appropriation of Lacan's work by the logics of contemporary academic publishing, whose standards demands clear

cut definitions that are also able to be integrated with other theories. The result, although useful to disseminate the value of Lacanian theory in disciplinary settings which would otherwise never had met it, can many times be confusing for the readers. Studies have spoken of *jouissance* either too succinctly, as a concept in the margins of working theory and empirically not workable, or too transcendently, as a category of philosophical range that validates certain conclusions drawn from a more grounded level.

For the purposes of the present study, *jouissance* will be seen as corresponding to neither of these readings. It must be said that several scholars have rendered Lacan's ideas intelligible for organization inquiry, respecting its nuanced, paradoxical formality (e.g. Stavrakakis, 2008). However, the growing multitude of Lacanian studies, driven by the appeal of novelty perhaps, is saturating the field more and more, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. Moreover, some of the blame that is to be placed on organizational scholars should also be put over Lacan's many elaborations on *jouissance* throughout his teaching, as this variety also contribute to obscure the function of the concept in his psychoanalytic understanding of subjectivity and the social.

The problem at hand is how to organize the different theoretical variations of the concept of *jouissance* that emanate from Lacan and organizational scholarship. This task is an epistemological one, requiring the separation of diverse strands of conceptualization, the evaluation of its contribution in relation to diverse aspects of academic research and the appreciation of the

bridges they can build between psychoanalytic and other socio, political or economic theories that are relevant for organization and management studies. Such a process of theoretical distinction not only adds reflexivity to academic work, creating categories to pinpoint the subject position of the researcher as s/he attempts to name *jouissance* through (academic) discourse, (Lapping, 2011; Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). In addition, it can also reveal the utility of the concept of *jouissance*, in its diverse versions, to engage with long-standing problems in organization and management literature like resistance and control, among others. Organizational identification is one of these established problems and a richer categorization of *jouissance* as a dimension of discourse could contribute to a critical constructive assessment of the catalogue of literature on the issue, particularly from a psychoanalytic standpoint (Driver, 2009a, 2009b; Müller, 2012; Kenny, 2012)

The categorization of the concept of *jouissance* this study will propose is based on the work of Jacques-Alain Miller, the appointed editor of Lacan's seminars and one of the most versed commentators of his oeuvre. Miller (2000) traces the progression of Lacan's conceptualization of *jouissance* from the beginning of his teaching to the very end, providing a synoptic understanding of the relation between *jouissance*, the real, and the imaginary efficacy of a lacking symbolic register. Miller's reading, although described in chronological fashion, should not only be comprehended as a linear evolution where one stage renders the previous one obsolete. As McGowan states, "one can put them [the paradigms of *jouissance*] in synchronic relation with each other, so

that rather than competing with each other, they exist in supplementary fashion” (McGowan, 2013: 273-4). In this sense, Miller’s paradigms of Lacanian theory can be seen not as attempts to create a meta-theory of *jouissance* that would account for the validity of different versions, but rather as an attempt to place understandings of *jouissance* to work for and against one another, supplementing but also interrupting the grasp they can provide of the Real for the subject. Miller’s intention is to underline the traumatic deadlocks of the ‘Lacanian’ as subject, locating the *jouissance* in her very capacity to characterize *jouissance* through discourse on paradigms, yet considering this (im)possibility of stabilizing a stable reading (in Lacan’s work and in the subject’s concrete experience), as an opportunity.

Miller circumscribes six paradigms of *jouissance* in Lacan’s oeuvre. They are summarized in Figure 1, along with a description of its main theoretical features, the function that identification plays in each one of them and the studies in organization and management literature that serve as examples of the type of understanding each paradigm provides.

Understandings of <i>Jouissance</i>	Main Features	Tension of Identification	Exemplary references in org. studies literature
1 st Paradigm: Imaginarisation	<i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of narcissistic satisfaction of perceiving a unified self in the mirror image. It emerges once the image has been realized as incomplete, as the subject becomes alienated.	Identification as imaginary self-unity v/s symbolic alienation	Roberts, 2005, Fotaki, 2010
2 nd Paradigm Signifiantisation	<i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of the signifier, the spoken word beyond meaning, which flows mediated by instances of ciphering and deciphering. It emerges when the hidden meaning resists interpretation as a symptom appears.	Identification as fantasmatic ciphering / deciphering v/s symptomatic embodiment.	

<p>3rd Paradigm</p> <p>Impossible <i>Jouissance</i></p>	<p><i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of discourse as an imaginary-symbolic construction of the meanings of reality. It is the real, which can never be fully captured by signification, and thus threatens the stabilizing effects of discourse, but which also propels the forward movement of desire and symbolic articulation as a defence against the impossibility of total meaning construction.</p>	<p>Identification as finding wholeness in the objects of desire that populate fantasy v/s spectral haunting of the objects of desire</p>	<p>Stavrakakis, 2008 Driver, 2009a, 2009b Müller, 2012</p>
<p>4th Paradigm</p> <p>Normal <i>Jouissance</i></p>	<p><i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of embodied discursivity. It is the impossibility of concrete satisfaction when prescribed by the subject as a realistic deduction of his/her own normal existence. Thus, it is the excess caused by objects that are not sublime but taken for granted in their familiarity.</p>	<p>Identification as finding a support for self- determination v/s division of determinability in self-speech (cause), instances of interruption.</p>	<p>Hoedemaekers, 2010 Wozniak, 2010</p>

<p>5th Paradigm</p> <p>Discursive</p> <p><i>Jouissance</i></p>	<p><i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of all forms of discourse, insofar as it energizes their capacity for subjective interpretation via the division of the signifier from the object of desire. It emerges when truth emerges as knowable, as a residue of truth.</p>	<p>Identification as constant re-definition of modes and effects of subjective truth in relation to offerings of knowledge v/s Identification with subjectivity as a residue in relation to the institution of discourse as knowledge.</p>	<p>Cremin, 2010, Sköld, 2010</p>
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<p>6th Paradigm Non-Rapport</p>	<p><i>Jouissance</i> is the excess of embodied experience over discursivity as a whole. <i>Jouissance</i> is assumed as the radical disjunctions between the signification of the social link and the experience of bodily satisfaction. In this sense, <i>jouissance</i> is the affect that is not perceived/perceivable in the body; it is the affect that allows the affect of signification to be detached, to lose its primordial rapport.</p>	<p>Identification as finding a pure difference amidst a field that 'feels' real in its supposed engendering v/s non-rapport, dissolution.</p>	<p>Fotaki & Harding, 2012</p>
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Figure 1: Paradigms of *jouissance*, based on the categorization of Miller (2000).

Although the problem of organizational identification touches on the assumptions of each and every one of the paradigms, as it has been stated above, the present study of empirical material will focus on paradigm number three on impossible *Jouissance*, number four on 'normal *jouissance*' and number five on 'discursive *jouissance*'. Even though the first two and the last paradigms are extremely relevant to any organizational study on identification and there is available literature based on their assumptions (for example, Roberts, 2008 based on paradigm one and two; Fotaki & Harding, 2012, based on paradigm six), this study will focus on the abovementioned ones because of

the protagonist role they have played in shaping debates in organization and management literature so far.

The data analysis chapters of this thesis will engage with emerging themes coming from qualitative analysis by discussing the diverse insights that are allowed by these three paradigmatic uses of the concept of *jouissance*. The focus on identification as lack will be refracted by successive readings of the *jouissance* that causes identity to emerge in discourse. This will provide an enriched appreciation of the possibilities, impossibilities and deadlocks of subjectivity as analysed discursively in the studied organizational setting.

More importantly, it will contest the idea that research itself has an Other, the Other of discourse analysis perhaps, on which the researcher-subject would trust, despite of its impossibility to guarantee the endless re-signification of the social and the advantageous position of the critique of mastery (Wozniak, 2010).

The very idea of paradigms of *jouissance* subverts the universality of the abovementioned Lacanian interpretive stance, by situating the relation between the lack of the symbolic and the affective excess of satisfaction that is *jouissance* as interpretable in not one but multiple modes. This foregrounds the affectivity of the researcher during the research effort, as an embodied desire that identifies with its own version of the scientific-Other (Wozniak, 2010, Lapping 2013). From the perspective of this study, affectivity is obviously material, but such materiality it is not just a realm independent from the symbolic/imaginary effectuation of subjectivity (Lacan's third paradigm).

Affect should also be considered as the name of the ‘discursive trauma’ within the apparent ‘material’ and ‘embodied’ neutrality of the idea of ‘affect’ itself (for instance, affect as emotion). These are insights which can only be considered when the notion of *jouissance* is deployed in at least part of its range (from the ‘earlier Lacan’ to the ‘later Lacan’), so as to include the researcher’s desire, and his/her psychoanalytically-informed interpretive speech, as a constructive yet creatively destructive function of knowledge (Nobus & Quinn, 2005).

Data analysis as an affective-material procedure

Undoubtedly, the use of a psychoanalytic theoretical framework for the analysis of data requires considering the affective-material dimension of researching. In this case, such process of research included the transcription of hours of recorded voices into interview text, the creation of a set of codification rules in response to manifest non-verbal events recorded and then the application of it to the registering of these events in all interview cases, the elaboration of field/research notes on a diary about my impressions and associations on the transcription process, and finally and most importantly, the reading of notes and interview text, followed by the selection and association of sections in them in a meaningful way, according to diverse concepts in a theoretical framework.

As it has been argued consistently in previous chapters, such process seeks to acknowledge the desire of the researcher as constitutive of the research endeavour, and hence, to include the ontological lack that mobilizes the

researcher's desire as one of the fundamental concepts that are supposed to guide the analytic procedure. This implies that the procedure of analysis is not assumed as a straightforward interpretation of the patterns that the data can evidence in correspondence to conceptual premises, in this case, of a Lacanian psychoanalytic kind. Rather, it implies assuming it as a reflective process where surprising, almost deviant discoveries are looked for and where failure of partial outcomes/findings is embraced as a fundamental aspect of successful research (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). In short, the analysis of the data is assumed as the analysis of the desire for making a particular data speak scientifically. This is indeed a task that can only be done through a truly reflexive stance, from which the endless re-sketching of patterns and connections can be celebrated in its partial yet radical in-exactitude and inconsistency, despite and precisely because of the fact that certain patterns will in the end be considered stable enough to become 'a thesis'.

It is crucial to make note, albeit briefly, how this reflexive re-sketching of patterns in the data, in accordance to a theoretical framework, takes place at a material level, and how its abovementioned partial yet radical inconsistency operates in practice.

In concrete terms, such constitutive and productive inconsistency can be appreciated primarily in the researcher's everyday engagement with multiple electronic and paper copies of interview texts and notes (i.e. discursive data), often found in disorganised state, and during his deployment of strategies to distinguish and manage selections of those texts, according to the fundamental

Lacanian distinction between the register of the imaginary, where the narrative outcomes of discursivity appear to hold a unifying sway over the subject's identity, and the register of the symbolic, where the mastery of a seemingly anodyne signifier over a subject's engagement with discourse (i.e. the chain of significations) can be interpreted in its unconscious strangeness.

The affective-material gesture of analysing the data interpretively, following psychoanalytic guidelines, can be appreciated further by considering how the abovementioned elements come to play in the researcher's everyday experience. The example of the analysis of the function of the signifier 'nothing', appearing on the second section (on interruptive *jouissance*) in chapter 5, provides a clear illustration of this.

The analysis of this particular signification began after three consecutive readings of the transcript of a public servant's interview (Lucia, a young implementer focused on reporting), at a point where I got the impression that strange elements (i.e. symptomatic, unconscious elements) were appearing in some of her narrations. Although according to theoretical Lacanian premises I was probing for at least two divergent types of strangeness at the same time, namely, intensity (i.e. sublimation) and incoherence (i.e. interruption), I felt the narrative selections featuring the strangeness were indicating an appearance of the latter kind, and so I decided to start sketching a potential interpretation of a signifier that could reveal an unconscious identification of the interviewee that would go beyond what she was trying to mean with her comments. At this point, handwritten notes and digital mind maps were other

interpretations of Lucia's testimony had been previously recorded were retrieved and read, in order to provide resonance to the associations that would emerge out of a new read of the selection of strange elements.

Then, two different colour highlighters were used to pinpoint specific significations (i.e. portions of text) in the hard copy of the transcription and to qualify them in their imaginary and symbolic functions. Notes were also taken with a pencil next to highlighted sections, to register emerging associations around them. Field notes were also read recurrently during this process, in an attempt to situate the interviewee's testimony within a broader context, which is assumed as having framed her subjectivity and the researcher's early interpretations of all kinds of elements in it. The result of these procedures was the pinpointing of the signifier 'nothing'. This element was distinguished, using different colour highlighters, as fulfilling a mastery function at the level of the symbolic (using one highlighter colour), and as hinging between two closely related yet opposing narratives at the level of the imaginary (using another highlighter colour): a despaired one about a severe lack of recognition and power ('we are nothing... to them'), and a hopeful one about future opportunities for development ('we are nothing... yet').

Finally, once this selection procedure was over, a draft on this interpretation effort was written (as if it was being prepared for its inclusion in the thesis draft) and extensive notes were taken and attached to a digital mind map, where the selected signifier and narratives were registered as separate ideas and then classified as part of a very large 'tree of associations'. This digital mind

map served to orientate the entire process, which consisted of recurrent episodes of reading, probing, selection and interpretation. The latter can be seen as adding new interpreted elements to an existing catalogue and also as modifying (often dramatically) previously made interpretive gestures following new, more attuned impression of the data. In many cases, the interpretation of one passage in a public servant's testimony served to re-qualify the interpretation of other public servant's testimony, even if they were not directly related, as the analysis of discourse was assumed as occurring (also) at the level of the researcher's desire, who was able to access diverse instances of policy discursivity. In this case, the interpretation of the signifier 'nothing' proved to be stable after the recurrence of subsequent interpretations, and served to sustain a general argument about an interruptive *jouissance* at the core of public servant identity: the idea of 'nothing' as a central signification, voided of a unitary meaning, which instigated a constant yet strangely enjoyable division between hope and despair in public servant identity.

In this sense, the affective-material procedure deployed during the research effort (colour highlighters included) can be seen as a fundamentally reflexive one, based on the premise that such reflexivity emerges out of contacting the eventuality of failure and ephemerality of interpretation at a practical level (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). It is one that intends to follow a Lacanian understanding of *jouissance* as constitutive of identity, not just public servant identity, but also that of the researcher. Fundamentally, this calls for a

handling of data, in the name of analysis, that is exploratory and actively in pursuit of divergence and inconsistency, so that *jouissance* can be interpreted as unfolding in overlapping, contradictory and fleeting ways in the experience of the subject, both as public-servant-subject and as researcher-subject. Accordingly, speaking in colloquial terms, the affective-material handling of data is supposed to be embraced as messy and disorganised, and the desire of the researcher is supposed to be seen as spilling over the data collected through the manufacturing of somewhat incoherent notes, erasures and multiple copies of transcribed material, often scattered over multiple, dissonant analogue-digital formats.

* * *

This section, as part of the chapter presenting the methodological frame of this study, has discussed the main concepts that will orientate the analysis of data that follows and outlined the affective-material procedure that has been carried out during the analytic stage.

The next chapter will begin the analysis of empirical data, particularly characterizing, from a Lacanian perspective, the way in which subjectivity emerges within the symbolic network and imaginary landscape of bureaucratic work, in the general context of the organisation of educational quality policy implementation.

I have before me a sequence of five pictures that summarize the period between 1960 and 1970 in Chile. The first one shows a known politician of that time, dressed with a *poncho*, saying hello to some smiling local ladies, baby included. The next picture shows the same politician, this time dressed for a gala – he finally put on the white tie! - giving a salutation worthy of a monument; it is notable how politicians anticipate their posthumous honour. Next, I see a picture of a group of peasants carrying something like spears with national flags attached. They look triumphant. The fourth picture shows me again a politician, a different one, standing in the seat of a convertible, with a presidential band crossing his chest, posing proudly and as upright as possible, waving. Politicians usually wave and this politician had been doing that since long ago. Not far from this figure, on the back, a horse rider can be distinguished; a military figure, helmet on, which has become more and more familiar, at least from what we can see in the newspapers, in the Congress seats, in the podiums and on television, of course looking aged, not as severe, still an *indispensable, immortal or immobile* man; that is at least the way he is being deliberately portrayed. Finally, I bring to attention the picture of a young man that stares intensely to the camera, surrounded by soldiers with helmets and sub-machine guns. It is the only moment of this photographic sequence in which certainty and the grandiloquent gesture have disappeared and an obscure, confusing shadow can be discerned.

There is something very dramatic about the whole sequence. Together, these pictures show not just moments; they also account for a change of sentiment. The final picture is the one that sets the frame, the one that ends up forcefully grounding the message, even though the message might not seem clear. The young man's face seems to be addressing us with a question, or better yet, with a kind of perplexity, with a riddle very difficult to solve.

Looking at the sequence makes me feel like putting a title to it. Many possibilities come to mind. '*Illusions perdues*', 'Crime and punishment', '*Arauco domado*', '*Anteparaiso*', 'The end of history and the last man', 'Psycho'. I also think that if we were to put background music to it, it would make the whole thing more eloquent. I would start with '*Brilla el sol*', followed by 'Help!' and '*Venceremos*', interrupted by some chords of the 'Radetzky march' or the '*Viejos Estandartes*' and finishing with something melancholic, something like '*Gracias a la vida*', slowly, as if one was doubting of what one was supposed to be thankful for, but convinced that being thankful about something was inevitable.

I cannot get rid of the young man's face. As much as I want to forget his face, it keeps coming back to me. It haunts like a ghost; maybe he is one. It must be that his gaze opens a number of questionings that we have not provided answers to or that we do not want to know about. His confusion is ours, and the picture acts as a mirror.

ALFREDO JOCELYN-HOLT

*From the book "The perplex Chile: from 'advancing relentlessly' to
'relentless compromising'"*

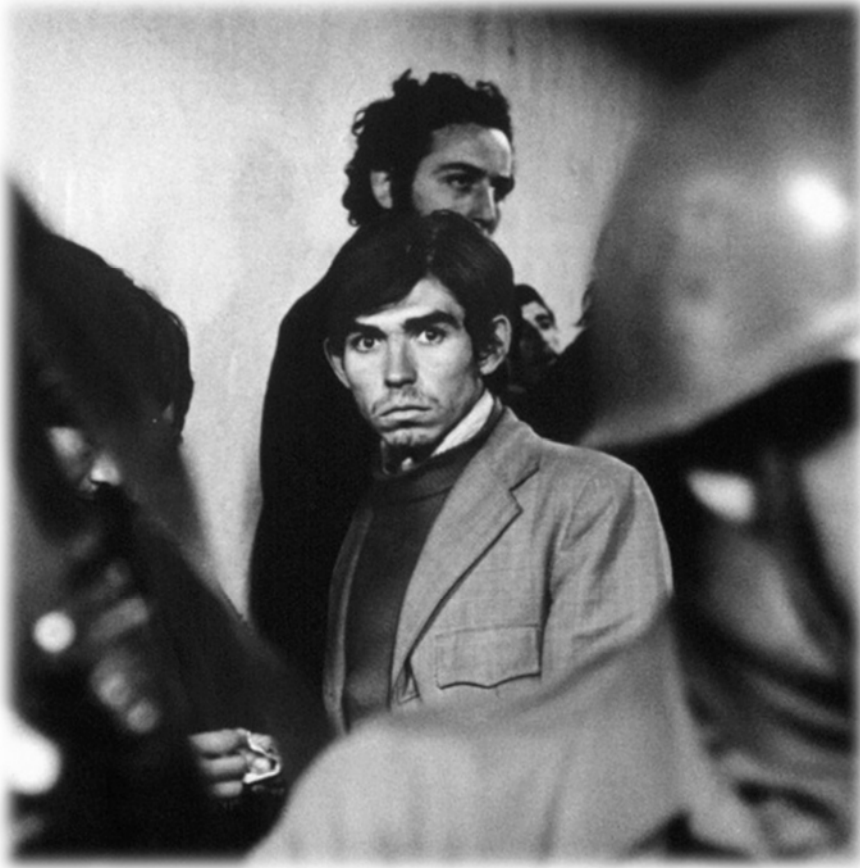


Photo by David Burnett (1973)

Chapter 3 – On the ‘subject of bureaucracy’

The journey to understand the bond between public servants’ identity and their experience of work in the Chilean State bureaucracy began with an interest in the bureaucratic object that seemed to capture all their attention at the moment when I was able to observe them and have interviews with them: the educational quality assurance policy that had to be ‘implemented’, that is to say, to be organised within the bureaucratic structure.

The prominence of the meaning of quality policy for reform implementers, particularly ‘educational quality’, was revealed early in the research, as the studied organisations under implementation were part of a large bureaucratic scheme known as the National System for Educational Quality Assurance. The scheme, prescribing a number of new or reformed organisations, was the result of a policy devised as a direct and formal response to massive student mobilizations demanding, generally, better and fairer educational systems (Bellei, Contreras & Valenzuela, 2010); in the students’ own words, as heard in the media and seen in their large demonstration banners, demanding a ‘quality education’. The emergence of a logistical process of implementation that I had the chance to witness seemed to confirm, by itself, the advent of a distinct quality framework that seemed promising and new (although it had been under partial elaboration for many years). The students’ demands, along with those of the majority of the population that supported them (Rojas, 2012), it seemed, were listened to actively by policy makers and politicians. With a legal

package already agreed, approved and officialised, the only challenge left appeared to be about realizing the contents and goals of such consensual vision for the enactment of (a new version of) the educational quality programme.

As the data collection commenced, therefore, I expected the meaning of quality policy to be the main focus of attention for those involved in the implementation of educational policies and surely to occupy a central place in the construction of analysis. In fact, 'quality' was a signifier that kept appearing during and between my engagement with interviewees and their contexts. I encountered it, for instance, when I was standing in an underground wagon in Santiago on my way to the very first meeting with senior management. The signifier 'quality' was written on an advertisement for an educational NGO, featured on the walls of the wagon. The advertisement promoted a number of initiatives but also conveyed a conclusive message in big letters: "This is another contribution of the Santiago Underground to the achievement of Quality in Education". Then, after I arrived at the central Ministry of Education building where the meeting was going to take place, I encountered it again, written as part of the headlines over the immense world map graphic that covered the walls of the main hall. The headline stated "For a Quality Education" and was meant to frame a list of public education projects. I stumbled upon the signifier in this fashion many times later, in many different workplace contexts and also in new government advertisement campaigns, during the data collection period and afterwards. 'Quality', it appeared, was a substantial notion, whose meaningfulness would encompass something as

small as a poster-reminder and as big as the world and which would be crucial for the fate of the nation. It conveyed a sense of integration and development.

However, when I shared my perceptions of the quality ideal with one senior implementation manager, Romina, with whom I was negotiating access to study one of the component organisations in charge of implementing the policy, I was quickly warned about the controversial nature of the meaning of quality. In our first interview, my comments on the public optimism that I had recognized and which I wished to gauge in her were met with a sense of disbelief, which also brought forth a defensive attitude. I said:

“I imagine this is a very intense and complicated effort, because many people are interested in this taking place, I mean quality has become so present, we see it now with the students in the streets and also in the public sector management, it appears in many places .”

Romina replied, rather bluntly:

“No, it is very different. They just do not seem to get the message⁴. They talk about free education, segregation, but they exclude the learning outcomes ... It is empirical, it should be grounded in the [standardized] test, and lead to equality of opportunity”.

⁴ Originally in Spanish as “El mensaje parece no llegarles”. The infinitive form of the Spanish verb “llegar” can be translated in this context as “to reach”, i.e. “the message just do not seem to be reaching them”. However, in the Chilean context the verb “llegar” is sometimes used as an idiom for “understanding” – in this case, as if the message was not being understood. This polysemy is best captured by the English translation “to get”.

And then Romina pointed to a pile of learning standard booklets on top of her desk and said: “This is our job [our work⁵], it has been carried out forever, it will keep going for years and years. It’s a technical area, yes, it’s the Ministry”.

It is fair to say that the majority of debate held between education experts and political actors on the supposedly meaningful idea of quality concerns the middle section of the comment by the senior implementer quoted above. It is a discursive engagement that revolves around the interrelation between signifiers of ‘free education’, representing the financial side of the education system, ‘segregation’, representing the socio-geographic side and ‘learning’, which stands for the ‘technical area’ of education that was finally mentioned. Certainly, this is an urgent debate concerning educational quality policy, in which evidence-based arguments of educational technique test their compatibility with political interventions inspired by arguments on constitutional rights, governance and social structure. Consequently, it could be argued that the signifier ‘quality’ has been set by neoliberalist policy-making champions to orientate the hegemonic struggle for filling the empty yet universal template of education with a particular content meant to be more or less measurable/accountable and socially inclusive/equalizing (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Clarke, 2012; see also Morley, 2003; Davies & Bansel, 2007, 2010; Torres & Schugurensky, 2002).

⁵ Originally in Spanish as “trabajo”. The Spanish word “trabajo” can be translated both to “job” and “work” as nouns, and also as “work” as a verb.

Yet the construction of policy implementation discourse, and thus the subjective realizing of a public servant identity, seems to unfold, in the studied context, along humbler lines. What was conveyed by the discourse of many implementers was not a detailed interplay of socio-political demands contesting the meaning of education, as the kind one could find in a legal policy text, but rather a basic and laconic declaration of principle concerning “the empirical” in “the technical area”. Instead of focusing on the political battle for reforming education and the role of the State, implementation was concerned with the purpose and boundaries of policy as a command for a logistical refurbishing of the existing bureaucratic structure. In the quote, this is hinted at by the sharp negation of my understanding of quality as dynamic running across social spheres on the grounds that quality was just “different”. For Romina, a senior manager and chief of implementation, quality’s importance resided precisely in what it was not; from her position, quality was not open for social re-construction but instead “grounded”, technocratically, on the methodological soundness of a test’s elaboration.

Thus, the ‘difference’ she refers to does not express an opposition between her particular reading (and thus ultimately a political stance) on what quality implies (“technically” and socially) and whatever she might have assumed I endorsed (perhaps by bringing up the student movement), but between the bureaucratically organised/organisable context, for her the immediate (and thus unquestionable) workplace setting of “the Ministry”, and the non-organized context of “the street”. Her words indicate that if there is a

motivating problem, it is that “they” – the Chilean public, massive supporters of the vast demand for quality education – “do not get it”, an insight amplified by the fact that she said this while looking at Santiago’s main street out of her large office window. What is it exactly that they do not get? From the perspective of this study, the aim of which is to highlight the constitutive inexactitude of subjective claims and assumptions by public servants, the answer lies in the association between the idea of quality and what she called in Spanish “trabajo”, a word which is used to signify both a “job” and “work”. The reality that the ‘street’ is missing is that quality is fundamentally a product of the hard “work” of bureaucratic implementation, represented by the pile of paperwork, and also the “job” or the formal role that is required to make it happen, enacted by her presence. It is not that “they” do not get educational quality - as they are able to demand it - or that they do not get that quality is about learning - because those that have spoken on their behalf have done so as students asking for a better policing of learning delivery. What “they” do not get – and should be getting according to the subjective stance her speech represents - is quality as something that should be organized: quality as the thing that is supposed to be gradually generated once tasks are set to be accomplished and specific roles are defined as responsible for accomplishing them.

This initial exchange was helpful in foregrounding the role ‘quality’ plays in reform implementation discourse as a master signification, that is to say, following the conceptualizations of Parker (2005) and Cederström & Spicer

(2014) as a discursive pattern in which the mere presence of a signifier in an utterance or text (what Lacan coded as 'S1') guarantees the epistemological validity of a whole chain of claims, arguments and/or narratives about a topic (what Lacan coded as 'S2'), up to the point of rendering the problem of defining the meaning and truth-value of said signifier in relation to said topic as irrelevant. In this sense, the 'quality' signifier can be seen as signalling the strong conviction that there must be at least one way of making quality work and turning it into a reality: by rendering it the product of an effort of organizing and managing in the public sector. If there are clearly emerging organisational contents and purposes, as all the interviewed public servants strongly believed they had witnessed in the bureaucratic workplace, then there is quality.

Such joyous discovery of the organisation seemed to affirm, retroactively and unconsciously, the legitimacy of the quality assurance policy (mostly conveyed by the legal text) and ultimately of education as the main socio-political challenge. This effort of asserting the practical viability of policy was most notably perceived when I asked Feliciano - an implementer specialized in producing reports and communications - about how his work might influence the achievement of educational quality. His reply began with: "Quality? Hmmm, I had never thought of that. (20-second pause) Wow, I had never thought of that, but yeah, something comes to mind". It was not necessary for Feliciano to recollect, with richness of detail, a specific quality-related work practice for the identity of his self-narrative to be structured; public-servant-

subjectivity seemed guaranteed by the mere fact that he could imagine and review his latest activity within the organisational context and infer something about it, even if he was able to openly acknowledge his ignorance on the particular topic.

Paradoxically, it seemed his relative lack of knowledge about quality enabled the notion to become prominent. Such a discursive set-up revealed a certain subjective satisfaction in appraising the ideal that mobilized organised/organisable work as ‘under implementation’; a satisfaction that, following Lacan’s theory, implies a kind of rushing of the subject to arrive at a state of certainty about the truthfulness of his/her actions, in this case, those work actions that could actually contribute to the generation of (educational) quality. This is indeed a hasty leap forward that any policy implementer must confront one way or the other, for all policies have to be bolstered organisationally, that is, inter-subjectively and socially, before there is enough evidence to support their installation. Following Lacan (2007a: 171), we could conceive the implementer-subject as anticipating “its own certainty owing to the temporal tension with which it is subjectively charged”, if we assume that such “temporal tension” is none other than the orderly succession of work-events within a bureaucratic workplace, i.e. sequences of work-related speech-acts such as e-mails, memos, reports, memos, interviews, among others.

For Lacan (2007a), the sudden emergence of sense out of hesitation is constitutive of subjectivity. Such a dynamic occurs when the subject tries to make sense of a discourse that is being exchanged inter-subjectively (for

Lacan, the ‘time for comprehending’) after witnessing (for Lacan, the ‘instance of seeing’) what has been set as an obvious and impersonal ‘fact’, in this case, the legal text in which the term ‘quality’ has been used to name the institution of new public sector mechanisms to regulate education. This was reproduced during the quoted exchange with Feliciano, where a common inter-subjective sense-making practice among implementers – to take the broad idea of quality for granted and to discuss how exactly to implement it in particular work processes - was re-enacted in the form of a topical interview conversation. There, during such a brief articulation, the fundamental mode of identification of the subject with the discourse on quality’s implementation was revealed. What the exchange illustrated was how the public-servant-subject being interviewed pushed himself, in proud fashion, to keep speaking, despite all the shadows of in-exactitude that emerged during the extremely long period of silence and hesitation. The consistency of his words, and more generally of his identificatory involvement with discourse, appeared to emerge out of his lack of recollection of any argument or slogan about quality’s implementation. For a duration of 20 seconds, he did not have any capacity to think about quality, yet the image he offered to the interviewer, in accordance with the image he perceived in the interviewer (and his interview questions), was that quality had sense in his context, and quite a lot of it. He conveyed this by owning such sense; not by saying ‘it must mean something for some’, but declaring that something came to his own mind.

Indeed, from a Lacanian standpoint, the public-servant-subject can be seen as speaking precisely because of the in-exactitude in subjective memory and the historicity of discourse; in this case, it is the temporal in-exactitude related to the problems of 'translation' between policy text and the actual inter-subjective reality of organisation that cannot help but leave many prescriptions unrealized (in practice) and realize other unintended ones (Fotaki, 2010: 711). In the moment in which Feliciano 'woke up' from the 20-second pause and cleverly announced that something was 'coming to mind', he spoke as if quality always-already meant something. This positioning was able to take place precisely because the lasting silence (and the concordant interviewer's reaction) showed him that it was really difficult to access a definition of what quality was and that he did not need to be current on any specific argument on why quality was important in order to do his job.

There can be seen, thus, a sudden, hasty reaction to the 'window of hesitation', which leads the subject to 'leap forward' to an instance of decisive insight, from which s/he can confirm and consolidate the identification s/he has been exerting (and to which the interviewer is responding). This is what Lacan (2007a) called the 'moment for concluding', similar to the Archimedean 'Eureka!' moment and equivalent to what Lacan (2007a) saw as the realization of fullness that the child has on seeing his/her own reflection in a mirror. It is a forced reduction of the subject's 'time for comprehending' or 'sense-making' in the imaginary, enabled by a symbolic or logical operation that can lead to the definitive assertion of certainty about his/her identity. The symbolic

operation at stake in Feliciano's brief quote is none other than the master signification of 'quality'. Withstanding the long 20-second tension between him and the interviewer at the level of the imaginary (where each one holds the expectation to recognize what the other could say), his speech grabs hold of the 'quality' signifier and declares its mastery by asserting the meaningfulness of a whole chain of claims about quality (the 'things' that are starting to 'come to mind'), despite the fact that he 'had never thought about it before'. The utterance of the signifier 'quality' (the 'S1' function) swiftly converts the ignorance (or forgetfulness) of narratives on quality into the 'capacity to reflect' about the diversity of meanings and implications that quality policy could have (the 'S2' function). Amidst a 'time for comprehending', filled with utmost uncertainty, the subject who includes 'quality' in his/her speech can reach, suddenly and unconsciously, a 'conclusive moment' in which s/he is able to convince himself/herself as if s/he was saying 'sure, quality always had a meaning'.

The analysis of Feliciano's quote, particularly the appraisal of the subjective positioning his words illustrate, provides a richer account of how policy, in this case quality policy, is conceived by the public servants under study as a problem of organising a way of 'working' and interconnecting 'jobs' within the bureaucratic structure of the public sector (using the terms of Romina, the senior manager). It shows that the implementation of quality policy is not appropriated by implementers in any way as an encompassing socio-political problem, advocated for by social movements or political actors; rather, it

shows that for them (quality) policy implementation is a ‘humbler’ issue of ‘bureaucratic accounting’, where one ‘pile of documents’, the embodiment of a well-executed work task, can be seen as the reformed, more developed version of a previous task. As public servants in charge of implementing policy, Feliciano and many other interviewees were able to speak about quality because they attributed their own identificatory features as being interlocked in a system of actual bureaucratic inter-action for which the master signification of ‘quality’ functioned as an index of a formalized and manageable work process.

As argued above, such bureaucratic systematicity can be seen as being enacted not only at the level of the imaginary, by the concrete others (fellow implementers, supervisors and external agencies) with whom new forms of organized work are being co-coordinated as routine. It can also be seen as being enacted by the long-standing legal framework of the bureaucratic structure of the Chilean public sector, which at the level of the symbolic allows regulating the use of resources and formal communication through exchange of documents.

This was best conveyed by a brief exchange I had with Romina, the senior manager, minutes after our discussion on the meaning of quality. Our conversation this time revolved around the Quality Learning Standards booklets – part of the ‘pile of documents’ she had pointed towards minutes before – that the Chilean Ministry of Education was in charge of editing and sending to teachers in schools all across Chile. I grabbed a couple of the

booklets that were on top of her desk, held them in front of me to express my interest to her and said: “Ok, I understand, so these are the materials that you produce, these are the things, the concrete things you make to generate quality in the schools”. She took the booklets, placed them back on top of the pile and then replied in a rather harsh tone, as if she was correcting a serious mistake: “No, [these are] not materials. [They are] Decrees with the force of law⁶”. From my standpoint, Quality Learning Standards were just booklets, artefacts made for the teachers to use, representing a broader dynamic of mutual recognition between educational agents taking place at the level of the imaginary. From her standpoint, the booklets were not representations or depictions of a coordinated exchange between agents but rather legal prescriptions, meant to instruct and restrict teachers in their educational practice. When asked by a curious interviewer-researcher, she declared that in her conception quality was reduced/reducible to a bureaucratic document, the sole purpose of which was to assure compliance with the current legal framework. For her, the booklets did not have any meaning but that of legal obligation. As part of public servant discourse, these ‘quality materials’ embodied what Lacan conceived as the symbolic register of subjectivity, because they functioned as mere signifiers of ‘pure order’, the rational legitimation of work division and commandment that

⁶ Romina refers to a Presidential Decree, which in the Chilean legal system possesses an equivalent status to that of Law approved by Parliament/Congress. The use of Learning Standards for the measurement and improvement of learning in schools was instituted by such a Decree. This is why she considers the booklets themselves to embody the ‘force of the law’.

bureaucracy, in its stereotypical version, should ideally stage (du Gay, 2000a; Styhre, 2007).

Following Lacan's theory, the analysed interview exchanges can be seen as expressing the time and space in which identity, in this case public servant identity, is constantly re-generated and partially preserved or 'fixated' (Lacan, 2007a; McSwite, 1997b). This is a process that relies not only on the constant imaginary recognition that the subject seeks in his/her sustained synced coordination with the concrete others with whom s/he interacts bureaucratically to implement policy through the execution of a diversity of tasks. It is also one that relies on the symbolic structure of policy discourse, under the rules of which a master signification ('S1') is set to arrange the back-and-forth flow of workplace conversation and work-related formal narrations (i.e. the writing of documents) so that they are perceived as always-already meaningful and orderly ('S2').

The consideration of these two registers, the imaginary and the symbolic, is important to understand how public servant identity unfolds and how it does not. Identity does not unfold like a progressively constructive effort to make sense of what quality policy is (and could be). Rather, it unfolds as a repeated and rather stubborn effort to discover and corroborate the supposed consequences of a fact that the subject rushes to take for granted: that 'quality', whatever its meaning, can and should be organised bureaucratically. Feliciano has never given a thought about it and Romina cannot see past the mechanisms to legally prescribe it, and yet these two testimonies, along with many others,

express a consistent commitment towards the organisation of quality policy. From a Lacanian approach to discourse, this strange contrast occurs because identity is acquired by the subject in post-foundational fashion (Cederström & Spicer, 2014), that is to say, signified in a way that overestimates the meaningfulness of experienced imaginary reality and in turn dismisses the contingent foundation of (any) meaning. This explains why discussing the meaning of quality does not appear relevant for the public servants under study; they are overly concerned with the ways through which the command to organise quality policy (with the 'quality' signifier at the helm) has already involved them in concrete modes of bureaucratic work.

Such fundamental concern of the public servant subject with the bureaucratic grounding of his/her identity helps bring forth the central problem this psychoanalytically-driven analysis of discourse seeks to address. Instead of focusing on the articulation of policy into temporarily stable forms of discourse, bearing broad socio-political (Clarke, 2012; Glynos, Speed & West, 2015) and organisational (Fotaki, 2006; 2010) consequences, this study focuses on the discursive articulation of narratives about already-going work practices within the bureaucratic structure of the public sector. In this sense, the data analysed indicates the emergence of a defensive stance in public servant discourse. In alignment with the Freudian notion of 'repression', the idea of defence in this Lacanian study relates to the mechanisms through which subjectivity can preserve the imaginary stability of identity against the entropic

push for change and accommodation for which the discourse of policy implementation effort calls (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000).

As the work of Fotaki (2010: 704) has proposed, analysing 'the role of policy formulation in supporting these defences is crucial for understanding how policy-making 'translates' meanings to organisational practice, in a manner that often leads to failure. Yet, as has been shown above, the kind of defence the data points to is not related to the discursive articulation of policy *per se*, but to the discursive articulation of bureaucracy, where the idea of policy, in this case 'quality' policy, functions as a master signification that prompts the public-servant-subject to take the meaning of policy for granted.

This represents an effort to complement Fotaki's (2010) use of the Freudian notion of 'repressive defence'. While the latter focuses on how the social synchronization of psychic defences prompts policy-makers to articulate grandiose promises in policy texts that are impossible to fulfil, this study focuses on the way in which policy implementation work, of a bureaucratic nature, is prompted by the public-servant-subject's defensive gesture to preserve his/her identity amidst the turmoil of imposed organisational reform. The idea of defence, accordingly, should here be found in Feliciano's endurance and Romina's stubbornness against the threat of policy's meaninglessness. The public servant defence consists of his/her assumption that policy, in this case quality policy, is always-already meaningful and that the real question is how to keep figuring out the exact meanings of its diverse realizations into bureaucratic work. Policy often fails because of its relation to

unconscious defences, as Fotaki (2010) rightfully formulates. However, failure comes about not only because of the inappropriate discursive articulation of the imaginaries of policy that concern authors such as Fotaki (2010); in this case, the ambiguous imaginaries and meanings of educational quality policy (Harvey & Green, 1993; Morley, 2001). It also comes about during the complicated process through the public-servant-subject's attempts to identify a place for his/her experiencing once (quality) policy has been discursively situated as the central justification for the well-established work practices of rationalistic and post-Fordist public administration under neoliberalism (Farmer, 1995; McSwite, 1997a; Lacan, 2007b; Komporozos-Athanasίου & Fotaki, 2015). This is of course enhanced in the Chilean context, marked by the extensive neo-liberalization of the public sector (Vergara, 1997).

It can then be concluded that the general concern of the public servants under study with the factuality of policy implementation management, beyond the meaning of quality as the target of policy, represents the main gesture, of a defensive and thus constructive nature, to generate an identity. In this case, identification should be understood as the effort of 'making' (i.e. narrating) something concrete out of the workplace commands to implement quality policy, following the unconscious premise, operating at the level of the symbolic, that invoking the 'quality' signifier assures the purposefulness of educational quality (as applied to policy). Moreover, as DuGay (1996; 2004) has indicated, public servant identification should be understood as the effort of 'making' or managing their own subjectivity so that it can be rendered a

contributing part of the push for continued bureaucratic work in neoliberal terms (Fardella & Sisto, 2013). This implies, so to speak, that the public servant has his/her own self-experience staked in the busy-ness of the public administration management business.

From a Lacanian perspective, the subject is seen as being led literally to 'implement' himself/herself and also the workplace context that goes along with it, simultaneously in imaginary and symbolic ways. S/he has to find a way to become one with the mirroring professional others within the implementation process within bureaucracy, who will illustrate for him/her successful patterns of personal, social and task-oriented behaviour s/he can imitate. Yet in the same gesture, his/her speech (and actions) must articulate a mode of discourse (the symbolic) in which s/he is signified as a unique identity - in this case, depicted by the image of the public servant - whose validity is guaranteed or 'defended' by the supposition of a prevalent and pre-existing intersubjective (discursive) order, or what Lacan called the 'Other' - in this case, the rationalistic, hierarchical, technically-driven order of public sector bureaucracy. The implementation or the 'making' of 'something bureaucratic' out of work practices and self-experience, can be defined, precisely, as the process of finding a 'password' that can allow the 'unlocking' of a safe, stable imaginary place for inter-subjectivity within the discursive-symbolic 'Other' of rational, post-Fordist bureaucracy. That is the specific role played by the signifier 'quality'. 'Quality', one of the names for policy, provides the public-servant-subject with a basic safe-conduct: for him/her, such

signification of policy represents at least one way of guaranteeing (i.e. 'defending') that his/her work interaction with others and his/her own thoughts and affects regarding work will be fully 'implemented/implementable'. 'Quality', when spoken of, allows some form of bureaucratic work to 'come into the public servant's mind', as Feliciano said, and vice versa.

Largely, the abovementioned analyses indicate that Lacanian theory is capable of making a central contribution to the study of public servant identity. It is capable of doing so because the analyses have shown, in a nutshell, how public servant interactions (i.e. discourse) during taxing efforts of implementation invoke the Other of organised/organisable bureaucracy to sustain or 'defend' themselves. Unconsciously, the Other serves to fixate the flow of signification of work practices and accounts of self ('S2'), by offering the subject mastery over a singular signifier, that of 'quality' policy ('S1'). It is the public servant who calls for the Other by voicing 'quality' implementation narratives ('S2'), assuming the Other as always-already present ('S1'). It can then be concluded that this particular Other, the traditional bureaucratic order represented by Romina's 'pile of documents', demonstrates itself to be an indispensable frame for neoliberalizing policy such as that devised to assure and account for the educational quality in schools competing as agents in the free-market (Morley & Rassool, 2000; Lynch, 2006).

The latter insight is vital in contesting claims about the surpassing of bureaucracy by a post-bureaucratic regime such as the so-called 'New Public

Management' programme, focused on autonomous enterprising, competition and corporate-like managerial practices (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). What the data indicates is that the neoliberal 'governmentality' that has pervaded the political economy of the public sector and/or more generally the State, as accounted for by scholars such as Foucault (Ball, 2003, and Fardella, 2013, for the Chilean case), cannot be reproduced without a strengthening of the logic of traditional bureaucracy. These insights support well-researched organisation studies that have found that reforms aiming at post-bureaucratic transformations would lead, at best, to hybridized managerialistic-traditional organisations (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Bourgault & Van Dorpe, 2013; Rondeaux, 2006) that would in turn have to face diverse types of resistance by public-servant-subjects (Thomas & Davies, 2005). From the perspective of this Lacanian analysis, post-bureaucratic programmes would be seen as only able to change what Parker & Bradley (2004) state as the source of traditional bureaucratic control, from politics to the market and its logic of competition; in other words, to change the set of signifiers in the guaranteeing Other, from those related to educational morals to those related to neoliberal quality accountability policy (Clarke, 2012). Overall, such understanding of the Other of public servant identificatory discourse seems to confirm Rhodes & Milani Price's (2010: 241) insight: that the post-bureaucratic programme "acts a parasite that both relies on and disturbs the practice of bureaucracy while failing to substantively challenge it" and which "requires the ongoing vitality of its host in order to continue to nourish itself".

Overall, the analysis presented in this section leads to a basic conclusion about public servant subjectivity within implementation discourse and practice, and about the process of identification that such a subjective position orientates. It is one that will provide the frame for the forthcoming sections of analysis. The conclusion is that public servant identity, in the studied case, cannot be constructed in any way without narrating (aspects or themes of) bureaucratic work as a substantial, meaningful and central object. The public-servant-subject needs to invoke the order of bureaucracy to make sense of policy commands for the neoliberalizing, managerialistic and 'post-bureaucratic' re-organising of the public sector, such as that regarding educational quality assurance (*via* standardized testing and accountability among competing schools), and the key signifiers that have been instituted to name the purposes of policy, such as 'quality', represent for the subject the necessity of bureaucracy's endurance.

In this sense, the public-servant-subject is intensely drawn to literally 'work out', in strict bureaucratic fashion, what 'exactly' policy is supposed to mean. Certainly, in this the public-servant-subject is divided, as Styhre (2008) has pointed out, between his/her engagement with the wondrous cultural, identity-driven and 'soft' imaginaries that post-bureaucratic programmes offer him/her and his/her engagement with the impersonal, rule-bound and document-driven symbolic-discursive network of bureaucracy that has traditionally governed public sector interaction. Thus, his/her conscious attributions of personal and collective purpose could fluctuate, respectively,

between themes of self-managerialism and themes of rationalistic control. However, as Lacanian theory indicates, the public servant's unconscious desire is directed towards something that lies beyond those characterizations of the public sector workplace ('S2'). Desire seeks some symbolically-ciphered, hidden object (its concealment being signalled by Feliciano's pause) whose achievement and subsequent enjoyment or *jouissance* by the public-servant-subject could be guaranteed by an Other. Such a desirable object, the object of *jouissance* that is the cause of desire, could only be defined as realizable if the public-servant-subject first rushes (forward) to take something (in the past) for granted - bureaucracy — by using a name — 'quality' policy ('S1') — to coin such an assumption.

Thus, the subject identity should be seen as grounded in the belief that (quality) policy 'works' ('S1'); specifically, in the 'retroactive' belief, made by 'rushing to anticipate the past', that policy 'has been working all along'. Such belief should be seen as commanding a constant, repeated effort to rehearse streams of meaning ('S2') on how 'exactly' it works. This particular rehearsing is what 'implementation' stands for in the eyes of the public servant in the studied case. Implementation is a narrative that conjures the Other's desire, as it promises to deliver to the subject the satisfaction or *jouissance* of identity, of becoming a protagonist of quality policy organisation. It engages in the same narrative articulation the desire of the public-servant-subject and the desire of the Other. More accurately, following Lacanian theory, the imaginaries (i.e. narrations, as practices) of implementation enact public servant subjectivity as

an unconscious question about the desire of a perpetually working, always-already organised/organisable Other. In a way that echoes John F. Kennedy's famous speech, it is as if the public-servant-subject were asking himself/herself: 'what does my State's implementation want from me? What exactly does it want me to keep organising?'

What this shows, in sum, is that the discourse that supports bureaucratic implementation, the management-speak of public servants, should not be reduced to the particularities of any kind of organisational programme (such as 'post-bureaucracy'). Instead, it should be understood as the general mode of subjectivity under organised neoliberalism (and capitalism). As Du Gay's (2005: 5) interpretation of Weber has eagerly emphasized,

"an abstract celebration or denunciation of 'bureaucracy' makes little sense ... it is pointless to apply global moral judgements to bureaucratic conduct *tout court*: to praise it for its impartiality or condemn it for its conservatism; to approve its efficiency or damn its amorality to find its exemplar in Sir Warren Fisher on the one hand, or Adolf Eichmann on the other. Indeed, as their polyvalent and conflictual character testifies, such judgements do not really concern bureaucratic ethics at all but rather the forms in which they impact upon other conducts of life or departments of existence".

Analysis of public servant discourse indicates that current neoliberal realizations of bureaucracy are there to provide the public-servant-subject with a language or method (what Lacan calls the symbolic) and a landscape (what Lacan calls the imaginary) to convince himself/herself that some-thing 'has been working all along', and thus, that there are means to 'defend' or 'work out'

a stable identity during implementation. Bureaucratic realizations or implementations are not there to specify ethics for the subject, because, as Lacan (2007b) and a Weberian-inspired du Gay (2005) indicate, bureaucracy is not really supposed to have ethics. Rather, bureaucracy is only supposed to 'keep working', orderly and efficiently, so that ethics that can affect it can emerge elsewhere, or perhaps, not emerge at all.

Bureaucracy is, in the studied case, what Stavrakakis (2014) sees as being best expressed by the reproachful comments made by International Monetary Fund director Christine Lagarde on the reforms to the Greek public sector: "I keep repeating myself: it's implementation, implementation, implementation. There are no alternative options in those countries". It stands, in the discourse of the public servant, as a duty imposed over him/her, to 'just implement', in the most neutral but forceful way: to simply 'make' or 'work out' some mode of bureaucratic coordination, any mode, and to 'make' a self that is suitable for that effort. Like the Freudian Super-Ego, which Lacan considers to define the structural function that keeps a master signification (i.e. the link between 'S1' and 'S2') prevalent in the subject's discourse (Lacan, 2007b; Žižek, 2000), it does not specify the meaning or ethical path to take, but the oppressive obligation to find one. Hence, it prescribes the endlessness of the inquiry, along with the repeated (and despairing) failure of securing the definitive one. This is at least what Romina suggested to me when I asked her, one final time, about the meaning of equality, quality's greatest promised effect in a neoliberal context such as the Chilean (Morley, 2003) and one of the central demands,

besides quality, that Chilean students and civil movements have been making to Government officials and policy-makers in recent years (Bellei, Contreras & Valenzuela, 2010). Again using a harsh tone, Romina insisted on her previous words, quoted earlier:

“Equality has to be equality of opportunities to learn, period. That is why we standardize the quality of learning and not teaching, because there are so many ways to teach, all of them work, you understand? That [assuring learning outcomes] is the technical mission that should be carried out, what we’re doing, that’s the Ministry, don’t doubt it for a second”. (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

According to the argument proposed in this section, Romina’s declaration, made from the position of a senior implementer, comprises the subjectivity of a bureaucrat. When she concludes the first phrase with “period” and when she calls for the interviewer-researcher’s judgement (“you understand? ... Don’t doubt it for a second”) she reveals the profound state of certainty she is experiencing, an absolute confidence in the capacity and trustworthiness of bureaucratic organisation, which she assimilates, like Weber and Heidegger did before her (Farmer, 1995), to the signifier ‘technical’. For Romina, there is no point in discussing it further: bureaucracy is the ultimate defence that protects an education in the ‘making’, regardless of the meaning that is inspiring such ‘making’. As Lacan would put it, Romina’s words are letting the interviewer-researcher know that she as a subject has reached the ‘moment for concluding’. Unconsciously, she has ascertained that there is at least one signifier, ‘quality’ policy (‘S1’), which can truly represent the object she declares

as most desirable, namely, equality *via* the assurance of quality learnings. As has been argued above, this insight comes not gradually but all too swiftly; that is why she says “period”, as if all doubt had been rendered unnecessary.

Yet Romina is thorough in letting her counterpart know that her certainty is strictly about the bureaucratic. Her ‘eureka!’ moment, what Lacan sees as the conclusive celebration of imaginary identity mirrored over the frame of the signifier (Roberts, 2005), comes precisely when her speech intensifies in her utterance of the phrase “that’s the Ministry”. Her desire becomes animated in the face of the ‘Ministry’ representation, which stands for the ultimate institution of bureaucratic power. Her words thus corroborate that the Other of public servant discourse represents the organised/organisable status of the public sector bureaucratic structure, and that the diverse neoliberalizing narratives on quality policy and its implementation (‘S2’) will only become meaningful if they are signified in relation to the signifier of ‘quality’ policy as a property of the bureaucratic.

This summarizes the public servant’s fundamental appropriation of the demands for quality education that demonstrations on Chilean streets had been proclaiming so loudly in recent years, and which Romina had had the opportunity to watch from the vantage point of her office window on one of the top floors of the Ministry of Education building. On one end, the agents on the streets were pushing to saturate the notion of quality policy with many strands of meaning, exhibiting their intense desires for the policy-makers and public servants to watch (and react to). On the other end, the public servants, as

witnesses, appropriated 'quality' as a master signification in the name of the organised/organisable Other; that is to say, as a (renewed) realization of the bureaucratic structure of the public sector (i.e. the State) whose efficacy in delivering desired policy meanings (i.e. narratives on positive policy outcomes) was always-already guaranteed. The data suggests this is why every single interviewee rejected my gesture of identifying them as (or loosely associating them with) 'public functionaries', the Chilean synonym for 'bureaucrat'. For them, 'bureaucrat' was a signifier that felt incompatible and even taboo within the neoliberal discourse that had shaped and thus validated the educational context where quality assurance policy was discussed. They stood against such a name, and conversely in favour of the idea of being called a public servant.

As Žižek poignantly points out (2008: 83), such is precisely the assumption that the subject is called to make – the Other s/he is supposed to suppose and desire - when situated within neoliberal, capitalist discourse. The subject sees himself/herself as a mere 'servant' of an order, the public sector, with no inherent ethics, which is supposed to just be implemented and keep working itself out, over and over again. Elaborating on Rhodes & Milani Price's (2010) work, the public-servant-subject, the one whose identity is married to the belief in policy implementation, can be seen as one who disavows bureaucracy so that s/he can paradoxically recourse to it in order to guarantee the purposefulness of identity itself.

Overall, this chapter has aimed to introduce the fundamentals and implications of what could be called the 'subject of bureaucracy' in the analysed data on

public servant discourse. This deliberately ambiguous formulation is meant to encompass the simultaneity of two processes of discursive articulation: on the one hand, the definition of what bureaucracy is, and particularly, of what purpose (if any) it could serve; on the other hand, the definition of a subjective position from which to speak and to act from within the organised/organisable bureaucratic order of the public sector. For Lacan, the erudite clinician, the 'subject of bureaucracy' was not a distant concern. Quite the contrary, Lacan's thinking, particularly the theory of discursivity he elaborated late in his intellectual life (Lacan, 2007b), can be seen as a response to the question on the traditional bureaucratic order and the organised/organisable Other that had been progressively associated with it during the neoliberal explosion of modern capitalism in the twentieth century. This is certainly an issue that he experienced first-hand as organiser of his own psychoanalytic school, as D. Nobus stated in a keynote speech in June 14th, 2013. Accordingly, as has been illustrated above, an analysis of public servant discourse based on a Lacanian theoretical framework is more than capable of providing an insight into the two articulatory processes encompassed by the idea of the 'subject of bureaucracy'.

Thus far, analysis has revealed that the 'organizability' of bureaucracy - the definition of the possibility for its realization - is a condition (i.e. a 'defence') for the implementation of policy, even if, and precisely because, such policy aims at neoliberally 'optimizing' the bureaucratic into the post-bureaucratic (De Cock & Böhm, 2007: 827). It has also revealed that a specific kind of

subjectivity, that which is supposed to manage the implementation of any of bureaucracy's realizations ('S2'), emerges as a desire, a particularly hasty desire, to identify with the so-called 'technical' feasibility of policy ('S1'); in this case, of quality policy. The basic imaginary inter-personal effects and inter-subjective symbolic structure that underpin the latter identification process have been outlined, emphasizing how bureaucracy equates not to a meaning particularly signified ('S2') but to a specific mode of mastering signification itself ('S1' – 'S2'). For the public servants under study, quality policy functions as part of a master signification, that is to say, a locally-grounded, hasty assumption of the absolute meaningfulness of a series of particular claims ('S2') based on the use of a universally-valid signifier, 'quality' policy ('S1'), whose meaning is swiftly taken for granted and thus ultimately rendered irrelevant. However, such outlining of discursive mastery, which scholars like Laclau and Mouffe (2001) have assimilated to the Gramscian theory of political hegemony, does not seem to be enough. As Lacan has warned (2007b) and the data has corroborated, bureaucracy should be understood as the specific name for a mode of discursivity in which not solely a 'nodal' signifier but the whole mastery of signification has been somewhat 'neutralised' in its expression of dominance and the subject's desire (and his/her ethics) have been reduced to a mere 'servicing' of an order that 'just works' (Žižek, 2008).

* * *

In the remaining data analysis chapters, I will continue to use Lacanian theory to further understand the articulation of what I have called the 'subject of

bureaucracy' in public servant discourse, encompassing both the signification of bureaucracy itself, its delimitation and purpose as organizational structure, and the signification of the subjective (imaginary) experience of those who take part in discourse (and practice) within the bureaucratic structure of the public sector.

To accomplish this, forthcoming analyses will interpret distinct modes of identity construction through discourse, involving different implementation narratives and practices, in order to reveal different modes of stable subjective positioning. Particularly, the (unconscious) desire mobilizing these processes of subjectivation as flows of discursivity will be discussed in relation to the organised/organisable Other of the bureaucratic order and the diverse types of enjoyment or *jouissance* that the public-servant-subject can experience when invoking the latter as a supposed guarantor of meaning or sense-making. By establishing different interpretations on how satisfaction or *jouissance* in public servant identification is experienced, the fundamental questions expressed by Schofield's (2001) key work on bureaucracy's durability and Public Service vocation (i.e. desire) will be further elaborated. What makes public servant identity attach to the bureaucratic socio-technical environment? In other words, borrowing the term Jossierand, Teo & Clegg used in their analysis of bureaucratic to 'post-bureaucratic' transitions (2006: 61), what makes public servant identity 'stick' to bureaucratic work? And how exactly does identity 'stick' to it? These are the questions that the following chapters will address.

Chapter 4 – Public servant identification with the fantasy objects of bureaucracy.

The previous chapter saw the defining of this study's area of interest — namely the fundamental relation between public servant subjectivity and bureaucratic work — based on the analysis of testimonies by policy implementers. Under this definition, public servants are seen as identifying with the constant planning and execution of bureaucratic work, following the command to implement policy (in the studied case, quality assurance policy) that they have received from senior officials, and which they have received in turn from politically-swayed policy-maker agents. Particularly, public servants are seen as identifying with public sector organising as the 'technocratic' challenge of bureaucratic work, which for them is not concerned with the multitude of clashing socio-political causes that had been prompting government to enforce quality assurance policing in prior years. Finally, the analysis conducted in the previous chapter opened up a line of questioning that was to run across the following chapters: What makes public sector identification 'stick' to the technocratic organisational domain of bureaucracy? What exactly do they find enjoyable or satisfactory in implementing policy through bureaucratic work?

In this chapter, the abovementioned questions will be addressed from a Lacanian perspective, particularly from the perspective of Lacan's third

paradigm of enjoyment (Miller, 2000), in which satisfaction is defined through the subjective articulation of a fantasy narrative/object. As part of fantasy, complete satisfaction with the narrative/object is defined as negative, impossible to achieve and yet, paradoxically, as actively sought by the subject as a possibility in his/her experience. From this standpoint, testimonies of public servants on bureaucratic work will be analysed, focusing on how they articulate both the possibility of achieving total satisfaction and the impossibility of achieving it. The chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will provide an introduction to the notion of impossible or negative *jouissance* as defined in Lacan's third paradigm (Miller, 2000), illustrating how it can serve as the main conceptual tool for empirical analysis in the chapter. The second section will present the analysis of narratives on idealized bureaucratic work with which the public-servant-subject identifies in his/her search for full satisfaction as a possibility. Finally, the third section will present the analysis of such an identification process from a different angle, this time focusing on how the public-servant-subject identifies with narratives that situate and explain the lack or impossibility of satisfaction in bureaucratic work.

Impossible or negative *jouissance* during policy implementation: a bureaucracy 'in the making', delayed.

As has been proposed previously, the notion of quality can be located at the helm of the discursive arrangement with which reforms to the public sector, in this case of an educational nature, are constructed as organisations. It takes

part in a master signification at the level of the symbolic, detonating an unconscious, retroactive effect at on the imaginary dimension of subjectivity. It does this by arranging bureaucratic know-how, or what Lacan (2007b) called knowledge in a general sense (the scripted and non-scripted procedures and methods of the public sector workplace, i.e. the memos, meetings, roles, among others of its components) to operate as concrete yet in-exact evidence of the substantiality and purposefulness of the implementation work that is required from him/her to realize a policy command. This is what Lacan (cited in Roberts, 2005: 629) called an 'attribution of permanence, identity and substantiality to the self'. The public-servant-subject hurries to declare him/herself as matching or mirroring in exact fashion the elements of workplace reality within a bureaucratic order (in the quoted interviews assimilated to a pile of reports, a recollection of everyday tasks and of course, the interviewer's questions) long before the concrete project is actually realized in its capacity (in this case, to improve student learning, school management and social relations).

The public-servant-subject is certainly preceded by the organised/organisable Other, whose purported enterprise-like features are part of a global cultural trend (Stavrakakis, 2008), yet, as argued in the previous chapter, s/he can only feel confident about the potential success of the policy implementation endeavour – the exactitude of its efficacy/effectiveness - when s/he leaps forward, repeatedly and always too hastily, to celebrate the idealized

wholesomeness of the contents and purposes of the policy to be organized. As Roberts (2005) points out,

“(Mis)recognition here rescues the self from what Lacan insists is the ‘lack’ that is our only essence. But, importantly, it requires that our capacities for action are repeatedly subverted to the task of making, or at least preserving, a ‘some-thing’ of my self.” (2005: 629)

Roberts’ insight allows clarification of the role that the master signification of quality, as considered above, plays in the studied case. Insofar as quality designates a policy to be implemented in bureaucratic structure (for instance, as a reform), it works as the ‘some-thing’ that is always kept ‘in the making’ in the eyes of the public sector (i.e. (State) workers/consultants. The signifier ‘quality’ policy, as a pure index or label, functions as one of the privileged passwords that allows the subject to legitimately ‘get busy with implementing’ (implementing ‘for’ and ‘with’ quality, that is) and thus preserve his/her own identity as a public servant within a bureaucratized realm. In this sense, as argued in the previous chapter, it also scaffolds a defensive screen that refracts and filters out for the subject the surrounding macro-social turmoil of student-civil movements marching down the streets and complex socio-political demands that call for his/her ethical response. The repeated ‘making’ of the self, as Roberts (2005) puts it, is synchronized with the ‘making’ of the bureaucratic workplace, up to the point of assimilating the ethical dimension of identity to the neutralized/neutralizing ethics of bureaucracy that authors such as du Gay (2000a) and specially Crozier (1964) have characterized. This

directioning of identification can be seen as defending the subject from the distressful ethical callings made by massive movements.

Thus the master signification of quality, in the studied case, reveals a fundamental link between policy and its bureaucratic implementation. Quality policy in this case has been installed as a pure, tautological signification of bureaucracy: quality policy exists only as bureaucratic 'making' and bureaucracy exists only when it 'makes' or brings about the effects prescribed by policy, in this case, the realization of some version of educational quality. This implies that there is something very specific at stake in the implementation of quality policy: it is a promised object; the 'some-thing' that Roberts (2005) considers that the organised/organisable Other can offer for the subject's construction of his/her identity or depiction of self. In Lacanian theory, the Other stands for the pre-existing order that logically (i.e. symbolically) sustains the attribution of meaningfulness of a master signification; hence, the abovementioned affirmation implies that the object at stake in policy implementation is an object that appears to 'linger' amidst a series of coherently (i.e. meaningfully) interrelated strands of signification or narratives ('S2') about 'quality' policy ('S1'), as if these articulations or narratives, located in the site of the Other, were giving the subject clues for him/her to solve. It is the sustained effort of solving the meaning of quality policy, of figuring out what the Other desires the subject to deduce, what generates the reality of a satisfactory object, that 'some-thing' that could provide to the 'self' what supposedly belongs to the 'self'.

As shown by Feliciano's brief yet crucial quote, analysed in the previous chapter, the object that underlies the meaningfulness of workplace narratives is not related to the diversity of meanings of quality but rather to the meaning of quality as policy; in other words, to the notion that quality exists to be implemented, over and over again. Feliciano's 20-second pause after he was asked what quality meant and how it related to his work, represents an introspective effort to browse through multiple narratives in his mind. It is an effort full of desire, that takes too long, which reflects the need to respond to the gaze of the Other, who Feliciano (unconsciously) assumes has left clues for him to solve amidst all the narratives in his memory. Finally he rushes forward, suddenly concluding the moment of doubt, and declares "I have never thought about it, but something comes to mind". This reveals that the clues he has just solved have brought him close to an object that is completely unrelated to the meanings of quality, as he is certain of never having thought about that. As argued in the previous chapter, what he is certain of is that 'something comes to mind' despite not having quality in his self-accounts. What belongs to his 'self' is his capacity to recollect his experiences of bureaucratic work, which he is certain will be able to tell the things about quality policy that he has never thought about. In short, if there is some-thing that belongs to him, an object that can support the enjoyment of his identity, it is his factual experience of the 'making' of quality policy; more specifically, his experience that some-thing in bureaucracy is 'in the making', not yet (or ever) complete but still unfolding.

Although quality policy, because of its neoliberal, entrepreneurial conception, prescribes how the organisation of policy is to transcend the labyrinth of bureaucracy for the alleged purpose of social development, the public-servant-subject finds in it an object for himself/herself that represents the steadiness of routinely bureaucratic practice⁷. For Fotaki (2010:710), the subjective engagement with policy represents an attempt to counteract the ontological and temporal finitude of the human being, insofar as policy works, in the words of Cabieses & Espinoza (2012)⁸, as a 'chameleonic vehicle' that would allow the representation of a complex diversity of realities into a simplified, succinct set of practices. Yet the Lacanian theory of the signifier indicates that this 'chameleonic' status does not imply that quality policy, as a master signification, can mean many things; rather, it implies that in the end it means nothing. This is Fotaki's (2010) discovery: policies often fail precisely because of the excessive desire invested in their 'chameleonic' capacity, which promises plenty but can deliver only little. The data leads one to interpret, accordingly, that it is not just the policy text which should be assumed as having 'chameleonic' features but also the identity of the subject who takes on the mission of implementing policy as his/her own.

⁷ The data shows, in this sense, that the role played by the quality signifier in the subject's discourse is equivalent to what Lacan (1998) called a 'reserve' in the sense of a Native American reservation. It signals the perimeter of an empty, fortifiable territory gained by surrendering old tribal and religious traditions (Weberian, iron-cage bureaucracy) in exchange for autonomous, goal-oriented sovereignty (entrepreneurial 'post-bureaucracy'), whose potential use is evidently beneficial but yet to be determined. It stands, accurately, for a reserve within the self.

⁸ Their thoughts are based on the work of McLennan and Osborne, two New Public Management scholars.

Following Roberts' (2005: 630) Lacanian interpretation, workplace identification in this case would be precisely about the 'chameleonic' play of mis-recognition, which would allow the implementing public servants to fly from or avoid the possibility of public humiliation due to being seen and seeing themselves as inadequate or incompetent, like Feliciano facing the interviewer during the long 20-second pause. It is the object of 'bureaucratic making', which Feliciano embraces and enjoys as the pause concludes, which is the ultimate 'chameleonic vehicle' for policy. At first, the command for policy implementation confronts the public servant with his/her ontological ('what is on my mind?') and temporal finitude (how long does it take me to answer?). Then, the belief in the durability of bureaucracy (Schofield, 2001), in other words, the trust in the infinitude of the bureaucratic making, enters the scene and re-animates the 'mind' of the public servant. The object of 'bureaucratic making' operates as the basic defence for subjectivity, and the subject who invokes it discursively, and thus identifies with it as a crucial reflection of his/her being, is assured the possibility of enjoying his/her own experience of implementing policy.

The data reveals that the signification of quality allows the sustaining of subjectivity by reaching beyond the educational realm and finding a particular Other; one who supposedly guarantees the shape and purposefulness of organized bureaucratic work (Badley, 1998). As a result, the object of quality policy's 'making' can be seen as standing for the 'spirit' of bureaucratic implementation, specifically, as the 'inner soul' of the public servants behind

it. It is articulated as transcendental yet unfathomable, as an 'inner' content for public-servant-subjects, the object that inhabits what Feliciano calls his 'mind', despite the paradoxical fact that it has been defined in relation to what occurs and will supposedly occur 'outside' (the potential learning effects, accountability consultancies, international benchmarks, inter-departmental coordinations, etc.) or maybe not be defined at all. In the Lacanian terms used previously, the signification of quality policy is structured as an alienation in the discourse of the Other (i.e. the pre-existing symbolic order), in which the desire of the subject for a specific object emerges out of the desire the subject supposes the Other has for him/her.

Public servant identity is structured as Otherness or alterity from this perspective, its life animated in the inside from the organised/organisable order of bureaucracy outside. In this, a radical lack of ontological consistency in the subject's being is at stake. Beyond the attractive features of the imaginary bureaucratic object, the public-servant-subject's desire looks for a master signification ('S₁-S₂') in the discourse of the bureaucratic Other that can specify or index the object that would match perfectly with what s/he is lacking. Here the object is quite literally equated to a kind of affidavit issued by the big Other, which is supposed to upgrade the status of the imaginary object, whatever its depiction may be, and certify its suitability to fit with the lack that drives the subject's desire. Hence, there is not only an ontological lack at stake in this alienated structuring of discourse (i.e. 'I am Other'), because the signification of a lack is met, paradoxically, with a profound sense of

purpose (i.e. of ‘filling’) during the public servant’s experience of identification. There is lack in the tension between the desiring subject and the desiring Other, but also there is enjoyment or *jouissance* in having identity assured by the signification, guaranteed by the Other, of a powerful bureaucratic object, supposedly capable of filling the lack. Both elements are at play in public servant identification, which was previously defined as a defensive process.

Both lack and enjoyment or *jouissance* serve to enact in the organisational context what is the cornerstone of defensive subjective constitution (the defence behind the defence) under Lacan’s third mode of theoretical elaboration according to acolyte and successor Miller (2000). Such a cornerstone is the primordial fantasy about the capacity of discursivity, as governed by the Other, to promise the subject a deliverance from his/her precarious finitude as an organisational agent acting through the use of the signifier (Müller, 2012); especially, about the capacity of discursivity to give him/her the satisfaction of preventing any potential ineffectiveness or failure of policy (Fotaki, 2010). As Fotaki (2010) and Clarke (2012) have pointed out, the reality of both policy implementations depends on the defensive, fantasmatic constitution of subjectivity; that is to say, in its articulation within discourse as a strong identification with – it could be said, as a management of – absolute redemption or satisfaction. Following Miller’s (2000:19) elaboration on Lacan’s third paradigm of *jouissance*, this absoluteness is strictly beyond both the imaginary beauty of the bureaucratic-object’s appearance and the symbolic guaranteeing that the law/rules – the Other –

can offer (in this case, the constitutional law of the State). Enjoyment or *jouissance* is situated as external to discursivity, lost but supposedly recoverable through the imaginary and symbolic means of discursivity. It is the 'real' satisfaction that cannot be tamed by discursively arranged practice (i.e. speech) but which nonetheless is the necessary 'real' reference that every discourse requires if it is to claim to be more than fiction.

In short, enjoyment stands for the impossibility or negativity of discursivity itself. According to Lacan's third paradigm, discourse can never say truly what it means and thus can never provide the 'real' satisfaction that it signifies is desired/desirable (Miller, 2000; Cederström & Spicer, 2014). Subjectivity, as a defence, is precisely about veiling such inherent impossibility, the ontological finitude of the subject, with a fantasy about the possible realization of the impossible: the acquisition of a sacred, absolute, pure object. Going back to the 'subject of bureaucracy' discussed in the previous chapter, this particular Lacanian take on subjective fantasy adds to the critique of the neoliberal revamping of the public sector bureaucracy in the name of quality policy (Rhodes & Milani Price, 2010). While scholars such as Clarke (2012) have revealed that the entrepreneurial discourse of contemporary educational policy (like quality assurance) has been structured as an idealistic (but impossible) fantasy full of 'pure objects', the data in this study indicates that the neoliberal post-bureaucratic public sector programmes on which the former relies for its implementation have also been structured as a fantasy. The former signifies ideal objects like 'freedom' or 'equality' for the subject to

identify with, while the latter signifies and offers the sacred, pure object of the 'making' and improvement of bureaucracy, for instance, in terms of bureaucratic quality (Rauch & Evans, 2000).

In what follows, the grammars that underpin the possibility of the bureaucratic-'making' object in subjective experience will be analysed.

Fantasy as sublimatory *jouissance*: identification with the idealized object of 'bureaucratic-making'.

Jouissance of a fantasmatic kind, which I situated in the methodology chapter as part of a third paradigm in Lacanian theory (Miller, 2000), would thus reside in the pure subjective belief that quality as policy could mean something important, decisive and beautiful; in other words, something sublime. Such *jouissance* results from suturing the ontological gap of inter-subjectivity with the means of epistemological certainty (Glynos, 2001: 192; Lacan, 1998). Accordingly, for Driver (2009a:60), it would be a 'creative and empowering' kind of *jouissance*, as if the mere presence of the belief — the mere impulse to speak about working on educational policy during an interview with the researcher for instance — would cleanse the subjective experience of all hesitancy and confusion and replace these states with a sense of awareness about workplace reality, its actual features and potential modifications. *Jouissance* from this viewpoint would be marked by the experience of haste, as it would represent a sudden discovery of hope, which the subject is supposed to hang on to before the opportunity vanishes. The subject speaks of himself/herself as situated in a position of 'making' something that belongs to

him/her, of pursuing or constructing a project through a series of actions. It is the sublimated object of fantasy that orientates this pursuit full of desire, even though the persistence of desire itself also and paradoxically determines that *jouissance* is impossible or negative, un-realizable and always-already lost as a possibility. It is the lack, not the acquisition, which arranges the whole subjective movement when s/he identifies discursively with a fantasmatic narrative.

The latter dynamic is what many interviewees described in terms of being really busy, enthusiastic, hopeful, cognizant, mindful, and concerned, among other states, in relation to the auspices of quality policy being fostered through their work. A particularly long and incessant speech articulated by implementer Julieta displays this eloquently:

“... it’s complicated and it’s as if one feels that the weight of quality rests on the part that one can do, I mean, the weight of informing quality appropriately, a bit of that, the quality of the evaluation we do for example, and, and I don’t know, and regarding the other institutions, I don’t know, a will to do things right can be perceived, like trying to comply with procedures, I don’t know, for instance you have this thing of public consultations that now is being strongly included in the proposals [that we send to advisory boards], I mean, there is this positive will of making procedures more reliable, of gathering information, of generating proposals, so yes, I do think there is an emphasis on quality, that’s for sure, now, just as I was saying before in relation to rankings, there is too much of an emphasis on accountability, I mean too much focus on assigning responsibility, so, we are informing the evaluation of quality, maybe in a way that is too precise, too severe, but if you start thinking in the other command of the legal text that is

about informing the improvement of quality, sure, there it could be said, I could say, maybe we are not doing that, as much, I mean because of this thing of not adding an educational discourse, educational contents, hmm, to the policies, I mean I was thinking how much I'd like someone to do a study about what percentage of public policies in education are oriented to topics of evaluation and accountability, and what are the policies for support and promotion of teaching and management, because my perception is that 80% of our attention is devoted to evaluation and 20% to modifying the curricular basis from which the teachers operate, but it's like, I don't know, like the issue of teaching career is entirely abandoned, we are in debt, hmmm, I don't know, and these are great efforts, I mean we have the Teaching Evaluation System, which is a giant, I mean like people from all over Latin America come to Chile to learn from teaching evaluation, that is fantastic, but what do we do with the information we gather? I mean we are, I mean there are so many institutions and tests, I mean so with all their limitations it is a marvellous example, really useful, I mean we have data which is, I mean researchers from all over the world come to use these databases, so that's ok, but on the other hand, ok, let's evaluate, let's categorize, let's rank, classify, but hey, what are we going to do with that? Or if you start thinking about how much money it costs to install all these systems, it's like wow, what if we use this money to fund school direction support programmes? And what if we use this money for teacher training? Or what if we use this money to raise teachers' salaries? So truly it's like this vision that the system should be addressed from one side, when it should be confronted from all sides, I mean it's not enough with teacher qualification results, with improving working conditions, with social valuation, with the real consequences of standard teacher evaluation, it's everything, you know?"

The spread of Julieta's quote is useful in demonstrating what Fotaki (2010: 715) sees as the individual underpinning of the discourse that propels a public

policy of broad societal range: the imaginary fantasmatic strivings without which there would not be a (potentially creative and empowering) construction of the social, and more importantly, a process of implementation more attuned to the organisational and everyday reality (Fotaki, 2010: 715). Following this author, the quote would directly indicate the split between quality policy-making (i.e. legal text-writing) and quality implementation (i.e. organizing work). This is an intrinsically unstable and conflicting translation that can only be bridged in its many gaps, as argued previously, by giving way to an intense desire for bureaucratic streamlining, as intense as the relentless verbosity of the above-quoted speech. By now, analysis has already established what the quote indicates immediately: that the neoliberal, entrepreneurial contents that infuse Julieta's passionate delivery of her narrative on implementation ('let's evaluate, let's categorize, let's rank, classify') do not reject the traditional bureaucratic order but rather demand it adaptively ('we should pay more attention to the other commands of the legal text on quality / 'there is this positive will of making procedures more reliable'). In this sense, if there is a 'soul' inspiring the neoliberalized subject's practice in the Foucauldian sense (Fardella, 2013) it is not a post-bureaucratic, but a bureaucratic soul.

What is most striking in the quote, perhaps, is how clearly the ego-agency – for Lacan the inter-subjectively recognizable “I” in speech – pushes to make the subject's meditation explicit, as if the massiveness and delay of quality implementation were enjoyable and, in turn, the reluctance of certain agents to take time to “confront all sides” was disturbing. Julieta speaks of many

issues without pause during 500 or more words and insists again and again on asserting, perhaps to keep her thinking going, on how she “doesn’t know”, how she “means” things she’s said in a different way, and how the things that “could be said” impersonally are actually an opinion that “she says”. By constantly re-fashioning her speech she affirms her (epistemological) capacity to know something about her work implementing quality. Her lack of knowing (the repeated “I don’t know” in her discourse) represents her certainty of knowing, and her passion for naming all sorts of contingencies does not represent divergence but rather integration. As Glynos (2001) points out, fantasy works to render the inherent disruptiveness of contingency invisible by signifying the desirable object as the embodiment of a universality; usually the rationalistic universality of science (Lacan, 2007b; Wozniak, 2010). It is important to note that Julieta’s quote on quality implementation in this sense reveals what is maybe the main role that public policy, as bureaucratically implementable, plays in contemporary neoliberalism. It stands for a scientific, universal master signification which, when invoked by a subject (as an Other), is able to turn a state of ignorance or conflict into certainty about the effectiveness (i.e. the unity) of social change. In other words, it stands for the bureaucratization of life as something neutral but also sublime (Lacan, 2007b).

Let us address some specific features of Julieta’s speech to flesh out the abovementioned interplay of identification (i.e. desireful narration) and enjoyment. This requires acknowledging some of the categories that the interviewee employs in her speech.

Julieta addresses the interviewer but also herself, establishing a tense imaginary engagement in which the subject wishes to recognize herself primarily as mindful and busily on top of “everything” but with an unspecific “will”. The use of the latter signifier is revealing⁹, because for Julieta “will” does not express a directive intent as in “I (we) will do (act/make) this or that” but rather a speculation on the conditional (“what if we...”, “what are we going to do if”) supported by the use of an impersonal collective voice: the “will of making procedures...”. Interestingly, amidst the multitude of overlapping bureaucratic “procedures” to which the quote refers – “evaluation”, “ranks”, “classifications”, “tests”, “consultations”, “accountability”, “training”, and so on - this “will” does not express the fantasy of being presently active and influential through speaking, along the lines of an Austinian speech-act. Rather, the quote conveys the fantasy of delaying the act, of waiting and hoping for something while doing something else. The signification of ‘will’ marks an optimistic projection and anticipation of the future that brings appeasement about the present, and for which Julieta takes responsibility. For the public-servant-subject some-thing ‘will’ happen because there is an institutional ‘will’.

The subtle use of this signifier in Julieta’s case indicates such articulation, that there is a ‘will’ for quality policy. Strangely, she rushes to this ‘will’, speaking of it relentlessly and with astonishing richness of detail, but it is not her will,

⁹ Originally in Spanish as “voluntad de hacer”, translated literally in English as “will to do/make”. The translation of the play around the signifier “will” works in both languages: “good will” is “buena voluntad” and “will power” is simply “voluntad”, while “I will act” translates as “Yo haré” (literally, “I will do/make”) which assumes an implicit “will to make” not necessarily belonging to the subject of the utterance (someone else might be prompting the subject) and thus conveying a deferral or de-centring.

which will confront her with the contingency of the present. She thinks of too many procedures, and they result in 'too much' ("too severe", "too precise") or 'too little' ("maybe we are not doing that, as much", as measured even in percentages), but she still emphasizes the 'will' behind them. She expresses her belief in the sublime object of bureaucratic 'making': quality policy 'will' work out somehow; there is a 'will'. This identification with the trustworthiness of bureaucracy is what explains why she moves from 'it's not enough' to 'it's everything' in her narration. She says: "I mean it's not enough with teacher qualification results, with improving working conditions, with social valuation, with the real consequences of standard teacher evaluation, it's everything, you know?" While she strives for the other's (the interviewer's) recognition by saying "you know?", she emphasizes a sense of a radical lack ("nothing is enough") which is immediately covered by the upbeat, hopeful tone with which she declares that 'it's everything', as if she was at the same time saying that they as public servants should effectively be managing 'everything'. The interpretation is that the Other enters the (unconscious) scene and guarantees some-bureaucratic-sublime-thing for the subject, preventing his/her division, that is, the blatant contradiction between specific policy aims and 'everything'. Would it be possible for Julieta to say 'it's everything' if she did not already trust that every-thing 'will' be able to be worked out by the 'will' to foster bureaucratic procedure?

What is at stake, in a sense, is the endurance, almost the immortality, of bureaucracy (Schofield, 2001). Things are 'in the making', as Julieta's eventful

speech conveys, and this assumption grants sense to the ongoingness of work and ultimately provides satisfaction. This is how a fundamental impossible, fantasmatic *jouissance* is drawn (Miller, 2000). The process of sublimation fascinates the cognition of the subject, filling up his/her daydreams not with ideas of education but with ideas of the bureaucratic structure of the public sector itself, and such sublimation becomes a fantasy object when it is catalogued as something that can be promised by and received from the organized/organisable Other of bureaucracy.

The very real lack or impossibility of enmeshing 'everything' into quality is turned into possibility. At the imaginary level, quality is identified as something that is missing or lacking ('it's not enough', 'there is too much, or too little'), but which also prompts an upbeat, optimistic speech that reveals the identification with the belief that quality can always be 'recovered' bureaucratically. At the symbolic level, 'quality' policy serves as a signifier of the mastery of the subject over subsequent but not-yet-realized spoken significations, like a guarantee stamp in an imagined bureaucratic plan. The result is the emergence of an enjoyment of the impossible, in terms of a paradoxical fantasy of 'rushing to postponement', a 'haste to delaying', close to what Glynos sees as the enjoyment of procrastination (2001). *Jouissance* or satisfaction is obtained in subjective experience when there is a busy-ness that serves to narrate the meaning of a not-yet-realized reality, and which can thus only be kept 'alive and busy' by consistently postponing it. As Crozier (1964) discovered, that is the main function fulfilled by the 'bureaucratic

phenomenon': to deactivate and postpone the conflictivity of the present; in the studied case, the conflictive between multiple political and social demands that have been made recently about educational quality policy in the Chilean context (Rojas, 2013). This is what public administration scholar McSwite (1997a) clarifies further from a Lacanian stance. According to this scholar, within a neoliberal, entrepreneurial socio-cultural context for subjectivation – the Foucauldian 'governmentality' - the defence against the risks of the struggles against the possible, with all the failures it might entail, consists of identifying with the impossible by using the grammar of bureaucracy's discourse.

Yet it is important to note how the sublimatory side of identification unfolds not only in the mode expressed by Julieta's above-analysed quote, that is, as a review and comment on the signifiers that represent the push for entrepreneurial policy *à la* 'New Public Management' (such as quality assurance, school accountability, etc.) against the background of long-standing bureaucratic procedures. It is also important to emphasize sublimation as an imaginary effect in public servant identity. This implies focusing on the fascinating effect of certain features of coordinated workplace intersubjectivity and practical life at a local level. Of course, such focus does not imply underestimating the master signification of 'quality' policy and its reference to the bureaucratic-'making' object. It rather implies thinking 'emphatically' about the 'texture' of public servant desire, putting oneself in their shoes and seeing what they see in order to 'believe'.

Two short interview passages illustrate the imaginary subtleties in the grammars that sublimate the master signification of quality policy:

Firstly, the testimony of Javiera, a female middle manager, who stated:

“... for the proposals to remain¹⁰ in a way that contributes to quality, our observations have to be really clear, so that we can tell the Ministry ‘hey you, you need to change this, this thing right here and let’s hope you change it for something like this right here’. I mean, the clearer we can be with these things the better, because also we cannot iterate things eternally. We need to be so clear in what we consider is a problem, because in the end, it is that little piece of paper, in that written agreement, where all, all, all the work is contained and expressed ... this is the final result, it’s like when they extract copper and in the end you get a copper bar, the agreement paper is like our copper bar in the end”
(Underlining represents prosodic emphasis) [Javiera]

Secondly, the speech of Feliciano, who expressed the following regarding his work designing reports:

“... people get carried away by appearances, so the cosmetic work that is included in what I do, you know, is super relevant, you know, even if it sounds silly, if I strive to make the surface as beautiful and shiny as I can that is crucial because that catches people’s attention ... If you want to read something about quality, whether you are a director, a teacher or a parent, it is very different to receive a hefty Word document of 150 pages than to receive one page in A4 printed in exquisite magazine paper, with colours, diagrams, you know, a whole story ... in

¹⁰ Originally in Spanish as “quede”. The Spanish verb “quedar” can be translated alternatively as “to stay”, “to stand” and “to remain”. In this context, this ambiguity in the verb is indicative of the subjective interpretation I have been proposing, as it represents the spatial/material fixity of the bureaucratic text, but at the same time and more importantly, the temporal imperviousness of bureaucratic practice and its results.

the end we just take a high resolution picture of education and pass it to other actors, you know? Like the Ministry and the Council, they are the ones who have to improve things ... we are much colder in that sense, we only sketch the reality of the educational system” [Feliciano]

Although different in many ways, both these passages coincide in illustrating the sublimatory effect of fantasy, in which an object, in this case the bureaucratic ‘making’ of quality, is depicted by the public-servant-subject as desirable in its beauty and/or sacredness. To understand how the imaginary is set to irradiate the sublime, it is necessary to first appreciate how the imaginary is ‘mounted’ over the symbolic while the subject articulates an implementation narrative.

On the one hand, at a conscious, imaginary level, the subject’s experience is full of an awareness of the concrete bureaucratic ‘making’ of quality. This signals his/her desire to see the act of passing one’s work along to the similar other, the counterpart over which the meaning of quality should be mirrored, as the crucial coordination that could make quality policy real. For instance, Javiera emphasizes the importance of “being clear” with Ministry counterparts and respecting the “written agreement” with them to the letter, while Feliciano emphasizes their role as “sketchers” or ‘photographers’ who are also ‘passers’ within a chain of work tasks on which others will decide. By speaking this way, as Julieta did when she spoke of ‘will’, they express a desire to articulate their identity as a problem of voluntary action, the effects of which are postponed to an undefined future. There is an invocation of a safe future, a different scene where anything quality policy might entail will be worked out.

On the other hand, at the unconscious level where the quality signifier in its relation to the Other is supposed to have a fixed meaning (the Other's discourse), public servant desire faces a (traumatic) dimension of impossibility. It is the impossibility of securing the ultimate meaning of quality, which the subject could only rush to take for granted; in previously mentioned terms, it is the impossibility of quality as a 'chameleonic' policy, which means nothing because it is supposed to mean everything. This can be seen precisely in the interviewee's haste, in their clumsy push to over-emphasize and grasp certain meanings. An intense anxiety can be interpreted, for instance, in their evident effort to share their conclusions on how quality is supposed to be, as it were, 'tamed' by implementation. This occurs when Javiera utters the word "remain" in a passionate, even harsh way, and then when she insists three times on the word "all", trying to give the interviewer a sense of fixity, totality and closure that contrasts with how 'little' she says the document condensing it all is. It also occurs when Feliciano uses the second person singular to call for the other's attention, asking the interviewer "you know?", as if what Feliciano was describing was obvious, and also when Feliciano describes himself as 'cold' even though he had just described how 'hot' and appealing his designed pieces could be.

These emphases indicate that the public-servant-subject cannot be sure whether his/her ideas in the 'written agreement' or the fidelity of his/her 'sketches' will ever be considered (in fact, the data suggests that decision makers at the apex seldom consider them). They indicate a radical lack of

knowledge in the voices who speak in these quotes, revealing in turn a strong attachment of the public-servant-subject to the symbolic Other; the attachment of desire. The subject does not know what quality is, because s/he is not sure if the work s/he does will mean something within the network of bureaucratic implementation discourse; despite all the efforts to emphasize, s/he is not sure s/he has identified what the Other desires him/her to be. The subject asks 'you know?' rhetorically, as a metaphor for his/her certainty, but on the surface, at the level of the signifier, s/he is really conveying her wondering about the other, his/her mirrored reflection, knowing or not; the imaginary perception has not been properly 'mounted' over the signification of a conclusion just yet.

However, the quotes reveal that the temporary gap of subjectivity, the ontological finitude of the subject's vision of himself/herself due to the inconsistency of the symbolic, can be defended and patched up. This defence takes place through the sublimation (i.e. the idealization) of the narrated. It occurs when the subject identifies with a clear-cut, beautiful imaginary object that has been signified as indexing supreme satisfaction or enjoyment; an exception to the rule of the symbolic. The construction of identity prevails over the gap of subjectivity because of the signification of some-thing sublime. This implies that the master signification of quality policy, with which the subject identifies, finds a stable place in the Other, as the sublime object is supposed to represent what the bureaucratic Other wants. The data shows consistently in the studied case that the sublime object is a depiction of a mode of

bureaucratic ‘making’ that the subject has put to work effectively, despite its ‘routine’ humbleness.

According to Feliciano, this object is literally about the ‘cosmetics’, not it a vain way, but as the opposite of what he sees as useless appearances. The object that comes across in the quotes is one of ‘effective communication’ (it could be said, a euphemism for ‘educational quality advertisement’). For Feliciano, this is directly about the “exquisite” paper and design through which tedious reports have been beautifully synthesised. These beautiful pieces, he says, tell a brief but meaningful ‘story’ in full colour, and replace the hefty treaties that are associated with traditional notions of bureaucratic work. For Javiera on the other hand, the sublime object is all about the “little piece of paper” into which so much purpose has been distilled. Again, it is a brief but beautiful piece that contains the history of agreements that have been worked out to prevent further conflict and solve pressing problems. Interestingly, the idea of a ‘copper bar’ comes to Javiera’s mind as a comparison when she talks about the ‘effective piece of paper’ (the State-owned building where Javiera worked was filled with precious copper sculptures). Her vision of copper invokes the idea of ‘refinement’, which means tasteful and beautiful, but also a ‘process of optimization’. It also invokes the vital importance of copper in the context of the Chilean economy, particularly the political economy of its State, which is the world’s largest copper producer¹¹.

¹¹ In the Chilean context, copper production is the largest in the world (one third of global production), and contributes 20% of Gross Domestic Product (The Economist 17 April

At first glance, it would seem these objectualizations in the quote indicate the pre-eminence of a post-bureaucratic concern with images, which Styhre (2008) saw as replacing the bureaucratic concern with ‘long’, ‘hefty’, ‘unappealing’ documents; but the data indicates the opposite. The quoted public servant discourse foregrounds sublime objects that mean the normality of the bureaucratic function: ‘exquisite’ paper is used for the ‘cold’ procedure of ‘sketching pictures’ and passing them along, and the refinement of the copper-like written agreement serves to add clarity to the prompting of the Ministry.

The imaginary of copper should be examined closely and interpreted in its powerful implications. The particular signification of copper immediately brings about the universal sublimity of the State, as the de-politicized, policy-oriented, administrative bedrock of the neoliberal socio-economic order (Silva, 2009). Within the fully neoliberalized Chilean context, the image of copper represents, quite literally, the ‘gem’ of the State-nation, hidden under the rubble of the desert where mines are dug. In particular, the image of the “copper bar” represents the ‘polished’ jewel, a precious metal already-processed by State industry into a form that leads, unequivocally, to national development. In this sense, the copper-like implementation of quality policy would stand for what the third Lacanian paradigm equates to Plato’s elaboration on the ‘agalma’ (Lacan, 2015): the precious, righteous object

2013).The State-owned copper production company CODELCO represents the national interest over such massive exploitation of mineral.

allocated inside a container-body of no real value (Socrates' body) which incites and justifies the subject's desire and love. The defensive role of sublimatory fantasy and its implications in the studied context are captured by this particular elaboration. Quality is likened to a gem hidden beneath the bureaucratic layers of policy implementation, a precious 'soul-object' that would bring life and purpose to the boring, almost value-less routines of the State's bureaucratic body. As long as bureaucracy is being used for 'making' or 'mining' the meaning of quality policy, it becomes sublime. and as long as the public-servant-subject desires to take part in this 'making', s/he sees her own inner soul in transcendental harmony with the supposed sacred substance – the Other – of the bureaucratic order.

At this point, some comments from a broader socioeconomic perspective are called for. The abovementioned insights on sublimatory fantasy allow a better understanding of how the subject is inspired to 'make' and gains some-thing of himself/herself (i.e. an identity) amidst the neoliberal push for implementing policies that render bureaucracy (specifically, the bureaucratic administration of education) more enterprise-like; in this case, educational programmes, the delivery of which to customers is accountable and assured in its quality (so that the customers can choose the fittest competitor among schools).

As Jones & Spicer (2005: 225) point out in their analysis of what they call the 'sublime object of entrepreneurship', this is part of a broader debate in critical organisation studies around "how a discourse (here enterprise discourse) hails subjects who then further [organise] the cause of post-industrial capital

through their own volition". Crucially for them, this question about the subjective purchase of neoliberal, entrepreneurial discourse should not be elaborated simply in terms of the historical evolution of the symbolic chains of signification that pattern and justify certain inter-subjective meanings and practices, the neoliberal ones, to the detriment of others, as Foucauldian organisational studies on identification and resistance have proposed (Thomas & Davies, 2005). Coinciding with what the present analysis has revealed, these scholars contend that the question on the subject, in this case the public-servant-subject, should be elaborated also in terms of the unconscious, irrational attachment to signification (i.e. discourse) itself, beyond and despite the socially-validated appearances of entrepreneurial meaning. This is the central question asked in a previous chapter of this thesis: what makes the subject 'stick' to bureaucracy amidst the efforts to refurbish it entrepreneurially and 'post-bureaucratically' through quality policy? Why and how does the subject come to understand his/her own experience as a 'need' for bureaucracy? However, Jones & Spicer's (2005: 226) is also the more general question that they find in du Gay's review of bureaucracy's contemporary role: what is the origin and object of the ethics that are enabled by bureaucracy's 'administrative neutrality'? What values (i.e. narratives) is bureaucracy put to serve and what values should it serve? (see also du Gay, 2005)

The answer, the Lacanian analysis of data has indicated, is related to the defensive structure of public servant subjectivity itself. In particular, it is about

how such structuring relies on the identification with sublimated (i.e. idealized) objects in the organised workplace, objects that have been discursively signified as capable of granting full satisfaction or *jouissance* (i.e. enjoyment), and which enable the fantasy of filling the subject's inherent lack (the cause of his/her desire) and of restoring him/her to a state of ontological fullness and harmony (Müller, 2012; Driver, 2009a; Cederström & Spicer, 2014).

Echoing what du Gay has expressed through his relevant work on the bureaucratic, and which organisational studies of Public Administration like Hoedemaekers' (2010) and McSwite's (1997a) have elaborated on, this understanding represents an effort to flesh out, usefully, the simultaneity of two legitimate readings (Jones & Spicer, 2005: 228). On the one hand, Foucauldian readings of the social, focused on the success of neoliberal discourse in producing entrepreneurial subjectivities (and practices); on the other hand, psychoanalytic readings focused on the constitutive impossibility or negativity of full subjective production and the sublimatory defence that constantly covers that failure. As Julieta's testimony illustrated, the public-servant-subject is one who speaks his/her identity in terms of an enterprising of self ('let's rank'), even leaving some space for resistance ('too much accountability'), but at the same time is one who prevents the risks of facing subjective division ('it's everything'; what exactly?) by embracing bureaucracy as an object that can be sublimely 'made' (a 'good will for procedures').

This contrast between organisational readings signals the answer for the question about the attachment to bureaucracy and the more general du Gayan question on ethics. Identity takes advantage of the tension during the entrepreneurial production of subjectivity *à la* Foucault by assimilating itself to an impossible yet possible object: the entrepreneurially inspired but bureaucratically made object, portrayed by Feliciano's 'exquisite' quality diagram and Javiera's copper-like 'little written agreement' on quality policy. As Julieta's words revealed, these identified objects are condensed, 'chameleonic' depictions ('S2') that would encompass 'everything' the neoliberal, entrepreneurial quality policy could promise. Yet they are only recognizable because of the master signification that takes the meaning of quality policy for granted ('S1'); as argued above, this implies that in the end they mean nothing. This is precisely why these objects shine with 'bureaucratic beauty' to the eyes of the public servant. They balance out the tension between subject and implementation by guaranteeing the meaningfulness of the public-servant-subject's internal world (his/her autonomous 'mind' and 'will') with the 'hard' legality represented by the external Other of the organised/organisable bureaucratic realm (Courpasson, 2000). Thus the sublime here means peace, and also hope, simultaneously for the ethical 'subjective inside' and for the 'organisational outside' of the bureaucratic workplace (du Gay, 200a, 2004; Casey, 2004; Kallinikos, 2004).

* * *

Overall, this section on sublimatory fantasy has interpreted that the public-servant-subject emerges through a desire to know what the Other desires from him/her. The data shows that the subject has reached a conclusion about this, as if s/he was saying 'the Other wants me to be engaged in the bureaucratic 'making' of an exact meaning for quality policy... the delay of this making is beautiful and even sacred, as they mean the policy is being worked out carefully towards effectivity'.

Public servant subjectivity according to this third Lacanian paradigm is all about trust in the Other's omnipotence, and about the belief in something sublime within the organised/organisable outside, which due to the subject's alienation in the symbolic, results in the very belief in his/her inner soul. Through his/her workplace communication, the public-servant-subject unconsciously and somewhat sacrificially assumes that despite the emptiness or contradiction in their vision of policy implementation, bureaucracy will always be beautifully alive and 'in the making', delayed but about to arrive. From this perspective, this is how the defence that sustains subjectivity is structured. Using the tools of a master signification of discourse ('S1-S2'), subjectivity is structured like the 'supposition of a promise' ('S1'), the promise that the act of organising (i.e. narrating) policy ('S2') will bring about for the subject the blessing of an object that brings total enjoyment or *jouissance*, namely, the object of bureaucracy's durable routine (Schofield, 2001). Through endless, delayed bureaucracy, quality policy can be seen as coming closer to

total *jouissance*, supposedly packed into stylish, conflict-free ‘little agreements’, like valuable sublime gems (‘copper gems’) refined by the State.

In this sense, the confusion about implications and meaning of quality policy can be seen as providing the subject with an imaginary alibi for his/her symbolic deployment of a ‘defensive faith’ in the bureaucratic. As Žižek (1989: 36) eloquently indicates¹², “we all know very well that bureaucracy is not all-powerful, but our ‘effective’ conduct in the presence of bureaucratic machinery is already [symbolically] regulated by a belief in its almightiness”. The data has shown that this ‘effective conduct’ is mobilized by the subject’s desire of knowing what the Other desires from him/her (Jones & Spicer, 2005: 233); in this case, where the function of the idealized Other is enacted by the bureaucratic order, the subject desires to prove through his/her actions that he is ‘making’ a good bureaucracy. These actions are illustrated by Julieta’s verbosity, which tried to ‘make’ insights out of all the implementation aspects, and Feliciano’s and Javiera’s recollections of their efforts to foster quality by ‘making’ the perfect bureaucratic object, depicted by the ‘refined document’.

A Lacanian reading considers these actions were made under the guarantee, supposedly issued by the Other, that they were already meaningful, and that they could banish the constitutive lack of subjective (i.e. discursive) consistency. Here, intensity of speech equates to a form of praying and the

¹² I think it is important to keep in mind that this is not the only argument that Žižek has elaborated on the topic of bureaucracy. There are other pieces that could be seen as arguing something opposite or strongly divergent to this analysis of bureaucracy as a fantasy. The role that Žižek’s work plays in construction of the contemporary critique of bureaucracy will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

sublimated imaginary objects equate to amulets, all invoking the godly deliverance of the organised/organisable Other from the turmoil of the neoliberal overhauling of the public sector (McSwite, 1997a). It was the writer Franz Kafka, perhaps the most insightful thinker on bureaucracy, who said that “the relationship with one’s fellow man is the relationship of prayer, the relationship to oneself is the relationship of striving; it is from prayer that one draws the strength for one’s striving” (Kafka in Hawkins, 2003: 52). In the neoliberalized context of Chile, where politics have been substituted for the neoliberal workings of policy (Silva, 2004), this seems to be precisely the case with the ‘promise’ of bureaucracy. As Žižek comments, Kafka’s point was that “for a modern secular non-religious man state bureaucracy is the only remaining contact with the dimension of the divine ... what the impenetrable omnipotence of bureaucracy harbours is divine enjoyment” (*The pervert’s guide to ideology*, 2012). For Lacan (2007), bureaucracy can offer the public servant subject a haven amidst the neoliberal commands for organisation, because it promises a ‘sanctuary’ from the law of the symbolic that determines his/her inherent division.

For Lacan, however, fantasmatic *jouissance* is impossible, and thus, it is ultimately structured as a promise that cannot be fulfilled. As argued previously, it is the lack, not the acquisition, what stabilizes or ‘defends’ subjectivity amidst the flow of organizational discourse (Cederström & Spicer, 2014).

In the next section, selected pieces of data will be analysed to understand the conditions, contents and broader consequences of such impossibility of fulfilment. The discussion will be focused on the question: how is the satisfaction or *jouissance* of identity actually obtained if the acts that invoke the promising capacity of bureaucracy cannot lead to consistent results?

Fantasy as transgressive *jouissance*: antagonistic identification with political agents impeding the ‘making’ of bureaucracy

The defensive effort of sublimation, outlined in the previous section, allows public-servant-subjectivity to strive for enjoyment or *jouissance* as it offers the subject a ‘delayed’ fantasy object that promises an eventual state of total satisfaction (Miller, 2000); namely, the object of bureaucracy ‘in the making’. The interpretation of *jouissance* in the collected data, however, has also to account for its inherent impossibility. According to Lacan’s third paradigm (Miller, 2000), fantasmatic *jouissance* is conceptualized as impossible precisely because what is enjoyable is the delay or postponement itself, not the promised delivery/deliverance that the delay postpones. Enjoyment is about keeping the object at a distance — a tempting yet safe distance (Daly, 1999).

This represents the Lacanian understanding of the Freudian drive, not as biological instinct but as a specific symbolic determination. An idealized objectualization of the public-servant-subject’s desire is possible because the delay never meets its target. Desire for identity is pleasurable because desire is supposedly directed towards an object that exhausts it, but as Freud pointed

out (1933), desire is ultimately part of the defence against the drive. Desire is structured over the traumatic endlessness of the drive's push for circular movement; a senseless repetition that leads nowhere and seeks nothing, as if it were the enactment of death. Fantasmatic enjoyment resides in the subject's 'defensive' (unconscious) gesture of veiling the excessive, 'deadly' movement of the drive with a hopeful desire to recover what has supposedly been lost. In this case, it is a striving for an idealized image/narrative of the workplace object that could indicate the actual possibility of realizing the postponed usefulness or efficacy of bureaucratic public administration. Yet fantasmatic enjoyment requires desire to never be fulfilled, its object never fully realized in the terms specified symbolically (and practically) by the public-servant-subject. The lack that motivates desire can never be sutured, so that desire can keep going. It could thus be said that enjoyment is paradoxically (im)possible; possible precisely because of its inherent impossibility (Daly, 2006). In turn, it could be said that the reality of bureaucracy is (im)possible. How exactly, though, does the failure of desire's realization come about? If total enjoyment is impossible or negative, does that imply that no enjoyment is achieved?

In light of the analysed data on public servant discourse, it is accurate to say that *jouissance* is achieved, but only partially and in a way that subverts (but requires) the articulation (i.e. narration) and seeking of an idealized bureaucratic object. This is the perspective signalled by Cederström & Spicer (2014), scholars who have formalized what they call a post-foundational analysis of organisational discourse, meaning one that focuses on how

possibility is founded paradoxically on impossibility. For Cederström & Spicer (2014: 15), “the pure *jouissance* imagined through the lost object will never materialize itself fully, because there is an insurmountable gap between ‘*jouissance* expected’ and ‘*jouissance* obtained’ ... *jouissance* is always a contaminated form of the expected pure *jouissance*”.

This relates to the critique that Jones & Spicer (2005) made of du Gay’s fundamental analysis of the public sector’s neoliberal entrepreneurial revamping. The former emphasize that in du Gay’s text, there is a direct link between what the latter calls the ‘congenital failure of governmental operation’ and an excessive element that ‘separates the real from its symbolization’ (Jones & Spicer, 2005: 226). What Jones & Spicer (2005) intend to demonstrate, through the review of du Gay, is that the policy discourse commanding neoliberal efforts of organisation, particularly in the public sector, cannot transform and enjoy the real as they seek, because of discursivity’s own impossibilities (Fotaki, 2010). As Lacan proposes, ‘the real’ is always missed, precisely because it is articulable discursively, and thus the real of full enjoyment is impossible, although the articulation of the discourse that invokes it remains possible always. The only enjoyment available is that of articulation itself, around supposed ‘real’ sites (i.e. identities), charged with an investment that renders them attractive for subjective desire. For Jones & Spicer *via* du Gay (2005), one of this supposedly real and sublime places is that of ‘entrepreneurial’ identity (e.g. ‘the entrepreneur’, ‘entrepreneurial Public Management’). According to the analysed data, another one of these sites or

identities is that of bureaucracy as a politically-swayed socio-technical order. Certainly, as Clarke's analysis of Australian educational reforms has shown (2012), 'quality' policy also constitutes one of these sites, but as the chapter on the 'subject of bureaucracy' indicated, it is not the one foregrounded by the public servants studied. For them, the 'real' of quality policy, whatever it might be, is only the 'real' of the ongoingness of bureaucratic work.

So, the problem of *jouissance* during the analysis of public servant subjectivity should then be understood as attached to the irresolvable tension between discourse and its own need for securing 'the real'. *Jouissance* in these terms is profoundly paradoxical. Enjoyment does not emerge for the subject if not articulated as a supposedly real and ideal object, yet it proves to be definitely impossible if that object is consistently pursued. Thus, the only way to distil '*jouissance* obtained' out of '*jouissance* imagined', as Cederström & Spicer (2014) put it, is to 'refract' the link between idealization (i.e. sublimation) and realization. 'Refracting' in this case is not about disrupting such a link completely. It is about enacting 'exceptions' to a given command for total enjoyment, in a way that prevents a particular realization but not the universal rule as a whole.

This is why organisational scholars such as Glynos (2001) have developed research programmes that address the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* as essentially attached to acts of transgression. From the perspective of Lacan's third paradigm, (an act of) transgression is part of fantasy as it represents the 'exceptional', signifying at once the failure of any claimed 'real' outcome of

organising and also the 'real' procurement of *jouissance* or satisfaction; in other words, transgression indexes both the potentialities and limitations of discursivity in relation to reality.

Transgression subverts what has been ordered discursively (i.e. the Other), yet at the same time it calls for a strengthening of such order (i.e. it calls for the Other's desire and command). For Lacan (1997), it enacts 'the exception that proves the rule' of reality itself: since 'the real' can only be signified and imagined as a fantasy of idyllic enjoyment that is ultimately impossible, transgression operates as a rather horrific and very real (i.e. concrete) act that renders the soothing idea of the harmonious more necessary than ever, for defensive purposes. Things can only remain (potentially) idyllic to the subject's eyes and expectations if a certain horrific real-ity within them appears and prompts the subject to desire, defensively, for the recovery of their harmoniousness. For Lacan (1997), following the Freudian concept of 'The Thing' (Das Ding), the construction of an ideal, sublime yet impossible object of identification cannot occur without paying the price of experiencing the 'spectral' or ominous side of fantasy: things are most sublime precisely when they are on the brink of turning nightmarish, or when reality turns horrific for a short while but is then restored to a harmonious state. Fantasy is about introducing an intimidating distance or gap between the design of reality and the subject who sets out to experience and enjoy it.

This is how in Lacanian theory under the third paradigm (Miller, 2000), transgression has been associated with the last register of subjectivity besides

the imaginary and the symbolic: the register known as ‘the Real’, which from this interpretive standpoint is viewed as radically excluded from discursivity. In this case, as the data indicates, transgression stands for the impossibility or negativity that hollows out any imaginary-symbolic construction of workplace identity; the impossibility of mastering and enjoying the understanding of what is supposed to be ‘real’ in the organisational realm and of what is supposed to be ‘real’ about self during the effort of organising.

Going back to the public servants studied and their identification with the object of bureaucracy ‘in the making’, it is important to note how the public servant who participates in transgressive acts or narrations puts himself/herself in a position of identification from which s/he foregrounds a side of defensive fantasy that differs from the sublimatory side, in this case, the sublimation of bureaucracy’s capacity to ‘make’ itself according to (quality) policy. Despite the fact that a particular act of transgression is the only way *jouissance* can actually be obtained by the public servant, its subversive character calls for the reinforcing of the fantasmatic defence of identity, so that the invoked order that regulates it – the organised/organisable Other – can preserve its function for the structuring of the subject. This reinforced defensive gesture is structured as a response against the threat of inconsistency, the inconsistency of any order, in this case the bureaucratic order, whose legitimation requires a degree of transgression of its own terms; in other words, the ‘corruption’ that is necessary to obtain some but not full *jouissance* in the public sector context (Lennefors, 2008; 2010). Accordingly,

it differs from sublimation. While sublimation can be seen as a basal, pre-emptive defence devised to lay the grounds for total consistency, the defence that is associated with the emergence of transgression can be seen as a reactive, ‘scapegoating’ gesture. It is a blaming gesture, in which the irruption of impossibility or inconsistency is swiftly signified as being caused by an external other with horrific/threatening imaginary features.

The latter defensive grammar is what Žižek (1993) and several other scholars following his lead (Daly, 1991; Glynos, 2001; Stavrakakis & Chrysoloras, 2006) have equated to narratives about the ‘theft’ or impediment of total *jouissance*, which pertain not only to individual identity but also to collective and national identity. As Žižek (1993: 203) puts it:

“We always impute to the "other" an excessive enjoyment: he wants to steal our enjoyment (by ruining our way of life) and-or he has access to some secret, perverse enjoyment. In short, what really bothers us about the "other" is the peculiar way he organizes his enjoyment, precisely the surplus, the excess that pertains to this way: the smell of their food, their noisy songs and dances, their strange manners, their attitude to work”. (Žižek, 1993: 203)

Žižek’s words emphasize the ‘dark side’ – the negative, impossible side – of the idealizing grammars of fantasy under Lacan’s third paradigm. It is the side that stands for the Real register of subjectivity exceeding any imaginary-symbolic construction. As outlined above, in the actual experience of the public-servant-subject, this impossible side is enacted through transgression, which it could be said operates by expressing the ‘other’ side of identity, the subversive side, one that negates the idealistic claims that the same subject had previously

made for the sake of obtaining some *jouissance*. Notwithstanding, Žižek proposes a different mode of articulating the impossibility or negativity of identity, a more liminal one that projects it to a staged 'outside' of experience, where an imaginary 'other' is blamed for transgressing the path towards ideal realization. This reactive defence through 'scapegoating' allows transgression to be acknowledged explicitly but be seen as absolutely detached from the subject's possibilities. The transgressor is 'an-other' and what explains the failure in securing total *jouissance* is the 'perverse' *jouissance* of the other and/or the other's desire to steal the subject's total *jouissance*. The incidental transgressor ends up being equated to a proper agency, with its own tradition, who intends to steal the constructive delay of bureaucracy, required to implement policy well.

Accordingly, in this case the guaranteeing function of the Other in relation to identity is also modified. The Other is seen as no longer desiring the public-servant-subject to organise bureaucracy into a sublime realization of (quality) policy, but as desiring the subject to implement policy bureaucratically in opposition to the condemnable ways of the hindering, transgressive other. As the following analysis of data will clarify in this case, the transgressive other is equated to the agency of politicians and policy-makers, who design and command policy but do not have to carry the burden of organising it; they are seen as operating 'outside' the bureaucratic realm, excluded from, and ultimately hindering, the task of inventing or figuring out ways to make policy

work. It is an other whose resisted agency is attributed a desire to actively politicize public sector interaction, as Cooper (2015) has recently discovered.

For the public servant, this shift represents a different route for identification. Following Lacanian organisational scholars such as Driver (2009:366), such a re-identification movement would convey an instance of constructive workplace story-telling: one in which 'the horror of the nothingness of work, self and organisation', in this case attributed to the hindering ways of a policy-making other, can lead to an 'empowering and creative' re-making of bureaucratic subjectivity and policy implementation. However, the collected data seems to call for a Lacanian interpretation that differs from Driver's. The re-identification with the hindering agency of politicians and policy-makers signals the paradoxical extremism and the hastiness with which the public-servant-subject has to defend his existence in the bureaucracy under the irrational push to implement neoliberal policies that reduce constructive socio-political tension to utopic free-market calculations (Fotaki, 2010; 2006). It shows that the public-servant-subject, in his/her trusting unconscious attachment to the steadiness of bureaucratic work (the organised/organisable Other), is willing to isolate himself/herself completely and even become paranoid of political agents in order to keep his/her faith in the good policing of social causes like 'education'.

Once these theoretical clarifications have been placed, the empirical case can be interrogated. Where, in the data collected, can the obstacles and

antagonisms that provide an alibi for the public-servant-subject to articulate his/her transgressive *jouissance* be appreciated?

In this case the basic and most general instance of fantasmatic transgression and ‘scapegoating’ can be seen when public servant discourse shifts from focusing on the sublime ‘delay’ in the delivery of implementation (i.e. the generation of educational products and services) to focusing on concrete others that threaten the viability of the gradual bureaucratic ‘making’. In narrative terms, at the level of the imaginary, the public servant suddenly appears as contradicting or even betraying his/her own principles, in an unintended way. As a great number of interviews with public servants revealed, the subject declares themselves to be no longer optimistic with ‘all the possibilities that lie ahead’ (which will be slowly and prudently seized) but rather pessimistic, afraid that some agent might be ‘stealing’ the slow-pace and resources needed and/or that the whole implementation effort might be impeded. The following exchange I had with implementer Lucia, particularly the frustrated tone of her report, illustrates this richly:

“... since I became part of the standardized test team I have always been visiting international studies webpages, specially Australian ones, because they are at the forefront, and I was always looking at this like, ok, the first world, and we the third world, because really the contents and design on their sites, and the access they have to sources of information, is spectacular, and we were like sending a report which was so simple and humble, and now I see it’s all possible, that it can be done, that it requires more people, more specialization, but it’s possible, so that’s super, its promising, it gives one good expectations... [5 second pause]

Looking at it from another side, sure, one says I go on looking and I say, damn¹³, with this, the haste to implement quickly the new institutionalization, I feel because of political interests, we are skipping important steps, so we are implementing, now we ordered nice folders for our ministerial counterparts to use, pretty things, well done, but we are not defining, we haven't made a real study of our audiences, that's what was called for a long time ago! We have been constructing a bunch of nice, cool things, but will they use them? Will they read them? Will these things be useful to them? And this is something that since the beginning, when these new agencies got organized, it was crying out to be done, we were crying, ok we have to do a comprehensive study, now this is understandable because we a- it is demanded from us that we go along, producing so quickly ... I feel we've been put to make up work stuff as we go along and that we've missed our chance to do something with good fundamentals. Last year, I mean all the reports that we did this year were like continuity, continuity of last year, but how is it going to be continuity if we are in a totally different context?!, we are in the context of the Quality Assurance System! Let's put on some music, let's make a show¹⁴ of this, we are in the context of the quality in education ... those are my two stances, like, it's beautiful and it's good that we are becoming more professional but it's so sad that we are doing it like fools, rushing at full speed..." (Underlining represents prosodic emphasis) [INTERVIEW GH]

At first glance, this passage seems similar to the one by Julieta quoted in the previous section, as it presents a vigorous and hopeful reflection on the many things that are yet to be accomplished. However, this quote elucidates more

¹³ Originally in Spanish as "pucha". In Chilean slang the idiom "pucha" functions ambivalently to aggrandize ("pucha, this is so good!") and also to express discontent or complaint ("this did not work, pucha"). I translated it as "damn", a word which in English slang could fulfil the same functions.

¹⁴ Originally in Spanish as "bombos y platillos" which translates literally in English as "drums and cymbals". This is Chilean slang for "fanfare", "spectacularity" or "show".

clearly how the invoking of an organised/organisable Other to regulate bureaucratic work requires an antagonistic scapegoat – in this case obstacles and a thieving agent – to cover up imaginarily (that is, in a unified, coherent way) the inevitable transgression in the fantasmatic mode of *jouissance* that has been interpreted thus far (Glynos, 2001). Imaginary antagonism – an animosity towards a concrete hindering other – is the only way to prevent the mastery of signification (in this case the master signification of the 'delaying' of a bureaucracy 'in the making') from revealing its utter incapacity.

Specifically this should be understood as the inability to explain or account for the failure to actualize each and every one of the idealized organisations of quality policy, the meaning of which the master signification takes for granted. As argued in previous chapters, the mastery of signification (of identity) requires the subject to rush too hastily (and 'foolishly' as Lucia says) to declare the meaningfulness of his/her (imaginary) self, in a way that represses or 'defends' his/her own being from the inherent inconsistency of discursivity (the symbolic). In this case, Lucia engages in a different defensive grammar, articulating the haste not as part of her experience but as a (projected) expression of an other's intent to hinder the subject's work ('damn, with this haste ... for political reasons ... we are skipping important steps). The identification with a master signification of quality policy eventually puts the public-servant-subject in a position where s/he cannot help but asking questions about the supposed universal validity of his particular workplace: 'what 'exactly' does 'going slowly' mean?' 'And to 'what extent' should I believe

in such ‘delayed making’? Since the answers, because of the symbolic structure of discourse, can only be fragmented, inconsistent and ultimately transgress the universal principles, some rotten or spoiled imaginary components (strands of quality policy signification) have to take the blame. The figure of the antagonist is thus also the scapegoat, who is able to shore up and preserve the wholesome image of (quality) policy as effectively implementable.

This immediate indication of the abovementioned dynamic is the fact that Lucia’s speech presents an uneasy split, a kind of bureaucratic doublethink¹⁵ similar to that located in the previous quote, between policy goals and implementation (El-Sawad, Arnold & Cohen, 2004), and also between the actuality and the potentiality of work in the public sector. The testimony emphasizes two contradictory ideas. Firstly, it affirms that because of the organisation of work, things are improving for sure, gradually establishing an ideal state. Lucia states, for instance, that a kind of first world workplace with first class websites “is possible”¹⁶. Secondly, it focuses on how this embellished

¹⁵ This is a fascinating interpretive angle, derived from the fictional concept of doublethink coined by George Orwell in his dystopian masterpiece on totalitarian bureaucracy called “1984”. So far, El-Sawad, Arnold & Cohen (2004) have provided some clues regarding its potential as an analytical tool for studies on organisation. Considering how this study has referred to the ideal of identification as expressing a kind of Management-Speak, a notion derived from the language of totalitarian bureaucracy called “Newspeak” in “1984”, an interesting parallel with Orwell’s work can be established. In Orwell’s novel, doublethink was a specific mode of spoken discourse (newspeak) which allowed the subject to suture the gaps or contradictions of content and the effect they had on his/her identity as a servant of State power. This was done precisely by uttering freely two opposing ideas and trusting implicitly in the capacity of a ruling agency, the Big Brother, to guarantee their counter-intuitive coherence. This is precisely what seems to occur in the studied case, when interpreted from the perspective of fantasy, in relation to the organised/organisable Other, who assumes the function of the “Big Brother” for the quality implementing bureaucrat.

¹⁶ The implications of this type of public servant discourse, relative to the problem of colonialism and globalization, among others, will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

situation, full of “nice, cool things” and “nice folders” which communicate the right uplifting message, are utterly useless as “the chance to do something with good fundamentals” has been dismissed, devalued or simply forgotten by agents endowed with political power.

Initially, for Lucia policy goals are rendered “possible” in the actuality of bureaucratic work, yet the concrete details of the implementation put that supposed realization at risk of becoming pure, disappointing potentiality, as in “we missed an opportunity”, “we skipped steps”, “we haven’t defined”, among other utterances.

The subject who speaks in this way seems to assume the efficacy of bureaucracy cannot yet be known – rhetorically, she asks the imagined beneficiaries of her bureaucratic work “will they use or read what we do?”. Yet the quote reveals her ‘time for comprehension’ has already reached the ‘moment of conclusion’ that staples the efficacy of a certain strand of signification in mastering an identity (i.e. taking its total meaningfulness for granted): quality is for Lucia already legitimate, because there is a clear, unquestionable opportunity to implement it thoroughly, usefully and proudly, so much so that she says ‘music’ should be added to it. Lucia’s references to ‘music’ and ‘showmanship’ at the end are revealing in this sense. Who does she envision listening to and watching such a musical show? Her words indicate that she imagines an audience for the grandiose ‘music’ that accompanies policies that have been well-organised in the bureaucracy, a music that is ‘played’, so to speak, for the Other to listen to. As Woźniak (2010) puts it, this is the ‘gazing’ function of the

organised/organisable Other, a guarantor whom the subject believes is capable of acknowledging the subject's point of view (the Other 'returns the gaze') and backing the efficacy of what the subject envisions to organise, eventually, despite delays. This is how the narrative of delay is set as a bridge (of desire) between the public servant's desire (i.e. his/her look) and the desire of the Other (i.e. its always meaningful gaze). She explicitly asks about this 'audience' in the beginning: 'will they read these cool things we have made for them to see? Do we know our audience?' Then in the end she provides a trusting answer: 'indeed, there is music to be played, let's put on a show!'

However, her words show that the fantasy of a trustworthy bureaucratic ongoingness, which serves to cover up the lack of planning and opportunity-seizing capabilities in the organised/organisable Other, is shored up, defensively, by the perception of a hindering by antagonist agents. What the subject is sure of is that time has not been taken (its possibility subtracted) to study and reflect upon things properly. For Lucia there has been a "rushing" that has made public servants look like "fools" because agents have unreasonably put "public servants to work as they go along", hastening instead of carefully planning. This idea of "haste", that the interviewee's speech highlights (building up an emotional investment that starts with the 5 second pause and culminates with an exclamation in a raised voice, marked in the quote by the use of underscoring) is crucial as it points to a signification that condenses all the fears of quality policy failure and attributes them to an antagonistic object, signified by "political interests" that have failed to "heed

what had been called for a long time”. The idea of haste as supposedly imposed by the perverse agenda of external political agents is the opposite of the constructive ‘delaying’ or ‘taking time’ of technocratic bureaucracy, and it is thus placed as the breach or transgression that lies at the heart of the fantasy of bureaucracy, a transgression blamed on the other and not on the public-servant-subject. Where there is delay, there is also, paradoxically, an intrusion of haste, both rhythms being commanded by the same set of agencies, namely, politically supported policy-makers.

This reflects the structure of the symbolic in subjective experience, where lack of consistency and contradiction are central. Yet what the quote foregrounds is how inconsistency is repressed in the imaginary by bringing into the scene a particular other, of an intrusive kind. What comes across in Lucia’s words is that the ‘delayed making’ of bureaucracy is still signified implicitly as sacred, because the haste of bureaucracy is depicted as being triggered by the intrusive interests of politicians. The technocratic meaning of bureaucracy for the public servants under study is thus clarified and distinguished absolutely from the antagonistic role that pure political agents (and policy-maker advisors) are set to play. In turn, this confirms broad claims about the de-politicizing effect of the policy-language of neoliberalism (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014) especially in the context of the Chilean public sector where neoliberalism has been thoroughly implanted (Silva, 2009).

Lucia conveys that she obtains some *jouissance* by keeping herself in the struggle to implement policy within bureaucracy, but more than that, she

declares the total *jouissance* she desires (and which she thinks she deserves) has been stolen by political agents. This is truly how through her identification she obtains (some) *jouissance*. She obtains it by projecting the transgression/inconsistency of the terms of her own hasty fantasmatic belief in bureaucracy into the space of the other; in short, by displacing the haste for policy implementation to the other. The same fantasy about the ‘technical’ haste associated to policy implementation busy-ness is at stake, but with a differing meaning. For the public-servant-subject studied, it is all about enjoying the ‘shortcomings’ of a state of organisational exception; it is as if s/he was saying “if only we could surpass the obstacle of haste we could start ‘making’ something good out of policy, with and for quality... if only politicians could stop pushing for their own agenda’s sake and let things take the time they need”. Such subjective positioning is found in Lucia’s quote and is supported by testimonies such as that of Javiera, a mid-level implementation manager:

Javiera: Um, it’s very difficult, when I started working here I had this idea of my previous workplace, where everything had a Gantt chart with deadlines, and everything was planned from the beginning. Here you don’t know what you’re going to be dealing with, so for instance planning a budget for next term is extremely difficult (she laughs).

Interviewer: That’s what you have to do.

Javiera: Right, because one says, OK, there is a new government that will be elected, will they change the curriculum or not, will they want to implement a new curriculum? (she asks these questions with a high-pitched tone of voice, and she laughs expressing sadness) Because it might be the case that the curriculum will

become obsolete, that these people from the new government will come and say ‘we don’t like this, we’re gonna change it’, so it’s really difficult to anticipate the work we have to do, to plan, we work too much on a day-to-day basis, and so we’re always wondering ‘ok man, what are you going to tell me today, what will you be throwing at us?’ (she sighs), and it’s difficult because some day they will say ‘I’m sending this to you next week’ and then they don’t send it, and then they say ‘two more weeks’, and then it doesn’t happen, so you arrange things in preparation and then they collapse on you, external consultants cannot adjust to the constant re-scheduling. There’s a lot of improvisation, and when I came here, I remember, they said the quality standards were like a ghost, like a shadow, it haunts you, it’s coming, it’s coming, it’s coming, then some of that came but we didn’t know how to fund it ... it’s really hard to anticipate, to estimate how things are going to work out, especially when the elections are coming and people at the Ministry are going through that level of uncertainty. (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

Javiera’s words lead to re-affirming the previous interpretation of Lucia’s testimony. All the ‘improvisational’ and inconsistent modes of implementing she feels have sadly become the rule are attributed by her to what Lucia called ‘the interests of politicians’. Javiera pinpoints these agents with precision; for her they are ‘these people from the new government’ or more simply ‘the man’, and she declares herself and the implementers she manages as victims of this powerful ‘man’ when she sighs and laughs with sadness and lets the interviewer know that she is wondering ‘what they are going to be throwing at her today’. Whatever ‘those people’ are throwing at her, she thinks is ultimately hindering her capacity to plan, to ‘anticipate’ and ‘know what to do’, up to the point of rendering the implementation of quality strange and incoherent.

This is what she conveys when she repeats 'it's coming' with an intense tone of voice, and when she comments that quality standards, the policy-object that has to actually be bureaucratized, has become 'haunting'. She means that quality standards are being 'thrown' at her by the 'man' in political power in no order whatsoever, and that it is the throwing itself that is hindering her proven capacity ('I came from a workplace where everything had a Gantt chart') to organise. She affirms that bureaucratizing is difficult yet not impossible or senseless; that things for her as implementation manager have been made difficult by 'people' who just send items in need of quality because they think of their electoral success rather than policy implementation coherence (e.g. curriculum systematicity). Overall, for Javiera it is not the policy implementation system within the bureaucracy that is inherently flawed, but rather it is the instruction from politically-driven bureaucratic authorities (i.e. governmental agents) that has perverted idyllic implementations into a 'haunting' experience of bureaucratic organising. When she shares her hurting about the things that are 'coming' again and again, she is speaking about politically-driven agents who have left her abandoned in a space that barely makes sense. The *jouissance* that she obtains is thus precisely shaped in the form of a signification of complaint and longing; complaint about the 'theft of bureaucracy' by the electorally-driven selfishness of the '(new) government' and longing for the steadiness, routines and constructive delays those 'people' stole.

The resonance that Javiera's quote has in relation to Lucia's reveals crucial details about the 'scapegoating' function of fantasy, particularly about the circumstances of the political agents that are set to take the blame for stealing *jouissance*. Javiera speaks as if political agents were not officially part of the bureaucratic structure, even though the public sector has been traditionally, and to date still is, commanded vertically from the top by political agencies and criteria (i.e. political parties, policy-makers, advisory think-tanks, etc.). This is an obvious contradiction that reveals once again that for the subject the organisational object of bureaucratic 'making' that can actually be enjoyed is assumed as part of a fantasy about 'purely' technical, scientific objects (Woźniak, 2010); in other words, as an object defended against a threat, in this case, the threat of the political. Schematically, at the level of the imaginary, the politically-driven agents in the State are seen as antagonists to bureaucracy, while at the level of the symbolic, they are constitutive part of the bureaucratic realm, by designing, negotiating and signing the legal texts that command processes of policy implementation in the public sector.

For the public servants studied, the notions of 'the political' or 'political agents' do not point to partisan or civil-activist narratives of broad societal range, regardless of their national prominence at the time of research (this is the case, for instance, for student movement in demand of educational reforms, which were seldom mentioned by interviewees and not elaborated at all as a problem). Instead, 'the political' is reduced to the notion 'interests' as Lucia put it, which stands for selfish, immoral arbitrariness. In recent times the

vague notion of “interests” has been somewhat demonized in Chilean culture (signifying a range of problems, as in the ambitious “interests” of wealthy capitalists and the banking “interests” collected over students loans, among others); in this case, it serves to represent a kind of loose, unregulated and somewhat intrusive agency within the bureaucratic realm that distorts the righteousness of “good procedure” and “good fundamentals” as Lucia puts it.

In accordance with the abovementioned insights, the antagonism between those who trust in the bureaucracy (the public servants) and those who supposedly wish to steal its feasibility (political agents) does not represent a conflict of aims between traditional notions of bureaucracy and New Public Management programmes but rather the encompassing post-political premises of neoliberal discourse (De Cock & Böhm, 2007). The public servants’ quarrel is not with traditional political authority within bureaucracy *per se* but with the “interests” of politicians understood as personal and selfish power-driven agendas (even with aims at profiteering in some cases), which in the view of the public-servant-subject hinders the plausibility of policy, in this case neoliberal policy, to actually get organised. As argued previously, their main concern is about getting neoliberal policy to ‘work out’, and what they know – what they have ‘rushed to ascertain’ in Lacanian terms – is that the organisation of policy works out when bureaucracy keeps being ‘made’. Therefore, as Schofield has found (2001), they are much more concerned with preserving the moral and functional ‘durability’ of bureaucracy, not with ‘optimizing’ it according to post-bureaucratic managerial technologies.

Nonetheless, it is of most importance to note that the defensive construction of identity through scapegoating is not successful in covering or explaining the transgression that is inherent to fantasy. From the perspective of the third Lacanian paradigm of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000) which this chapter has taken, identity is assumed to be structured as a fantasy, a fantasy where either an idealized, desirable object capable of bringing total satisfaction/*jouissance* or an agent stealing that object takes centre stage. However, such fantasy-structuring comes with a price — the price of transgression.

The issue of transgression at this point relates back to the analysis of ‘quality’ policy as a master signification specifically grounded in the bureaucratic context. Thus far, analysis has shown that the public servant identifies with the idealized object of bureaucratic ongoingness or delay by hastily taking the meaningfulness of quality policy for granted. However, such an assumption, according to which the invoking of the quality signifier guarantees the mastery of all signified meanings enchaind to it, cannot be realized because of the inherent symbolic impossibility of discursivity. The problem is thus ontological: the subject cannot be the policy implementer who s/he declares s/he is positively sure to have deduced to be in the bureaucratic context. In order to gain an identity through fantasy, the subject has to renounce to total *jouissance*; s/he has to keep *jouissance* always at a ‘safe distance’, so that impossibility is always conceived as possibility; for instance, the distance of antagonism between public servants who were about to secure the *jouissance* of bureaucracy, and the political who have stolen it. Yet this distance between

the subject and the other is an imaginary distance – a concrete, spatial delimitation between law-making places (the site of policy makers) and administrative offices (the site of policy implementers) – that is not successful in defending the distance at the level of the symbolic, between a master signifier, in this case ‘quality’ policy, and the rest of the significations it is supposed to guarantee. As Glynos (2001: 203) clarifies by quoting Žižek's work, this distance in the symbolic can only equate to the transgression (i.e. inconsistency) of public discourse (the law) itself:

“[While there is a notion of symbolic identification with a master signifier] the point to emphasize here is that there is a further dimension to identification which acts as the support of this public identification. In short ‘what holds together a community most deeply is not so much identification with the Law that regulates the community’s normal everyday circuit, but rather *identification with a specific form of transgression of the Law, of the law’s suspension ... with a specific form of enjoyment*’ ” (original emphasis)

In the studied case, as shown throughout the analysis of data, the ‘community’ that Žižek talks about (*via* Glynos) is that composed by public servants in charge of implementing quality policy and the ‘normal everyday circuit’ is that of the ‘making’ of bureaucracy through coordinated work activity. The following quote by Lucia provides a subtle insight into how transgressive *jouissance*, not the promised full *jouissance*, is actually obtained under the conditions of the (administrative) Law or Public Discourse that governs the work activity of public servants within the bureaucratic structure:

Interviewer: So your perception is that there is a plan.

Lucia: That's my wish.

Interviewer: Your wish...

Lucia: My wish, yes, (she laughs) not my perception. No, I think that currently they are thinking, the political issues are too present, the political contingency, so, for example Bachelet [the leading presidential candidate who finally won the election and by the time of writing serves as President] announced something like she wanted to get rid of the tests just like that, so I see that something like that is being conceived...

Interviewer: Wow.

Lucia: It's a good thing this interview is anonymous and confidential because...
(laughs nervously)

Interviewer: Yes, of course.

Lucia: Yes... it's the political contingency.

Interviewer: But what effects does this have on you?

Lucia: I get disappointed, I am disappointed, because finally I can have my political tendency but I leave it outside this place, it makes me sad to think that any idea, any project is left unresolved because of a political issue, just think about the Learning Achievement Levels [the previous learning standard that was revamped by new Quality Assurance regulations], we worked on them for three years, I spent three Februaries¹⁷, three Februaries working on them and what not, so like that, three years, and in one minute they were gone, now we won't

¹⁷ February is here posed as the central month of summer (in the southern hemisphere) in which most people go on holiday and workloads are reduced to a minimum. She mentions this month to convey that she had to work really hard, sacrificing her free time during what was supposed to be her holidays.

... speak of them anymore because now it's about classification which I'm sure works but ... why start from scratch and push forward? ... I understand there are good and bad things and that everything can be perfected, but starting from zero gets me desperate because I see that we don't arrive to any destination, yeah, so I think sadly work is clogged¹⁸ [covered up] by political matters ... so many opportunities to improve, to interact, are lost.

This brief exchange quote summarizes very well the argument on the defensive role of transgression in public servant fantasy that has been proposed thus far. There are two succinct elements in it that are especially eloquent in this regard, namely, the invoking of the idea of perception and the commitment of a transgressive act of disclosure.

The first of these is the interviewee's use of the notion of "perception". In her speech, Lucia distinguishes between her "wish" and her "perception", mapping very clearly the difference between the sublimated contents of fantasy (wishes) and their truth value (perception). In this case, the latter is about a transgressive truth, namely, that in order to love and trust in the bureaucratic order the subject has to hate, in paradoxical fashion, the politicians that run it (allegedly, because of their "interests").

Thus far in this analysis an articulation of a "wish" for the sublime has already been commented upon – it is about having the security of a "plan" for the stable

¹⁸ Originally in Spanish as "tapado". The verb "tapar" in Spanish can be translated as "to cover" (an object), as "to clog" (a duct or channel, or a network thereof) or as "to veil" or "to cover up" in a deliberate way. In the quote, this signifier shines with ambiguity, as there is no clear way to tell which of the three meanings about the relationship between bureaucratic work and politics is dominant. The subject condenses all three meanings, or perhaps more, in one singular gesture of complaint against the political.

execution of bureaucratic ‘making’ – but the distinction of “perception” introduces a particular aspect. Lucia is not just worried that thwarting by an external antagonist might occur; rather, she claims to have ‘perceived’ it (while laughing excitedly); she “sees something like that [a threat] being conceived”. In the beginning, she bolsters her “wish” by talking about what she thinks she sees/perceives and in this sense she acts like the rationalistic, evidence-driven, scientific (Cartesian) subject Lacan claimed was attached to any articulation of unconscious fantasy: one whose being emerges because s/he realizes it is s/he and not someone else who is having the experience of seeing something (Lacan, 1998; Woźniak, 2010). Lucia is not really declaring that her perception might be infallible. What she declares is that she feels certain she is in control of something of her being that is called a ‘perception’. This is interesting as it implies that the threat or theft the subject “perceives” operates at the level of the master signification – that is, at the level of a ‘blind’, rushed certainty – and therefore that an instance of transgression is constitutive of fantasy, beyond the narrative content or knowledge that fills such an instance.

The second striking element in the quote, related to the first one, is the interviewee’s comment following up her previous description of what she ‘perceived’, which presents paranoid features. Her speech conveys an intense fear about her words being heard and thus her thoughts being known by others. She conveys this when she addresses the interviewer affirmatively, declaring ‘it’s a good thing this interview is anonymous and confidential because...’. Her utterance of ‘because’ is intentionally vague, as it is set to

prompt a reassuring response on the side of the interviewer ('yes, of course') regarding the confidentiality of the research information. According to Lacanian theory, this conscious inter-personal tension reveals that the issue at hand, the thwarting of her work by political "interests", or 'clogging' as Lucia puts it, is of major importance for her identity and that it has been emotionally invested (Roberts, 2005). There seems to be no psychological disturbance of the self in this observed paranoid behaviour, as a Kleinian psychoanalytic reading might consider (Lapping, 2011: 149; see also Lyth, 1960), but rather an effect of impossible *jouissance* (Miller, 2000) over the chain of signification articulated by the public-servant-subject during identification.

Concretely, following Cederström & Spicer's (2014) terms, this brief passage shows the difference that is enacted in a fantasy scenario when expected enjoyment meets actually obtained enjoyment. It does so because the paranoid comment by Lucia is in itself a transgressive act whose execution accompanies the "perception", as Lucia calls it, of an agent that thwarts the attainment of the sublime total enjoyment. Her act of disclosing information in a public space (the coffee shop on the ground floor of her office building) is a transgression of what could be called the 'loyalty' of committed policy implementers to the feasibility of bureaucracy, that is, the implicit rule that dictates public servants should not endanger policy implementation by revealing internal conflicts. What this reveals, and what Glynos' quoting of Žižek also proposes, is that Lucia obtains (some) enjoyment not only by acknowledging the postponement of total *jouissance*, arguing it has been stolen by political agents, but also by

actually acknowledging her own transgressive action in the present. This is what is subtly but crucially expressed when she says that the interviewer's care for confidentiality 'it's good' and then laughs nervously about it. Lucia is demanding an educated response from the interviewer-other, so that she can see her own transgression reflected in the interviewer's assurance ('yes, of course, I will not publish your disclosure of secret conflicts').

In short, as Žižek emphasized (Glynos, 2001), her identification with bureaucracy is demonstrated to be not just with the law that regulates public discourse, in this case the 'workplace law' that regulates the bureaucratic organisation of quality policy, but at the same time with the transgression of such 'workplace law' or code. Crucially, the analysis of Lucia's quote shows this is a form of transgression that takes place not at the level of (neoliberal) policy-making *vis-à-vis* official legal texts and media communication (Clarke, 2012; Glynos & Howarth, 2007) but at the rather under-researched level of policy implementation, where the prescriptions of legal texts (policies) are interpreted, re-invented and translated into organisational practices within the bureaucratic structure of the public sector.

As argued above, the analysis of Lucia's quote serves to clarify the paradoxical identificatory alignment of the subject as seen from a Lacanian perspective, where opposing narratives complement each other in their function. It shows how his/her trust and hope in recovering the "lost improvement opportunities" can only be sustained by developing a parallel distrust towards her workplace. The depiction of a 'delayed' bureaucratic 'making' towards full (educational)

quality becomes 'stained', so to speak, by the interviewee's disclosure of her pessimistic distrust towards the intrusive and 'clogging' effect of politics over bureaucracy to the researcher, who has previously declared his intention to divulge it to a wide audience and thus to potentially hinder the integrity of bureaucratic work. Yet for her, the risky confession fulfils an unconscious duty towards the organised/organisable Other, as it is perhaps the main way to signify just how powerful the threat of the political is and how clear is the antagonism that the Other desires the subject to establish¹⁹; political agents like her superior officers might have eyes and ears everywhere²⁰, they could be suspicious of her, and so on.

In sum, this shows that when fantasy orientates the constitution of subjectivity and identity the sublime ideal of a delayed bureaucratic 'making' can only be sustained through a paradoxical staging, a mode of articulation in which transgression – in Lucia's case, (the threat of) disclosure – plays a key role (Glynos, 2001: 248). Transgression is crucial in embodying and giving a

¹⁹ For Žižek (2000), antagonism is a representation of the 'stain' that serves to call for the attention of the Other's gaze, a desirous gaze that fulfils the fundamental function of animating the desire ('the desiring eyes') of the subject. For Lacan (1998) the gaze of the Other is pacifying, despite imaginary antagonisms, as it is a structural part of the subject's capacity to make sense of himself/herself as an agent in the world (for Lacan the antagonism of paranoia was rooted in the subject's effort to know something of the world through imaginary mutual recognition). Žižek's point is thus that antagonism indicates stability, a kind of stability that the subject is certain is universal but which is truly contingent and can be contested and re-signified.

²⁰ This dialogue with Lucia was part of a minority of interviews that took place in a spacious coffee shop (Starbucks) located on the 1st floor of the building where some of the studied Quality Assurance organisations had their central offices. It was in fact a space that was usually attended by other members of these organisations; any of them, including high officials, could have heard or 'seen' some of Lucia's opinions. For the public-servant-subject, this was a threatening place; Lucia's first words to the interviewer, immediately after the first handshake, were "I cannot stand the smell of Starbucks anymore; I've come to hate it".

concrete sense of ‘reality’ to the symbolic-unconscious definition of *jouissance* as lost or stolen but indeed recoverable; in the researched case, a ‘delayed’ and thwarted but ever upcoming bureaucracy.

* * *

Overall, this section has illustrated how the enjoyment of transgression can be seen in the studied case as part of a grammar of fantasmatic, defensive identification. It is one that occupies the complementary, reverse side of the sublimatory grammar that is used to render the durability of bureaucracy (Schofield, 2001), the object of ‘bureaucracy on a delayed making’, idyllic and trustworthy for the purposes of implementing educational quality policy. In turn, the chapter as a whole, including the analysis of sublimation and transgression, has shown how the fantasy-framing of public servant identification relies on diverse grammars that articulate the (im)possible satisfaction or *jouissance* in the bureaucratic organisation of policy.

In this sense, the Lacanian analysis deployed in the chapter foregrounds two specific consequences of organised public servant discourse, that is to say, the discourse articulated by those who take the responsibility of implementing and administering public policy and thus expect to ‘make’ or organise something enjoyable out of it.

On the one hand, the analysis of fantasy illustrates what Fotaki (2010) and many other organisational scholars have indicated regarding the management of State institutions (Gunder & Hillier, 2009; Clarke, 2012; McSwite, 1997a):

that policy and its implementation often fails, because of the impossible objects that it cannot help but ascertain as the fundamentals and/or aims of its (neoliberally-inspired) discursive identity.

On the other hand, it illustrates that the identity of the public servant as an agent also becomes 'failed' or inconsistent, due to the tension at the level of subjectivity between a hasty, overconfident desire to ascertain the meaningfulness of the (quality) policy-law that commands bureaucratic workplace activity and the unconscious desire to transgress such legitimation. The public servant believes too blindly, or too sacrificially, in the bureaucratic object (of his own 'making') that would supposedly complete or satisfy (the lack in) his/her being and then cannot help but sabotage his/her own discourse so that his/her belief is not proven ineffective.

Certainly the latter relates to dynamics of hybridation/flexibilization/adaptation and persistence/fidelity during public servant identification, which many organisational scholars have discovered in situations of neoliberal, 'post-bureaucratic' public sector reform (Bourgault & van Dorpe, 2013; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Rondeaux, 2006; Schofield, 2001). Yet the failure of public servant identity goes deeper than that, to issues of ontology or the definition of the being of bureaucratic 'things' like policy implementation objects and public-servant-subjects. According to the present Lacanian analysis, the main problem is that the public servant proclaims the absolute solidity and universality of his/her ontological status, paradoxically,

with impossible means, the means of discourse (and master signification) which can only be transgressed.

The main consequence, as Glynos (2001) points out and the data has shown, is that the ethical dimension of public servant subjectivity (and of Public Service in general) is obscured, as the failure of universal identity does not lead to acknowledging the contingent construction of the social but rather to brave defence through renewed claims about universality; for instance, about the universal identity of those who ‘steal’ bureaucracy by politicizing it (Cooper, 2015). The consequences mentioned above add to the discussion regarding the ‘ethos of Public Service’ in public servant identification, which public sector organisation scholars such as Caron & Giauque (2006), Horton (2006) and especially du Gay (2000a) have fostered in recent years. The present analysis suggests that the generation of ‘hybridized’ neoliberal-traditional forms of bureaucratic implementation, even if it is under the critical conviction that ‘the function of officials ... cannot be exhaustively defined in terms of achieving results with maximum economic efficiency, value for money or best value’ and should acknowledge “loyalty ... sensitivity to complexity of the Public interest, honesty and fearlessness in the formulation and provision of advice” (du Gay, 2000a: 144), can lead, paradoxically, to the reduction or suppression of the ethical motivation of subjectivity. Analysis indicates, therefore, that the question about the ethos of Public Service under (post-bureaucratizing) neoliberalism, and the debate around it, should be re-formulated, considering

the fantasmatic effects of public servant identification through discourse. This is an issue that will be considered again in the conclusion chapter.

As expressed in the last concluding paragraphs, this chapter has approached public servant identification from the perspective of Lacan's third paradigm of enjoyment (Miller, 2000), which foregrounds *jouissance* of identity as impossible. From this viewpoint, the public-servant-subject's desire to secure an ideal identity is seen as constitutionally lacking, and thus accompanied by sublimatory (universalizing) defences and transgressive actions that provide only partial, confusing satisfaction. In one word, a public servant's enjoyment of an identity of work and self is considered negative.

The next chapter, however, will address public servant subjectivity from a different perspective; one signalled by Lacan's fourth and fifth paradigms of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000), which position the enjoyment of the desire for public servant identity not as a negativity in subjective experience, that is to say, not as the radical loss of a satisfying object, but rather as a positivity, as a gesture that aims at producing repeated satisfaction. The analysis of data contained in the following chapter will therefore foreground instances of public servant discourse in which identity is revealed to be bound to continued, normalized engagements with work practices for policy implementation. Accordingly, the chapter will convey that public servants do not only engage with work to articulate the need for not-inconsistent (i.e. idealized) bureaucratic objects for satisfaction (e.g. transgressive engagements) but that

they also engage to articulate the need for repeated/repeatable satisfaction with inconsistently-defined yet mundane, regular bureaucratic objects.

Chapter 5 – Public servant identification with the normalized yet excessive objects of bureaucracy

In the previous chapter, the analysis of public servant identification with bureaucratic work from a Lacanian perspective, based on Lacan's third paradigm (Miller, 2000), was presented as an experience marked by the impossibility of satisfaction or *jouissance*. Such analytic effort served in turn to account for one way through which public servant identity 'stuck' to the technocratic organisational domain of bureaucracy. Initially, the public-servant-subject was revealed to 'stick' to bureaucratic objects by signifying them as ideal or sublime. Later on, however, the subject was revealed to 'stick' to bureaucratic objects by signifying them as impeded or stolen by political agents and thus impossible to achieve in a fully satisfactory way. The signification and enactment of transgression by the subject was revealed as hinging between these two modes of identification, as this type of engagement was set to signify an 'exceptional' state through which the paradoxical envisioning of possibility out of impossibility was able to again be signified and enjoyed partially as a promise. Overall, the previous chapter emphasized the 'safe distance' that the public servants establish in their discursive relation to bureaucratic objects, in order to render them, and their own experience with these objects, somewhat enjoyable.

In this chapter, the process through which public servant identity 'sticks' to the bureaucratic order will be analysed from a different yet complementary angle,

based on Lacan's fourth and fifth paradigms of enjoyment or satisfaction (Miller, 2000). From such a perspective, satisfaction is not defined as an impossible ideal leading to a negative (empty) experience, but rather as a positive, mundane occurrence that is experienced, or more accurately put, embodied, in an excessive or at least inconsistent way. In this sense, the chapter will analyse the active engagement of public servants with narratives on bureaucratic work and the actual activity of performing it, looking at these involvements as normalized events that are sustained over time despite their failures. Accordingly, the focus will be placed on how satisfaction or *jouissance* is concretely obtained beyond the (failed) possibilities for its own retrieval/achievement.

The analysis of public servant identification experience from this standpoint will be addressed differently in the three sections of the chapter. The first section will provide an introduction to the notion of normalized or positive *jouissance* as defined in Lacan's fourth and fifth paradigms (Miller, 2000), illustrating how it can serve as the main conceptual tool for empirical analysis in the chapter. The second section will present the analysis of narratives on bureaucratic work featuring apparently normal contradictions, ambiguities and pauses/silences, narratives with which the public-servant-subject identifies precisely because of their inconsistent yet positively satisfying formulation. Finally, the third section will present the analysis of such a mode of identification process from a different angle, this time focusing on how the public-servant-subject identifies with (narratives on) bureaucratic work as a

performative activity, an activity which is largely satisfying yet at the same time excessive for the public servant self at work.

Normalized, positive *jouissance* during policy implementation: on the interrupted yet productive activity of bureaucratic ‘making’.

Thus far, my analysis has accounted for some of the modes through which public servant subjectivity is structured as a fantasy, from the perspective of Lacan’s third paradigm of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000). In this account, emphasis has been placed on the way in which public servant identity is rendered as a possibility for the subject – specifically as the possibility of enjoying the idealized object of bureaucratic organisation – precisely because of its inherent impossibility. *Jouissance* or satisfaction at the public sector workplace has thus been evaluated in its negativity, as a promise that cannot help but hollow out its own conditions of possibility.

Initially, public servants have been shown as strongly identifying with the ideal of ‘implementable (quality) policy’, with their discourse featuring a clear sublimatory force to ‘beatify’ the bureaucratic work setting within which policy implementation unfolds. In other words, the public-servant-subject is concerned with the ideal features of a particular object, the object of a bureaucracy ‘in the making’. This represents the basic process of fantasy, the process of instituting the possibility of desiring, which can be seen as exploratory and vulnerable to external threats and inner transgressions, as are most incipient organisation efforts in the public sector themselves (Brunsson

& Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). Subsequently, analysis has also foregrounded the identificatory process of public servants as an effort to expand the ways for desire, signifying implementation narratives as scenarios in which the bureaucratic objects appear as being consolidated through work. There, a shift from doubtful to over-confident expressions of desire can be found, a shift that highlights the defensive structure of subjectivity as seen from Lacan's third paradigm of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000). The subject's over-confident, unconscious identification with the implementability of (quality) policy (regardless of the socio-political implications of the policy's content) requires from him/her to display a defensive 'blind' trust on the durability of bureaucracy against all strains, proclaiming its ever-extending 'delay' instead of acknowledging its foreseeable failures.

Nonetheless, this shift has been so far highlighted in its negativity: the negativity that is implied by the lack of *jouissance* at the symbolic level of identification through discourse (Müller, 2012; Driver, 2009a). *Jouissance* has been seen as negative in this case not just because of the fragility of the public servant's desires but also because of the incapacity of bureaucratic 'reality' to realize the totality that a master signification of 'quality' policy ascertains in relation to it.

Adopting a diverging stance, the one signalled by Lacan's fourth and fifth paradigms of enjoyment (Miller, 2000), this section will highlight the positive side of *jouissance* or enjoyment as fantasized in the public servant's experience of policy implementation. The notion of positive is here understood

conceptually as a kind of reverse side of the fantasy coin. It is seen as that which remains after the lack of *jouissance* has been instituted by a master signification of 'quality' policy as implementable in the bureaucratic structure of the public sector. In other words, it is seen as the production that is required for lack to be registered; not the radical outside of signification or the radical loss of the object that is supposedly lacking, but the positive consumption of the object that empties it out and marks it as lacking in satisfaction. The following paragraphs will flesh out these assumptions further.

As previously stated, the production of lack is bound to the signifier according to Lacanian theory, before any mastery is attempted. Lack is conceptualized as inherent to discursivity at the level of the symbolic, and it can be expressed or 'staged' at the level of the imaginary through transgressive (i.e. contradictory, inconsistent) narratives. In the concrete terms of the public servant's declared experience, lack is introduced from the moment the command to implement is given and the public servant assumes it as the central purpose of his/her role in the bureaucratic organisation. Thus far, analysis has seen public servants speaking accurately and passionately about struggling with antagonistic political agents to protect implementation periods, always defining their *jouissance*, that is, their satisfaction, as 'not yet fulfilled'. The experience of public servants has been interpreted not as a fantasy of promised enjoyment, but of negative, lacking, transgressed enjoyment foregrounding the potentiality of the desire to keep figuring out the ultimate total meaning(s) of policy implementation.

However, as Stavrakakis (2008: 1054) reminds,

“This is not the full story. Apart from the promise of fantasy, what sustains desire, what drives our identification acts at the level of affectivity/*jouissance*, is also our ability to go through limit-experiences related to a *jouissance* of the body. Otherwise, without any such experience, our faith in fantasmatic ... projects — projects which never manage to deliver the fullness they promise — would gradually vanish”.

What Stavrakakis (2008) is pointing towards is the fact that some *jouissance*, that is to say, satisfaction, must be ‘enacted’, concretely and positively, if the basic fantasy pact between the symbolic and experience is to be substantiated. Yet what is stake here is not exactly the negative outcome between ‘total’ *jouissance* expected and ‘insufficient’ *jouissance* obtained that is functional to the articulation and especially the sustaining of fantasy as a defence for subjectivity (Cederström & Spicer, 2014). Rather, what is at stake here is the constancy of *jouissance* in discursivity itself, the fact that (a certain) satisfaction is needed to keep discourse as the central means for subjectivity. For Lacan, as Miller points out (2000), it is about foregrounding the *jouissance* that is linked to the constancy and repeated patterning of discursivity itself, not just the particular fantasy arrangements that give discourse a provisional shape. Thus, it is about foregrounding the (human) embodiment of discursivity, not just about the effects discursivity has on the body. It is about placing the focus on the circularity or repetitiveness of utterance and discursive inter-activity, based on the material affectivity of the body, which allows discourse to cipher the gesture of identification as ‘projects’ in Stavrakakis’

words (2008); projects the importance of which lie in the fact that they can be tracked as part of a stable 'reality' that would not 'vanish'.

From this perspective, *jouissance* is ultimately about the sustaining of the ordering itself, beyond one order or the other, which is why Miller (2000) associates the fourth and fifth paradigms of *jouissance* with the idea of entropy, that is to say, the radical loss as constitutive of (and not external to) the capacity to acquire what is lacking. It is the subject in its discursive link to the object — in this case, a bureaucratic object — that is entropic, meaning that loss is always-already operating in the consumption and enjoyment of the object that has been identified as desirable and procured to fill a lack. In this sense, crucially, it is not the 'total' Real which is radically lost and hence always longed for through the imaginary coordinations and symbolic rituals/orders of discourse; it is the loss that has a Real status in each discursive gesture, including that of identification, a status of repeated, endless consumption of its own imaginary-symbolic products (Miller, 2000). What comes across in this conceptual stance is thus the partial failure of its own interpretive terms, which is perhaps why it has gone under-researched in organisational studies, with some exceptions being the work of Sköld, 2010; Woźniak, 2010; Hoedemaekers, 2010; Kenny, 2012; Fotaki & Kenny, 2014; Fotaki & Harding, 2013 and Cremin, 2012. This is a partial failure that can be attributed to the work of influential Lacanian scholars like Žižek, but which can also demonstrate a great capacity to expand and refine the means for

conceptualization and interpretation, as Žižek himself apologetically clarifies in the following quote:

“The standard perception of Lacan is as a transcendentalist who emphasizes ... that with the entry into the symbolic order the primordial object of desire is lost: it is turned into an impossible thing which is absent, and every empirical object of desire that we get is merely a stand-in secondary ersatz, a supplementary embodiment of the primordial lost object. The argument is that the very fact of subjectivity means that the object is lost and that the imaginary illusion is precisely that the object can be regained so that we don't accept the radicality of the loss - we want to render the Real possible. On the basis of this illusion, different versions of idealized states are generated ... For more and more reasons I find this argument problematic ... I am co-responsible for the predominance of the notion of the Real as the impossible ... the Real is impossible but it is not simply impossible in the sense of a failed encounter ... the other aspect is that it happens but it is impossible to sustain, impossible to integrate. And this second aspect, I think, is more and more crucial ... A trauma, or an act, is simply the point when the Real happens, and this is difficult to accept. Lacan is not a poet telling us how we always fail the Real - it's always the opposite with the late Lacan. The point is that you can encounter the Real” (Žižek & Daly, 2004: 66)

With these propositions Žižek schematizes the main conceptual reversal that operates between the third Lacanian paradigm of *jouissance*, addressed in the previous chapter, and the fourth and fifth paradigms, which this chapter will address. It is a reversal that concerns the Real as a material reference for the imaginary and symbolic components of subjectivity as enacted discursively; in other words, the Real as *jouissance* or enjoyment of an object in relation to which the subject articulates his/her identification. As Žižek emphasizes, what

should be kept in mind is that Lacanian theory not only conceptualizes that the 'Real is impossible'. It also emphasizes that the 'impossible is Real': that the excessive dimension from which subjectivity has to defend against is also an integral part of the imaginary-symbolic apparatus that renders the experience of a reality 'real', and that the defence also consists in displacing and repeating the gestures of discursivity *ad infinitum*, in a circular fashion that Freud richly described in his accounts of the experiences with what he called 'the uncanny' (Freud, 2003). What is impossible is discursivity itself, the excess embedded in its own constitution and not what is outside of it or lost by it. Hence, it is an almost ungraspable intensity that over-determines yet also encourages the representational capacity of discourse when embodied by the subject who speaks/acts in the workplace. This is a dynamic of affectivity within discursivity that some organisational scholars such as Fotaki & Kenny (2014), Kenny (2012); De Vos (2009) have begun to study systematically in recent years, and which will be discussed further in the final chapter of this thesis.

Going back to the situation of public servants, it is important to pay attention to Stavrakakis' abovementioned assimilation of the entropic, failed-yet-normalized circularity of discursive activity in terms of 'limit-experiences of the body'. In the context of this study and this particular chapter on positive *jouissance* during (quality) policy implementation, Stavrakakis' definition will be worked out in two different ways, coinciding respectively with Lacan's fourth and fifth paradigms of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000).

The first elaboration on positive *jouissance*, that regarding Lacan's fourth paradigm of *jouissance*, will focus on public servant identification as an instance of what Hoedemaekers (2010) has called 'interruption'. This is coherent with Miller's (2000) characterization of what would be Lacan's fourth paradigm of enjoyment, for him concerned with 'normal *jouissance*'. For Miller, *jouissance* is seen as 'normalized' from this perspective because there is a theoretical departure from the third paradigm of impossible *jouissance*. While in the latter, satisfaction was inextricably linked to transgression, with enjoyment of identity being achieved only through disobeying the rules that (supposedly) governed a represented total, ideal object, in the former satisfaction is achieved by staging, at the level of imaginary experience, a suspension or 'interruption' of the efficacy of those rules. In this sense, for the subject *jouissance* is no longer about identifying with a logic of 'exceptions that confirm the rule' (for instance, the exceptional character of obstacles that would impede/hinder the possibilities of total satisfaction, or the exception of transgressive acts that would not represent the subject's total opposition to the law) but about identifying with the clear yet fleeting failure of the very structure of discursivity. This is what the idea of 'normal' stands for. It denotes a mode of enjoyment that strongly differs from the grandiose elaborations of fantasy, where narratives of heroism, sacrifice, faith and transgression are involved. Normal *jouissance* is associated with a mode of identification that seeks satisfaction not in the 'hidden and valuable meanings' that are supposedly lodged but never found within discourse, but rather in the humbler capacity of discourse to represent the turmoil during the process of identity construction.

Understanding the latter argument requires tracing the Lacanian idea of satisfaction back to its Freudian origins. Broadly speaking, satisfaction is for Freud about disposing of representations to pleurably discharge or ‘defend’ (i.e. ‘repress’) the endless affective intensity of the drive(s) (see Freud, 2003). Whereas in Lacan’s third paradigm the affective ‘energy’ of the drive takes the place of a transgressive impulse that would be defensively expelled to the ‘outside’ of the sublimatory effort of framing, marked with an ‘exceptional’ status, in the fourth paradigm this affective intensity takes the place of what Lacan (1998) termed the unconscious-as-gap and which Parker (2005) called the ‘breakdown of representation’ (and representability). As seen from the latter standpoint, *jouissance* or satisfaction in identification would be drawn by enacting an affective intensity in the grammatical structuring of discursivity itself, by temporarily ‘gapping’ or emptying its own conditions of coherence and letting the affective charge go un-represented for a fleeting, evanescent moment. For Lacan, the desire for an object that is signified as able to fill a lack is still operating during identification under the fourth paradigm, but the role of signification itself changes. As Hoedemaekers (2010: 382) emphasizes, for Lacan “identifications are inadequate by definition, and conscious discourse of the subject they appear in is peppered with slips, unintended significations and fumbled acts”. Such gaps or interruptions in the ‘grammar of identity’ are crucial in signalling the points where “signification is incomplete or where it misfires”, as these can

“demonstrate how discourses cannot shape subjectivity *without simultaneously instating their own failure*. This is a vital point as it shows that identity is by its

very nature a flawed and incomplete process, and the determining/constitutive influence of managerial discourses is therefore by definition a partial failure” (Hoedemaekers, 2010: 391). (Original emphasis)

Following Hoedemaekers (2010), these ‘fumbled acts’ or ‘discursive misfires’ are the elements that function as indexes of not-entirely fantasmatic *jouissance*, which generates satisfaction to the subject by offering to him/her little deviations of an open-ended, non-ideal search for objects of satisfaction. For Lacan (1998), these deviations stem from the logical, repeating patterns of the enchainment of signifiers, and thus generate an effect of randomness and surprise over subjective experience; the subject signifies each deviation as if it has been caused by chance, not attributable to any ‘scapegoat’, antagonist agent. This comprises Žižek’s comment on the notion that the ‘impossible is Real’: the search for objects of satisfaction is defined as being ‘peppered with little failures, mishaps or impossibilities’, which render the imaginary-symbolic defensive apparatus into a repeated dynamic of aperture, closure and re-aperture; of desire, failure or shock (what Lacan called ‘unfortunate encounters’, 1998), and re-ignition of desire.

Following Hoedemaekers’ lead (2010), the analysis of data will foreground the abovementioned breakdowns of representation by analysing instances of contradiction, ambiguity and silence/pause.

The second elaboration on positive *jouissance* can be assimilated to ‘intense performances of work’, serving the purpose of policy implementation regardless of the meaning that can be assigned to the command to perform

(Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010). They are 'limit-experiences' insofar as they seem capable of bringing an emotional intensity to the public-servant-subject's practice, and they are seen as 'embodied' insofar as they are an industrious part of the public servant's work activity.

Following Stavrakakis (2008), such intense work performance aims at preventing the 'vanishing' of the fantasmatic. Thus, the positive dimension of *jouissance* is about reversing the interpretation of an excess of lack, turning it into an interpretation of an excess of activity, an excessive 'performance' that sustains itself by actively emptying its own unfolding of a stable content or aim and pushing for ever renewed mundane objects. This is what Lacan's fifth paradigm of enjoyment considers satisfaction to be: the constant intensity of a push for ongoing production, one which requires the subject's (work) activity and discursivity to be oriented to an entropic loss of 'objectual' substance yet at the same time to an active orientation to engage with and 'consume' everyday (work) objects. Simply put, it is about the enjoyment of performative activity as a repeatable aspect of bureaucratic work.

As was proposed at the end of the previous section, interpreting *jouissance* in this way is important because it does not reveal the mode in which fantasy frames experience, but the reverse: it reveals the way in which experience, in this case, an intense performative engagement with implementation work, frames fantasy. It is not about missing 'reality' repeatedly, but about repeatedly enacting a reality that can enable a capacity to think and miss. From this perspective, the Real of satisfaction or *jouissance*, the main concern for the

public-servant-subject's desire, is not exhausted by depictions of the 'realities' that are lacking in 'fantasy narratives'. What this standpoint allows to be foregrounded is that the Real of *jouissance* must be registered also as an intense, even excessive enactment of bureaucratic performative work.

The next section of this chapter will present the first type of analysis of normalized, positive enjoyment during public servant identification: the analysis of instances in which public servant discourse (and practice) engages in the interruption of narratives on bureaucratic work. As outlined above, this analysis of identification with interrupted objects which reveals, in turn, the interruption of a unified, coherent identification (Hoedemaekers, 2010), will address narratives about coordination, particularly the collaborative negotiation between supervisors and supervisees, and will focus on three instances of narrative interruption: contradiction, ambiguity and pause/silence.

Interruptive *jouissance* in public servant identification: on collaborative negotiation during supervision and coordination of bureaucratic work.

Thus far, the notion of a normalized, positive satisfaction or *jouissance* has been defined and distinguished from the idea of an impossible, negative *jouissance* that was used analytically in the previous chapter. In what follows, one particular incarnation of normalized, positive enjoyment will be analysed in detail in consideration of the data collected: the interruption of public

servant identification. This analytic effort will show how the public servant is able to achieve actual satisfaction in his/her experience of bureaucratic work by narrating it, to others and himself/herself, through the use of inconsistent or failed significations. Crucially, analysis will show that the inconsistent signification of bureaucratic work indexes a public servant's experience that nonetheless feels mundane, normal and productive.

One of the clearest and most relevant instances of normalized, positive enjoyment as the 'gapping' or interruption of public servant identification, according to the terms expressed in Lacan's fourth paradigm of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000), is found in narratives regarding the agency of supervision during policy implementation efforts. Particularly, it is found in the narratives that concern what could be called the leadership style of the bureaucratic supervisor (O'Reilly & Reed, 2011) in charge of orientating the 'translation' as Fotaki (2010) calls it, from neoliberal ('post-bureaucratizing') policy prescriptions (i.e. legal texts) to policy implementation guidelines and organisational practices.

In the analysed case, the fundamental relationship between supervisors and supervisees during implementation seemed to be far from straightforward. Initially, given the bureaucratic structure of the public sector where roles are formally interconnected in a strict hierarchical fashion, the data seemed to indicate that mid-level leading agents were being categorized according to their formal relationship with political agents in charge of policy making at the apex. This was apparent especially because of the idealizing and transgressive

narratives that were found in public servant discourse (and which were analysed in the previous chapter). Some narratives positioned them as 'good willing' allies, protective and supportive guides, and also as enemies, threatening representatives of political 'interests' networks. Yet subsequent and more careful readings of public servant discourse reveal there is one view of leadership that predominates: that which is said to be championed by adaptive and entrepreneurial-spirited senior leaders.

For the public servants under study, supervisory agents are ultimately valued in their capacity to mediate, to 'translate' guidelines back and forth and flexibly between low and middle level roles in the organisational structure and also between political and stakeholder networks (parties, providers, companies, NGOs, etc.) aligned in a multifaceted way with central government. In this sense, as O'Reilly and Reed's research has concluded (2011: 1094) (based on the famous terms used by an educational policy maker in the UK), this particular kind of discourse on leaderism has come to be depicted as an imaginary where the leader functions like the 'grit' in the 'oyster' of policy implementation in the public sector. Narratives on the mediatory style of the policy implementation leader provide a fantasy image of a 'hybridized' yet beatific agent, who comprehends the importance of nurturing the everlasting process of 'bureaucratic making' that the public servant identifies with as an object, amidst a context where neoliberal, entrepreneurial, post-bureaucratic logics of governance overlap with traditional bureaucracy. The subtle and clever positioning of leaders in relation to the question of politics is what

triggers and sustains the engagement of the public-servant-subject, which as has been shown in previous chapters, can require equal doses of sublimation (the ‘pearling’ inside the public sector ‘oyster’) and transgression (the ‘gritting’) of the law/rules that govern the organisation of bureaucratic practice.

However, the data indicates that these imaginaries of the supervisor-supervisee relationship, where the supervisor acts as a mediatory, reconciling leader, are deeply contradictory. They indicate how the sublimatory/transgressive logic of fantasy, in which Real objects of satisfaction are always defined as ‘outside’ the possibilities of the public-servant-subject (albeit encouraging a striving for the possible), is not the only way to draw *jouissance*. They indicate that a humbler yet drastic interruption of policy implementation ‘sense-making’ also allow public servants to achieve some degree of satisfaction. This is a satisfaction that is still impossible in its totality, but which is experienced intensely, as a ‘making’ whose objects are not as well-defined and clear-cut as either the sublime or horrific (i.e. ‘exceptional’) objects of fantasy.

The following testimony by implementer Feliciano shows how certain narratives can convey enjoyment by contradiction; particularly, by contradicting the fairly stabilized discourse on the durable ‘making’ of bureaucracy which the data has indicated prevails across public servant identification. In this case, it is a narrative that regards the signification of two sides in the mediatory function of the leading supervisor. On the one hand, in this narrative the supervisor or boss is supposed to conjure an ideal order

which is not entirely authoritative and yet not without obedience. On the other hand, the supervisor must bear witness to the ‘inner enemy’ whose presence transgresses the leader’s pacifying capacity:

Interviewee: Look, my personal experience, I come from—both my parents were public functionaries, my mother worked all her life in the public sector, she has gone through governments, my father as well, they come from a time when public service was the least one could do, you know? Because there is always more money in the private sector ... All their lives they were public functionaries, and they ascended as time passed, because of their intellectual and work capabilities, and truly I always saw them fulfil their functions, and always with integrity, when they worked they had integrity, I also know there are people who are not like that, and I know because my family told me countless times, that there are people who don’t have integrity and basically work in the public sector to take advantage, to profit in any way possible, of what is offered, to use it as a trampoline of a political or economic kind. I don’t know, personally I think working in the public sector has the advantage that one’s opinion is considered valid, in the private sector if your boss says something there is no level of dialogue because everything is much more vertical I think, whereas here the relationship between boss and employee is, I have the impression that—my boss is very reasonable and I can talk and discuss with him when I disagree on something, I mean, they really trust in my capacity to make decisions instead of consulting them all the time, but in the private sector the boss is the final instance, and if the boss says black, it’s going to be black and that’s that ... I have lots of friends in the private sector who work until 12:30 am or even later, they end up leaving the office on the same day they have to go in ... in the public system that is unthinkable ... my perception of the public sector, and I haven’t seen many [who are unwilling], is that there are many who are willing to do their jobs beyond the political contingency, which is ideological. I saw in my mother how she devoted time to doing her job right,

regardless of whom she was working for, it wasn't about the government, it was about the country, the government administers the country, and the country just has to be in good shape. I saw in her that she always gave, dedicated a lot of time and energy to that, and I want to do just that, everyone in this coffee shop²¹ contributes to my salary, so I owe them respect and a level of quality in what I do. [Feliciano] (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

Feliciano's words aim at showing how the imaginary of leadership, and particularly the abovementioned mediatory brand of leaderism discourse (grasped by authors like O'Reilly & Reed, 2011), facilitates the identification of public servants while implementing policy. They do this by depicting the specific compromise that must take place between, on the one hand, the invocation of a sublime work coordination (i.e. respectful and 'integral' relations as Feliciano puts it), shining against the backdrop of an antagonistic discoordination (i.e. supervisor authoritarianism). Feliciano's quote intends to foreground the central function of the imaginary figure of the bureaucratic boss and the relationship s/he offers; namely, to stage a strengthened guarantor for a specific ideal 'style' of working bureaucratically, based on the 'dialogue' with the boss.

The 'devoted' and 'sacrificial' stance of fantasy comes across in his testimony, as he pushes to 'defend' his identity as a public sector employee by idealizing his account of supervision with references to morality, family ('my parents'

²¹ This interview took place in a spacious coffee shop (Starbucks) located on the 1st floor of the building where some of the studied Quality Assurance organisations had their central offices.

example') and nation, and opposing these to the antagonism of 'political interests'. Feliciano begins by portraying himself as a compliant 'son' who admires a mother figure, a character that evokes an ethico-familial order of solidarity and responsibility that supposedly reflects the 'integrity' that he insists comes attached to the public servant role the Chilean citizens are supposedly gazing on and assessing²². However, his commitment goes beyond value sets like the 'mother example' or any set of traditional bureaucratic rules or obedience guidelines governing the actual boss-employee relationship. Rather, Feliciano speaks as a public-servant-subject whose engagement/commitment emerges as a response to the specific mediatory 'style' of the public sector leader. For him, this is a particularly meaningful mediation, able to reconcile or 'hybridize' the harshness of the neoliberal, entrepreneurial call for managerial efficiency (what he imagines the 'private sector' and particularly private sector managers to be) with the constructive 'delays' of the bureaucratic 'making', run traditionally by paternal-like authorities ('my mother devoted time to doing her job right, regardless of whom she was working for, it wasn't about the government, it was about the country').

The intentionality of Feliciano's speech is crucial in illustrating a departure of public servant identification from strict and above all rational models of bureaucratic obedience. Coinciding with Schofield's (2001: 86) insightful conclusions, it shows that there cannot be an engagement with bureaucracy if

²² This gaze can be located literally in the 'café' situation where the interview takes place.

obedience (to policy implementation guidelines) is not met with public servant discretion or independence. In response to what has been analysed in previous sections, identification with bureaucracy and its traditional values of hierarchy and authority – Feliciano’s narrative around the figure of the ‘integral’ mother – seems to be insufficient to hold a fantasy together against the ‘threat’ of the inner enemy of political ‘interests’ or “trampolines”, as Feliciano calls them. A trust in the mediatory ‘style’ of the leader also appears to be needed, a style which aims at hybridizing traditional bureaucratic authoritarian control with outcome-oriented evaluations based on professional independence criteria (Carboni, 2010).

This a new depiction featuring the public servant as one who obeys the ‘integrity’ taught by the same authorities that taught his/her parents, but whose obedience is only “reasonable”, as Feliciano puts it. ‘Reasonable obedience’ actually entails a sophisticated mode of work engagement: a collaborative, open negotiation or ‘dialogue’ in which the public servant’s “opinion” (i.e. their ability to make decisions discretionally) is met by the supervisor’s “trust”. Feliciano’s testimony thus indicates a specific thread of signification (‘S2’) that is being enchained to the master signification (‘S1-S2’) in which the meaningfulness of the bureaucratic implementability of ‘quality’ policy (‘S1’) is taken for granted. This thread conveys a narrative depicting how the sway of hindering political agents over bureaucratic work through the traditional channels of hierarchy has somehow been refuted and ‘proved wrong’. It does so by specifying the mastery of ‘quality’ policy over bureaucracy

through significations of ‘dialogue’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘negotiation’. As scholars such as Catlaw & Jordan have discussed (2009), these notions, which were found in many interviews with public servants, serve to shift the focus of discursive content from the abstract problem of pernicious political intervention (the contrast between his exemplary parents and the opportunists who seek to take ‘advantage’ and steal bureaucracy) to the humbler ‘local’ activity of supervisor-supervisee coordination (the ‘talking and discussing’, for example through meetings, communications, report exchanges, etc.).

The result is the expansion of subjective mastery of identification, through discursive means, with the object of bureaucracy. It implies an assimilation of the meaning of ‘quality’ (whatever that might be) to the public servant’s discretion under a ‘collaborative’ frame of organisational negotiation; as Feliciano says proudly, “the public sector has the advantage that one’s opinion is considered valid”. This ‘advantage’ talked about by Feliciano signals a form of *jouissance* or satisfaction that is in a way less ambitious and more ‘normalized’ than it is ideal. This signification aims at something rather small and mundane within the project of a ‘delayed’ bureaucratic ‘making’, so often said to be threatened and impeded by the ‘political’. By articulating it, the public-servant-subject expresses a trust in delivering (a meaning of) ‘quality’ in the ‘little’ work of giving his/her input or opinion, because s/he supposes there is an organised/organisable Other (the bureaucratic order of the public sector) which desires the subject to believe in his/her own capacity to opine.

Briefly put, paraphrasing Feliciano's terms, there is public servant enjoyment in 'owing a level of quality to what the public servant does'. It is the enjoyment of the public servant's capacity to pitch customized ways of implementing (quality) policy to 'negotiating' supervisors who are supposedly expecting them avidly. Hence, it is above all the enjoyment of the 'duty' (what Feliciano calls 'owing') of repeatedly giving an opinion, almost (but not entirely) in an entrepreneurial way, so that the idea of 'collaborative negotiation' ('S2'), which has been enchained to account for the meaningfulness of 'quality' policy, is continuously realized in the organisation of the bureaucratic. This reflects Hoedemaekers' empirical insights (2010: 392) on the

“two identification ideals that embody a shift away from the impersonal ethic of bureaucracy and the clear division of responsibilities, and towards working upon the self. 'Newness' stereotypes the bureaucratic worker to valorize performative managerialism; 'responsibility' stresses the entrepreneurial and proactive attitudes of the ostensibly committed employee.”

Overall, Feliciano's speech exemplifies a mode of subjectivation and work engagement prompted by a neoliberal, entrepreneurial, transactional mercantile-like mode of controlling (i.e. supervising) the (design and) implementation of policy in the public sector. It is a mode in which the signification of a collaborative negotiation with bureaucratic authority, leading to the relative entrepreneurialization of self, is pivotal for public servant identity.

Nevertheless, this continued enjoyment of work inputting, collaboratively negotiated with the mediatory leader, cannot help but to reveal the lack of

consistency or failure of the symbolic-discursive order (the master signification) with which the public-servant-subject seeks to achieve it. As argued throughout the thesis, from a Lacanian perspective enjoyment *via* discursivity can only be articulated by having the public-servant-subject identify with and embrace the lack of his/her own desire in the organisational context (Driver, 2009a; Hoedemaekers, 2010). Yet in the case of Feliciano's testimony at hand, as argued in the beginning of this chapter on positive *jouissance*, the inconsistency concerns what Stavrakakis (2008) called the 'limit experiences' of *jouissance* at the level of embodied experience. In particular, as will be argued in the following paragraphs, it is about the contradiction or self-transgression in the accounting for (i.e. the narration of) an organisational 'reality' of (quality) policy implementation.

The main thread of signification that signals towards the failure of contradiction that is inextricably linked to enjoyment in Feliciano's quote is found in his following affirmation: "My perception of the public sector, and I haven't seen many [who are unwilling], is that there are many who are willing to do their jobs beyond the political contingency, which is ideological". There are two striking things about this formulation. One is that it relies on the idea of having a 'perception', as Lucia was shown to do in the previous chapter, to affirm the disturbing effects of the 'political' (what he calls the ideological) over the proper functioning of public sector bureaucracy (the implications of these claims about 'ideologies' commanding bureaucracy will be discussed in

the conclusion chapter). The other is that this claim of 'having perceived' is followed by Feliciano's affirmation about 'not seeing'.

The latter is a subtle gesture, apparently on the mere 'surface' of what his narrative would contain and thus of the kind that would be most meaningful for a Lacanian interpretation of the unconscious over-determination of discourse (Parker, 2005), that situates Feliciano in a very different position to the fantasmatic one in which Lucia positioned herself. The difference is a clear one regarding the subjective rendition of an experienced/experienceable 'reality' at the level of the body. In the case of Lucia's identification, the signifier 'perception' analysed in the previous chapter served to signify a reality that was missing in the sublime, impossible 'outside' of the experienceable reality of policy implementation, the reality she said she 'wished' for. In the case of Feliciano's identification, the signifier 'perception' conveys a reality that he is sure his body is experiencing, a concrete, humble reality that his body is actually handling ('quality in everything that I do'). The entire quote and particularly the affirmation at hand indicate that Feliciano's perception provides him with certainty about the 'collaborative negotiation' that is operating bureaucratically (with the leader) and not about the harmony that is missing (stolen by political agents). This explains why he can affirm that 'he has not seen' directly after claiming to 'have perceived' (and also why he relativizes by saying 'I don't know' or 'I have the impression' repeatedly throughout such an assertive speech). His certainty about his own (embodied) activity (eyes included) is such that the 'object seen' becomes almost

irrelevant: what the subject enjoys is the continued, repeated acting according to what he supposes the organised/organisable Other desires for him/her to 'perceive'/see (Woźniak, 2010: 406; Hoedemaekers, 2010; Stavrakakis, 2008).

The abovementioned insights on Feliciano's quote allow appreciation of the signification of contradiction during identification.

Initially, it can be appreciated how Feliciano's identification with a 'perception' of professional inputting under a collaborative frame is supposed to convey that the experience of negotiation in which the public servants under study are involved is a 'reality' and not a mirage. This, in turn, allows consolidation of the re-signification of the object of a 'delayed making' of bureaucracy, so that it is no longer considered part of a war waged against intrusive political agents but as the continued building of instances for 'collaborative dialogue'.

Subsequently, however, the reality and the conclusion that can be so transparently drawn from it (i.e. that 'good' bureaucracy is about negotiating between independent professionals) are revealed to emerge problematically and inconsistently in the public servant's speech. For how could the independence-granting relationship Feliciano has with his boss, a particular case of interpersonal trust found in a local context, be universalized to all relationships between public servants and their bosses? Furthermore, how could the moral standards Feliciano thinks the public servant is supposed to

adjust to (i.e. 'integrity') and the 'functions' s/he is supposed to fulfil be faultlessly 'negotiable'?

Feliciano is not aware of it, but the depiction of 'perceived reality' he offers to the interviewee/researcher, one that he feels very proud and sure of, is unrealistic, impractical for the organising of the bureaucratic. From the perspective of Lacan's fourth paradigm (Miller, 2000), it implies a contradiction at the level of the imaginary, that allows the establishment of a defensive compromise to draw the enjoyment of identity (I am one who collaborates with the policy implementation supervisor) amidst the paradoxical, lacking the status of symbolic signification (Hoedemaekers, 2010). The contradiction of this prevalent imaginary in public servant discourse is revealed exactly at the point where Feliciano expresses how much he believes the possibilities opened by the supervisor's negotiating attitude are at arm's reach. The tone and content of his testimony convey, on the one hand, that he has transcended the threats of 'political contingency' caused by the traditional hierarchical channels of bureaucracy, connecting implementers with politically-swayed policy makers; he claims: 'my boss does not say black is black, we rather negotiate'. Yet on the other hand, this realization of effective implementation of 'the facts', which he sees as full of 'integrity' and ethical vocation towards bureaucratic work, is precisely what cannot be sustained through his exchange with the negotiating boss. By definition, such exchange can only lead to an ad-libbed, ad-hoc work coordination, which is the opposite of the respect to rules and rule (policy) making that implementation requires,

at least at the basic level of the legal prescriptions (i.e. texts) with which public servants must comply and regardless of how post-bureaucratic the inspiration behind the policy might be.

Like many collected testimonies, the quote at hand indicates the intense desire with which the public-servant-subject has invested the 'bureaucratic tradition' as the primary object of identification, but at the same time, that the signification of such an identificatory object cannot help but fail or 'breakdown' if the object is to remain, causing the continued construction of desire and thus identification/identity (Lacan, 1998). The fragile, contradictory object of bureaucracy analysed in the previous section, an object 'delayed in its making', has been signified further as collaboration, dialogue or negotiation, consolidating it, but also emptying it, all in one single identificatory gesture; for instance, Feliciano can revere the fact that his mother "devoted time to doing her job right..." and then state that working until late is something "unthinkable" for the general public sector context. This indicates that the very notion of 'delay' together with the general 'making' of bureaucracy under the command of policy implementation are 'emptied' of their taken-for-granted meaningfulness ('S1'), and yet constantly re-articulated through several workplace significations ('S2'). Not only are they emptied in the promise of ideal, universal, ontological harmony, which would call for posterior socio-political and ethical movement towards discursive 're-filling' (Glynos & Howarth, 2007), they are also emptied in the very gesture of discursivity: an entropic, repeated gesture of producing bureaucratic sense to

then lose it, and of losing sense to then prompt its re-production, which for Hoedemaekers & Keegan (2010: 1025) resembles the movement of (capitalist) neoliberalism and its push for constant entrepreneurial re-assembly of self.

The following set of quotes by Javiera provides an even clearer picture of how contradictory identification can be, demonstrating impossibility precisely where it seems more plausible and grounded. The clarity they contribute is related to the fact that Javiera works as a mid-level supervisor²³:

First quote, from Javiera:

“I think the whole system [of educational quality assurance] allows and promotes this [in-depth analysis of implementation proposals], that is the idea, to establish a collaborative work between organisations [based on informed exchanges] ... So, I think what is needed—I feel like we must establish a relation which is not about “Oh, ok, I’m rejecting this” as an evaluator...

Interviewer: Like a supervisor...

Interviewee: Yes, not a supervisor but rather a relation of collaboration. This is still in the making, but when you say that all institutions work together for the quality assurance system I believe this is so above all in terms of a collaborative relationship, or at least this is how I interpret the law, this is how it should be. Bonds should be constructed, slowly, direct connections regarding work ... [a concrete exchange of questions and answers about tasks] this is possible, it doesn’t go that way much, but it should happen ... a coordination round table

²³ She is not Feliciano’s supervisor. She works in a different organisation, which is nonetheless very similar to the one Feliciano works for.

should exist, it would be incredibly beneficial in order to promote collaboration and to keep away from our role as mere evaluators ...

Interviewer: So there is a mediatory process, an intermediation. There is an intention to modify things, things get included, mixed, and then comes the final stage where the project gets stamped (interviewer hits the table surface with his fist) and then it's ready—

Interviewee: I mean, it's not like that now.

Interviewer: Ok, I understand, it's not happening at the moment.

Interviewee: But it would be awesome if it was (laughs in a discouraged manner).

(Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

Second quote, from Javiera (recorded one and a half minutes after the quote above was recorded):

Interviewee: For example, now we are in a period of many proposals being discussed in parallel, and it's really wearying, and then it might occur that between November and January I will have nothing to do! (she shouts). There are just too many things running at the same time. ... These things shouldn't be all at once going through my head (she laughs expressing discouragement). So it's like, one doesn't have the means to control, mm no--, because it's like, like, there isn't a relationship that is fully collaborative, so one could maybe say to people from other departments "hey, you know what, don't send everything at once, because no, no, no, I just can't!" (she taps the surface of the table), I mean despite the fact that some negot--, a negotiation exists to some extent, but clearly they are not going to change their priorities because we, um, we asked them, you know, politely. And especially because I imagine they are in the process of closing. (8

second pause) There are these void periods ... we are making reports, and then, wham!, a proposal comes in, and we have to stop all our work, because we have to take care of this other thing, which is our priority obviously, and that we have managed to do. So it's discouraging, because sometimes it's like "damn, you made us work in something that went nowhere" ... [by the end of the year]. I assure you, they are not going to remember any of this, and then everything will start from zero again. (she laughs expressing discouragement).

(Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

The analysis of these quotes is invaluable to appreciate how the significations on 'collaboration' and 'dialogue' can lead to stabilizing the epistemological certainty and truthfulness of a narrative on work coordination across the public sector, but also, in the same gesture, to rendering them contradictory, and unsubstantiated. The quotes are able to show this as they engage with the two main elements discussed in the classic (and still on-going) debate on the features of State bureaucracy as first posited by Weber and other theoreticians. These elements include law and rules/regulations, along with hierarchy and authority (du Gay, 2000a; Matheson, 2007).

Salient topics for analysis are found straightforwardly in the first quote, in which Javiera, the supervisor, speaks with an expositional and almost (but not entirely) authoritative voice. She begins by expressing her concerns with the problem of achieving/producing educational quality, particularly with the problem of 'organising' it, as she speaks very specifically about the way in which the "system" is supposed to coordinate work. The transcription registers

the precise moment at which her emotion of concern, the affective path her desire is tracking discursively, builds up to a point of (rushed) conclusiveness. She starts saying that something is “needed”, but she quickly interrupts and corrects herself in order to declare this need in the first person and stress a moral imperative. Taking a stronger position than Feliciano’s, she proclaims that policy implementers “must” reject the supervisory figure, a figure she takes the time to impersonate in a passionate way (when she quotes the supervisor saying “Oh, no, I’m rejecting this”). As Feliciano suggested before, the supervisor that she promotes the rejection of is of a particular kind, one that is oppressive (this is what the whimsical “Oh” in Javiera’s impersonation of the supervisor indicates) and associated, because of their status within the traditional politically-intervened hierarchy, with the ‘interests’ that disturb the sublime ‘delayed making’ of the bureaucratic workspace. Regarding the latter, she is explicit in mentioning notions such as ‘still in the making’ and ‘slowly’ and in stating starkly by the end of the quote that “things are not like that now”, that things have somehow been impeded.

Javiera’s identification comes across clearly in the first quote. She identifies with the image of the opposition to the traditional, hierarchical bureaucratic supervisor, an identification with a policy implementation (workplace) order/rule (i.e. the organised/organisable Other) that is articulated discursively by signifying the idea of ‘collaboration’ (‘we should organise in terms of a collaborative relationship, or at least this is how I interpret the law [policy], this is how it should be’) Yet the second quote, capturing Javiera’s

speech only a minute and a half after the first quote, focuses on detailing the implausibility of ‘collaborative’ policy implementation, and thus, on contradicting the explicit endorsement of ‘collaborative’ work. Javiera’s speech as supervisor in the second quote no longer focuses on the impediments that prevent what would otherwise be successful, but rather on the failed conception of its repeated efforts of re-organisation. The second quote features an outspoken and emotional complaining (a surprising thing considering I was interviewing a supervisor in the formality of her office) against what Javiera saw as pure disorganisation endangering the purpose of the entire policy implementation effort and particularly the role of the organisation she was contributing to lead. Crucially, her words convey that this is a disorganisation caused by the dynamic of negotiation itself (‘there are many proposals being discussed in parallel, and it’s really wearying ... There are just too many things running at the same time’).

Javiera’s speech is delivered in a way that emphasizes verbally and non-verbally the ‘reality’ of ‘failed collaboration’. Despite having previously supported a non-supervisory style, Javiera explicitly rejects the input from other departments, expressing an absolute distrust in the way counterparts were going to negotiate work with her and her team (‘they made us work in something that went nowhere ... they are not going to remember any of this’). Moreover, she shares her emotional sensibility with the interviewer/researcher, voicing the role of a victim of collaboration when she says “don’t send everything at once, no, no, no, I just can’t” while hitting the

table. It is precisely after articulating such hurting, an ‘organised hurting’ that she attributes to what she sees as a ‘not fully collaborative negotiation’, when she articulates the contradiction of the idea of the collaborative (and that of the mediatory leader) in the purest form. She declares: “a negotiation exists to some extent, but clearly they are not going to change their priorities because we, um, we asked them, you know, politely”. For her negotiation has been organised, but it is an inherently failed organisation of the collaborative, in which actual negotiating is denied. By narrating things this way, Javiera thus signifies implementation as interrupted and failed, and yet under constant re-organisation, a re-organisation that she sees as a ‘fact’ of endurance (‘the fact that some negot--, a negotiation exists to some extent, but...’).

What a Lacanian interpretation shows, based on Lacan’s fourth paradigm of *jouissance*, is that instead of refining the explanation of what ‘collaboration’ means so that the contradiction she is articulating becomes ‘dissipated’, the public-servant-subject achieves enjoyment by articulating a failed account of his/her own conception of bureaucratic work (in this case, collaborative work) and at the same time re-engaging with it (‘everything will start from zero again’). This is an ‘interruptive’, non-fantasmatic enjoyment that relies on the opening, closing and re-opening of the desire for the bureaucratic object, which leaves its ideal realization always half-made, unrealized and then sought again.

Elaborating on Miller’s schematization (2000), this represents an alternative to the fantasmatic way of ‘causing’ or animating the desire (i.e. the ‘life

certainty') of the subject, accomplished discursively not by heroically questing towards harmony (and thus risking the face of horrific transgression) but instead ascertaining the reality of a precious but evanescent object (which Lacan famously termed 'object little a'²⁴); in Lacan's definition (1998: 22), an object whose being can only be un-determined/un-determinable, is never coherently delimited and is always 'gapped' or 'interrupted'. In one image, the enjoyment of this object is found in Javiera's active identification with discouraged laughter at the end of her testimony. As organisational scholars such as Cremin (2012), Hoedemaekers (2010) and Contu (2008) have proposed, this mode of identification concerns the rather cynical enjoyment of contradicting what is unconsciously endorsed or *vice versa*. It is one based on taking a (grammatical) position of critical mockery that at the same time expresses an intense engagement, or the opposite, of expressing an intense hurting when conveying an endorsement of a mode of working. In accordance with these insights, it is no surprise to find a similar state of contradiction as

²⁴ As proposed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, the concept of 'objet petit a' has not been used to analyse this case of public servant identification, in order to allow a clearer schematization of diverse modes of identification according to different paradigmatic interpretations of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000). It is my view that the notion of 'objet petit a', which fulfils a specific function in the complex trajectory of Lacanian theory, has often been used in reductionist ways, especially by scholars who have had a paramount influence in organisational studies, such as Žižek (see for example the work of Cederström & Spicer, 2014). This has led to theoretical inaccuracies and a cult of 'second-hand' Lacanian conceptualization that can lead to inconsistent programmes for socio-political analysis and critique (see for example the divergence between Dean's (2006) and Sharpe & Boucher's (2010) monographs on what they call Žižekian politics). Although there are a few remarkable exceptions to this trend (for example the research output of Lapping (2011, 2013) and the revisionist work of Parker (2005, 2014), it appears to be a more constructive decision to limit the use of the concept of 'object little a', suggesting rather than saturating its meaning.

‘glad discouragement’ in the following quote by implementer Julieta, Javiera’s direct supervisee:

“If one would behave like, really ethically and really like a Taliban in relation to the principles one believes in, one would get very frustrated. It would be like, I generate lots of evaluation criteria and put them carefully in a document and then they get disfigured, just like that, because everyone is rushing to meet some deadline, they turn my document into a monster. So ok, one could say ‘this is terrible’ but then I discuss with my boss and we say ‘ok, it’s not so terrible’ because we are going to devise this and that strategy to pass the information on anyway. One becomes like an old fox, one learns the craft, and makes things move up, going through managers, senior managers and reaching up to the board [of policy makers], yet many things get overlooked by the board, and I think that transgresses the functioning of the system. I laugh because I hear all the time internal slogans promoting a dialoguing organisation, talking about the dialogue, the pluralism, the divergence across the institution and in the board, but that’s not really dialogue! It just won’t do if our things do not get discussed in the board and we can’t figure out who disagrees with whom! Uhm... (5 second pause) and you know, also, I find interesting, I think I’m quite sensitive to work environments and I have the impression that not many people here feel happy” (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

Julieta’s speech quoted above is subtler and yet more compelling in its illustration of the positive enjoyment that the public servants being studied draw from normalized interruptions or gaps when engaged in implementing (neoliberal) policies for educational quality. As with Javiera’s previously

analysed quotes, Julieta's quote can be separated into two distinct identificatory articulations.

Initially, Julieta exhibits to the interviewer a decisive realization she has made: that collaborative negotiation, when handled appropriately, can lead to a working hybridisation of traditional hierarchical bureaucracy and flexible, entrepreneurial ('post-bureaucratic') management. She acknowledges that the conflict between Taliban-like authoritarianism and free-for-all, disorganized negotiation could potentially lead to 'terrible', 'monstrous' prospects, but also that she has found (in collaboration with her supervisor Javiera!) a compromise solution. For Julieta this is the 'old fox' solution of acquiring the (entrepreneurial) cunning to bypass conflict and the capacity to disguise (i.e. to 'brand') one's intention; in other words, the 'crafty' (neoliberal) improving of a public servant self that can be 'sold' better internally.

Later on however, half way into her testimony, once the realization of a solution has been shown to the interviewer, Julieta begins to state that implementing policy through collaborative negotiation is implausible and ultimately false. Like her supervisor Javiera, instead of specifying the shortcomings of a particular negotiation she emphasizes the sheer failure of the collaborative endeavour in a passionate way, up to the point of mocking it, and also like Javiera, she ends her speech by staging her own version of 'discouraged laughter': despite having declared before that together with her supervisor they realized that 'things were not so terrible, she states her belief

that most implementers feel unhappy. What comes across in the end is how Julieta's enjoyment is attached to what Parker (2005) signals as the 'breakdown of representation' in identification *via* discourse. The 'collaborative' world that Julieta has discursively built (i.e. signified) along with her supervisor is collapsing in its foundations (i.e. contradicting itself), and yet her words express an affect of 'worry', the same conveyed when she says 'I laugh', where she speaks as if she were simultaneously shocked and convinced that everything would remain the same. As Lacan's 'paradigm four' points out, the subject seeks unconscious satisfaction in the stumble, the vacillation (Miller, 2000); in other words, in the apparently new shocks that only repeat the old.

Furthermore, it is important to note how the contradiction observed in the data is linked to identification with what Best (2012: 90) has called the 'persistence of residual ambiguity' during the process of organisation of the bureaucratic order. For this scholar, ambiguity is seen as the stubborn remainder of the Weberian standardization of bureaucratic knowledge that management deploys jointly with standardized practices (forms, procedures, guidelines) to reduce the 'ranges of interpretation' and uncertainty that the local implementation of particular public policies inevitably entails (Best, 2012: 92). Notwithstanding its strategic definition (see also Eisenberg, 1984), such a proposition suggests that ambiguity is the reflection of an irreducible ambivalence of public servants towards discursive ambiguity, as if ambiguity contributed something enjoyable to public-servant-subjectivity. As Best puts

it (2012: 101), ambiguity can be seen as adding a “coping mechanism for organisational actors faced with the unknown” within bureaucratized organisations that operate precisely as “ambiguity-reducing machines”. The latter definition (negative ambiguity leads to positive ambiguity) certainly points to the inconsistency of bureaucratic ‘making’, which from the Lacanian perspective of this thesis relates to the process through which a master signification of ‘quality’ policy (‘S1’) serves to unconsciously guarantee for the subject the meaningfulness of all other signification/narratives of workplace activity (i.e. the ‘makings’ of the bureaucratic). Accordingly, several instances of bureaucratic ambiguity in Best’s terms could be found amidst the discourse of the public servant being studied; for instance, in Lucia’s comments on staffing:

Lucia: "You know, there have been many female sociologists and psychologists who have not lasted long here".

Interviewer: Oh, and why?

Lucia: Because sociologists have been trained more on research, they want to do research, and our job, reporting, is not researching, it was nothing, I mean all conclusions you come to don't matter. ‘Report, write a report’, so that bothered them and frustrated them and so they left ... in reality our Communications team was really artisan-like [6 second pause] I mean, it wasn't professionalized, it is now in that very process, we're looking to find a way ...

Interviewer: Well, this is precisely what I would like to ask you now, more in detail, how would you describe or how would you evaluate the process, this old Communications department or section, the process in which this reporting turns

more professional. What did you think about it? What was your experience of this?

Lucia: Let me see because, obviously I have, mmm -- it's --I feel ambivalent toward it. Evidently it is fantastic how it has been growing, it's very, beautiful, to see that, how it grew and all the aspects of communication are there, right-- because we also have designers, before we had, there is a team of designers, now everything is thought, communication, so this is very beautiful to see, seeing how it came to be, how it has grown, and then one realizes we are nothing, I mean before we just played with dolls and we keep playing and one says yes really we were nothing now we are on our way and we still have lots to go through, we are still lacking in diffusion, we are still lacking in communication, in documents, knowing our audiences more, we are still lacking, lacking a lot, but when I realize, when I see how much it grew this year, these 17 people that came, the horizon broadens, yes, it is like, like the grocer that started selling, or this, I believe it was the owner of Cencosud²⁵ who began selling I don't know, door to door, and now he has, that, I feel in that, in that process and... (interviewer interrupts to ask a diverging question).

Lucia's quote above reveals a striking state of ambivalence in public servant identification, conveyed through her use of the signifier 'nothing' during her account of bureaucratic collaboration/coordination.

²⁵ Cencosud is one of the largest and most powerful economic groups in Chile, known mostly for their large supermarket chain, which is second in size and revenue only to the Chilean subsidiary of Walmart. Noticeably, Cencosud was founded by a German entrepreneur, whose grandparents immigrated to Chile in the 1940s. The company started as a small provincial supermarket in the south of the country and in twenty years became part of the country's second biggest fortune. By the time of the interviews, Cencosud had just finished building in Santiago, Chile's capital, the tallest skyscraper in Latin America. Cencosud's founder was named by Forbes magazine in 2013 as the 'retail king of Latin America'.

The high-pace and looseness of Lucia's speech as she tries to convey the idea of the growth of the public sector organisation for which she has been working reveals an astounding split between two discursive positions. On the one hand, she articulates an intense hurting caused by the 'devaluating rush' of those who command policy implementation (analysed in previous chapters), and which has prompted qualified professionals to leave ('I mean all conclusions you come to don't matter. 'Report, write a report)'). On the other hand, she articulates strong optimism regarding the durability of bureaucracy ('we are still lacking, lacking a lot, but when I see how much it grew this year the horizon broadens, it is like the grocer that started selling'). Yet this split is rendered into functional ambivalence through the signification of 'nothing'; a notion that works simultaneously for the two mentioned threads of public servant discourse.

It is precisely the ambiguity that the signifier 'nothing' contributes that allows Lucia to obtain satisfaction or enjoyment from her testimony and to prevent herself from facing the confusion and senselessness in her account of policy implementation. In this sense, Lucia's quote provides a complementary angle to the one provided by Javiera and Julieta's quotes. In Lucia's quote the breakdown of representation comes across more clearly but also illustrates the way in which representation is re-assembled ambiguously. This gapping of enjoyment is subtly condensed by the signifier 'nothing'. In the very same gesture of bureaucratic signification, Lucia is able to convey her despair with neoliberal policy implementation ('our job is nothing') and also her

engagement with entrepreneurial implementation activity ('we were nothing now we are on our way ... like the grocer that started selling').

Lucia's quote thus shows that the neoliberal revamping of the public sector partially relies on ambiguity. This is not just the strategic (communicational) ambiguity described by Eisenberg (1984) that operates at the level of policy making and which could lead to fantasmatic over-determination and thus failure of proposed outcomes (Fotaki, 2010). As the data indicates, it is also the ambiguity at the level of public servant identity, leading to an (unconsciously) inconsistent, detached or even cynical stance and to the insistence on failed accounts and interruptions of work activity. As Best suggests (2012) and the data illustrates, the neoliberal values of optimal accountability and market-like efficiency that have re-oriented the traditional control mechanisms of bureaucracy, like a policy on educational 'quality' assurance does, require ambiguous significations in order to be implemented. This is what the following brief quote by implementer Fernando indicates, particularly in his signification of the notion of 'people':

"We work with learning quality standards and often our handling of massive data has led us to understand many things, and sometimes people like psychologists and others like them who have not worked with data so much need help with some issues, and they ask us, you know, how to compute distributions of people according to levels of learning, and sometimes the people that go visit schools need to know how many visits they have to do according to certain information, or it could be the people from communications who need to respond to the press, to all those people who throw rocks at us, so then I don't know, it's like we need

to send a letter to the newspaper, or then maybe sign a document, anyway, those are some of the tasks that we have to do”

Fernando’s quote shows that there is public servant enjoyment to be found in the instability of signification, that is to say, in instances where meaning seems to be hovering and not fixed to a particular strand, and yet there is a sense of self-efficacy and meaningfulness that is conveyed by the subject to the addressed other (in this case, the interviewer who is being informed of coordinations regarding learning standards). In this case, a rather mundane and seemingly obvious description of ‘negotiation’ is intended to be expressed by Fernando, but what comes across is a confusing and incomplete elaboration of very different issues. The signifier ‘people’ indexes every one of these. Fernando talks in a disorganized fashion to the interviewer about collaborating with colleagues, measuring and evaluating the learning of students, delivering resources to internal clients and standing against unfair criticism, all aspects of work that Fernando declares he has come to ‘understand’ after handling massive amounts of data on quality, but there seems to be no connection between these aspects in his report and no senseful distinction is achieved by the idea of ‘people’; no clear location is assigned to the agents that surround Fernando’s position in the bureaucratic workplace. Rather, the signification of ‘people’ functions to coin a state of pure ambiguity, denoting a sense of massiveness around ‘quality’ policy implementation.

‘People’ seem to be animated in diverse ways by quality policy, and yet there is not much that can be specified or explained about their situation; they just

insist on their mobilization, just like bureaucracy is supposed to insist on its sociotechnical 'making' to realize some-meaning-thing of (neoliberal) policy. Accordingly, a most crucial contrast can be established with the previously analysed testimony of Romina, a senior implementer who while looking through her office window at the street where massive student demonstrations for 'quality education' had taken place declared that 'our quality is different than their quality'. For Romina, quality was a clear-cut bureaucratic object 'in the making', desired/desirable by public servants, distinct from the political object of student desire. However, for Fernando quality was about people amidst people, people disappearing and re-appearing amidst their own multitude, without defining clear limits for public servant identity.

The testimonies quoted above serve to illustrate diverse modes of articulating the interruption of public servant identification, and the repetitive, positive, normalized enjoyment of bureaucratic identity that can be drawn from it. Yet there is one more instance of interruption that must be briefly foregrounded: the silence of pause. This is a mode found in the middle of Javiera, Julieta and Lucia's speeches, and also in many other interviewee reports such as that by Feliciano which was analysed in a previous chapter (a twenty second pause after he said 'Quality? Hmm, I had never thought of that'). Following Hoedemaekers (2010), the silence of pausing can be seen as an indication of the instability of identification, as it serves to punctuate the flow of discursivity in a way that appears common and yet at the same time surprising and strange.

In the cases of Javiera, Julieta and Lucia, pauses ranging from five to ten seconds in length convey moments in which the breakdown of signification is completed. It is as if they stood for the final moment of a quicksand-like collapse, in which an attempt at meaningful identification deepens its incoherence precisely through its efforts at achieving consistency. While contradictory meanings are looming in a thread of signification, the silence of pause emerges abruptly as a mark of the impossibility of untangling them, and yet also marks the starting point of a renewed attempt, exhibiting to the other being addressed that the addressing subject is ‘thinking’ or ‘feeling’ on a deep internal level. As Hoedemaekers describes (2010), identification functions for the public-servant-subject at both these levels: at the imaginary level, it seeks a reflection of one’s identity in the other (the silence in which a response is thought), while at the symbolic level it seeks to punctuate a path for the persistence and repetition of desire (the pause between one signification and the next). Crucially in this sense, Julieta’s pause signals an identification with the failure of the discourse that commands policy implementation, rather than with some fantasmatic meaning that would explain what is preventing the ideal realization of policy. It is as if she had attached her being, for the briefest moment, to a temporal gap, a void, which nonetheless is quickly re-absorbed by a general comment on unhappiness at the workplace. In this sense, it is important to appreciate the astounding length of Feliciano’s silence after he was asked about his thoughts on quality policy. Following a Lacanian reading of ‘identification as interruption’ leading to normalized, positive *jouissance* (Miller, 2000), such silence should be understood as the failure of neoliberal

policy discourse itself. It is the staple of a discourse commanding a relentless effort of implementation (as IMF's Christine Lagarde's version of neoliberal policing promoted, 'implementation, implementation, implementation!') that can only be sustained by entrepreneurialized subjectivities and which does not care for promoting a particular socio-political vision (Clarke, 2012; Gunder & Hillier, 2009; Žižek, 2000).

* * *

Overall, this section has focused on different modes of public servant identification as interruption: the shockingly failed yet evanescent and quickly recoverable instability of signification of policy implementation tasks, which has been considered in this chapter as a staging of a positive, 'normally repeated' enjoyment of the bureaucratic by the public-servant-subject. Seen from this position, public servant subjectivity appears to unfold discursively during policy implementation not as the sacrificial faith on a single, ideal bureaucratic object (i.e. a delimited narrative) but as the recurrence of 'breakdown' (contradiction, ambiguity, silence) in the narration of bureaucracy's meaning. As the data has shown, these 'collapsible' meanings are related to significations of bureaucratic 'collaboration' and 'negotiation' during the supervision of policy implementation and more generally to the purposeful coordination between bureaucratic agents (or 'people' as Feliciano called them). Their breaking down, in this sense, indicates not just the fragility of neoliberal policy discourse (e.g. on educational quality assurance) but also and more importantly the subjective repercussion that its implementation

entails; namely, the enjoyment of public servant identity as repeated interruption or inconsistency, without the defence of idyllic fantasies.

Accordingly, what the analysis of data in this section shows is a different interpretation of what Glynos has characterized as self-transgressive identification with government: the affirmation of an idealized public sector object or event, which simultaneously meets its subversion (Glynos, 2014; 180). For Glynos (2014: 182), self-transgression occurs when the subject identifies with an object that “partakes both of ‘reality’ (that is, it points to something in reality ... that is understood to be worthy of our support or condemnation)” but that also unconsciously serves “as a site of ‘fantasmatic enjoyment’ (that is, it assumes a role in the fantasmatic narrative of the subject, and thus the logic of its desire)”.

In Glynos’ (2014) view, subjectivation thus relies on the ‘orthogonality’ or independence between two simultaneous public sector ‘realities’, one signified as epistemologically certain and the other felt as passionately promising, because it has been invested with unconscious desire (Glynos, 2014). In this sense, for him the mastery of signification (for instance, of the signified meaning of ‘quality policy’) and thus the enjoyment of identification always relies on a reference to ‘reality’ despite its inherent impossibility, and the subject is seen as one who faces the Lacanian ‘Real’ of such impossibility by trusting in one of the (epistemological or fantasmatic) ‘realities’ when the other fails. Yet what the analysis in this section shows is that ‘reality’ is not

necessarily a reference for the enjoyment of identification in a public sector context.

In alignment with Lacanian organisational scholars such as McSwite (1997a) and significantly with non-Lacanian organisational scholars such as McGoey (2007) and Binkley (2011), what the data shows is that the public-servant-subject does not desire to know about ‘reality’; his/her enjoyment of identity as a public servant is not marked by a desire for any status or meaning of knowledge. Rather, s/he is engaged in the effort of positivizing his/her self: rendering it impossible or ‘emptying’ it initially, indeed, but only so that it can be repeatedly (re)filled, and then re-emptied and re-filled again, in a positive movement of endless production (Lacan, 2007b; Cremin, 2012). As McGoey points out about the bureaucratic order (2007: 228), elaborating on Luhmann’s work: “when one admits no understanding, one is not pressured to assume any blame”. By appreciating such ‘admission’ as an unconscious one in the analysed data - as an unintended ‘will to ignorance in bureaucracy’ as McGoey (2007) calls it – the role of ‘identification as interruption’ during neoliberal policy implementation is clarified further. Public sector ignorance or ‘making bureaucratic knowledge fail’ serves, in part, to positively prevent or ‘defend’ the public servant from the socio-political impossibilities inherent to neoliberal policing itself (Fotaki, 2006, 2010; Szkudlarek, 2007; Gunder & Hillier, 2009; Glynos, Speed & West, 2015).

Following the insights outlined above, the following section will present the analysis of a final set of narrative themes on policy implementation, one that

illustrates yet another mode of a positive, normalized enjoyment of public servant identity: the enjoyment of bureaucratic work as performative activity.

Performative, productive *jouissance* in public servant identification: on creative improvisation and learning by autonomous professionals.

As argued previously, the analysis of negative *jouissance* during identification, that is to say, the enjoyment of the attachment to imaginary ideal objects that are demonstrated not to be achieved/achievable through symbolic grammar that define them as impossible and always-already lost (i.e. the ‘theft of bureaucracy’), does not saturate the understanding of public-servant-subjectivity. The *jouissance* that animates and regulates public servant identification with policy implementation discourse should also be understood in positive, productive terms, as a repetition of activity in normal everyday life at the bureaucratic workplace.

From the perspective of Lacan’s fourth paradigm of *jouissance* (Miller, 2000), the previous section has shown how the enjoyment of repeated activity can unfold in terms of interruption, as a recurrent process of breakdown and recovery in the narratives through which bureaucratic work is coordinated. Complementing those insights, the present section will draw from Lacan’s fifth paradigm of *jouissance*, conceptualized in later stages of his intellectual

trajectory. From this perspective, the enjoyment of identification is not only found in the ‘gapping’ of interruption (of narratives on bureaucratic work) but also on the enhancement of contemporary professional work, in which features of the working self are seen as ‘producible’ and ‘consumable’; in other words, the enjoyment of identification is found in the constant (entrepreneurial) improvement of the self, in the cumulative emptying and re-filling of its contents. In this sense, identification is assimilated to an attachment to performative activity, through which the re-production and re-consumption of the features of the ‘professional self’ in the bureaucratic context is deployed (Hoedemaekers, 2010).

Accordingly, analysis will foreground how the enjoyment of repeated activity unfolds in terms of the (psychologized) motivation towards autonomous, professional bureaucratic work, particularly as the motivation towards achieving a sustained work performance.

Analysis thus commences with a discussion of what performance can be and how it can be enacted in the bureaucratic structure within which the implementation of policies is set to unfold.

Fundamentally, a concern with performance implies focusing on concrete practices, which cannot be assimilated to the abstract classical, Weberian identity of public sector bureaucracy (at least in the Chilean case), based on law (i.e. legal texts), local rules, stored/storable expert knowledge and hierarchical role prescription and distribution (e.g. du Gay, 2000a). This distinction is precisely what organisational scholar and ergonomist Jacques

Leplat (2004) points to when he differentiates between actual work activity and prescribed work to which such activity is subjected. Following Leplat, actual activity, regardless of how adaptively it unfolds, can be seen as that which exceeds the prescriptions of work. From this perspective, thus, the idea of performance, as connected to positive *jouissance*, should be insisting on distinguishing the design of 'policy' from its 'implementation', as the constitution of both of these relies on discursivity, which could well be interpreted, from a 'negativistic' Lacanian approach, as lacking in *jouissance*, as if it had always been missing a stabilizing meaning (Hoedemaekers, 2010). In order to appreciate *jouissance* as positive, discursivity itself must be analysed in terms equivalent to Leplat's, distinguishing the abstract and prescribed/prescribable from actual, embodied activity. What is at stake, it could be said, is the identity of public-servant-subjectivity when emerging through the performance of a 'labouring' employee; not just one who believes and thus 'serves' an encompassing meaning or hegemonic programme, but one who employs himself/herself to actually produce something bureaucratic and gain embodied *jouissance* in exchange (Lacan, 2007b; Sköld, 2010; Cremin, 2012).

In general terms, the data analysed shows that instances of intense work performance are guided by narratives around the idea of professional autonomy. This type of narrative defines a clear reference for identification – in Freudian terms, an Ideal Ego, which is clearly connected to another stable reference for public servant identity analysed previously: the imaginary figure

of the negotiating boss. In fact, the public servant's depiction of professional autonomy seems to be generated as an imaginary, quotidian consequence of the discourse on 'collaboration' and 'dialogue' represented by the supervisors' attitude. Previously, interviewee quotes served to illustrate how the supervisors' desire to keep away from their roles as 'mere evaluators' was a required step for establishing a so-called "collaborative relationship" and a "permanent dialogue with others". At this point of analysis, this 'keeping away' is explored further, not as an inconsistent or transgressive declaration of 'collaborative' principles, or as a contradiction that interrupts the unification of identity's narration, but as a positive command to perform.

What is assumed is that the 'keeping away' principle must be brought into embodied practice in some concrete way. This dynamic can be found by making a different interpretation of narratives on 'collaboration-dialogue-negotiation', the signification of which occupies a central role in identification, as the analysis made in previous sections demonstrated. From this alternative perspective, the 'negotiators' appear as having to engage in intense programmes for action if the notion of a 'collaborative' bureaucracy is to be substantiated. Signifiers such as 'negotiation' in the public servants' discourse appear to command that some production must occur, stemming from the imaginary possibilities opened up by the supervisory agencies in the public sector. Such a link is clarified in a heartfelt manner by the testimony of implementer Julieta, a direct supervisee of implementation manager Javiera:

“... [the process of implementing the target quality policy] has been complicated, and one thinks, wow, what was the law-maker thinking when he did this? But on the other hand, they are trying to build this from zero, so it’s complicated, there are lots of challenges ... so it’s weird, as you get close to these issues you understand how difficult everything is, but also you get this feeling, you think “wow, why the hell are we not doing things right?”, because here these policies are overlapping each other, there is no dialogue between them ... the successful educational revolutions in the world have been capable of saying “this is wrecked, let’s stop, let’s think, let’s change things and take thirty years to see how it works out, ok?”, but here we don’t do that, there is no dialogue ... there is a sense of impotency, of frustration, as you suffer the editing and filtering of the products that we make, because you can really think about something, research the topic a thousand years, hoping to be able to establish a dialogue with rock-star-type international consultants for instance, but then you hear “yes, but you know their interests, they are not really going to talk about that during the meeting”. I think one could expect bosses editing your stuff heavily in this sense, but I’m lucky to have the boss I have, as there is a lot of affinity between us, I’d say she is courageous, she is not afraid to state the politically incorrect (she laughs), but also we’ve discussed how strategic we have to be (she decreases the volume of her voice), because if we raise the alarms and go scandalous we are going to get aborted (she laughs), so we have agreed that we have to pick our battles. Sometimes we accept to lose little battles if we agree that losing is going to allow us to win what we see as the bigger battle ... She has that double view, I don’t know, both of us can spend the whole weekend working and discussing issues, maybe it’s crazy, maybe the functionary doesn’t do it, she does it, I do it, but she is going to leave early if she has to attend an activity in the children’s school, she is flexible ... that’s how I learned to negotiate. (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

An appreciation of Julieta's words should begin by addressing what is perhaps most prominent in them, namely, their ability to express a sense of resolution and motivation. The former is noticeable in the first half of the quote, while the latter is expressed in the second half. Together, they illustrate the (re)animation of subjectivity in relation to actual work activity, overlooking and forgetting even the inconsistencies of policy implementation, which have been discussed previously in this thesis.

A sense of resolution in Julieta's testimony is related to the ideas of dialogue and collaboration, analysis of which reveals to be supported by supervisors/middle-managers and promoted by them from the top down. When talking about these notions, she is very precise in declaring that actually "there is no dialogue between policies" and that she feels deceived by the bureaucratic authority and their false promises of collaborative work coordination. This is what she means when she states, with affected intonation, that it is likely for public servants to "suffer" through instances of "editing and filtering". Displaying a conviction aligned in part with the 'post-bureaucratic' and managerial values of the neoliberal quality policy she is responsible for implementing (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Morley & Rassool, 2000), she suggests that the intervention of the traditional boss over the situation of the public servant results in an oppressive, unreasonable and ineffective way of coordinating work.

It could be argued that the first half of the quote conveys a state of disappointment and disorientation in Julieta, very close to the despairing tone

of Lucia's fantasy of an enjoyment spoiled by 'politically-interested haste' and the contradictory assumptions present in Feliciano's testimony and many others. However, the first half of the quote actually functions as a base for a subjective position oriented towards the positivity of repeated, persistent work activity. At the beginning, her words aligned with a defensive gesture close to the fantasmatic, Julieta considers that "there is no dialogue" to imply that the problem is outside, at the abstract level of policy design ("what were the law-makers thinking?"). Notwithstanding, once the critique of policy-making is done, she moves on, during the second half of the quote, to show her strong identification with the 'intimate inside' of the relationship between supervisor and supervisee, where a productive capacity resides.

It is the latter transition that gives a sense of motivation to the testimony in the quote. Such vision of the supervisor-supervisee link is much more specific and 'operational' than the one established before, for example, by Feliciano; instead of broad claims about 'motherly examples' and the private sector, Julieta speaks in more accurate terms about "being strategic", prioritising "battles" and 'learning' the know-how of negotiating. By the end of her speech, Julieta seems to be in a different spirit and place than she occupied when she started, one that is oriented and confident towards permanent awareness of the need for persistent action. She finishes her testimony showing a clear, positive sense of pride about what can be done and has been done concretely, implementation-wise, distant from the negative sense of 'regret' she expressed in the beginning. For her, the *jouissance* of 'collaboration-dialogue-

negotiation' is positively at work under the 'bent' or 'flexibilized' rules of their collaborative version of bureaucracy, in a way that gets close to being blatantly excessive. Julieta says: 'my supervisor and I can spend the weekend discussing, maybe it's crazy, the traditional bureaucrat doesn't do it, but we do it". Her remarks about the exceptionality of her boss ('she is courageous, she is flexible, she cares and prioritises') are not there to demonstrate how the totality of the public sector is supposed to be (and fails at being), but rather to provide a 'working model' to motivate quotidian productivity.

At this point, the theme of professional autonomy can be properly appreciated. Julieta's quote, particularly the shift it illustrates from an identification with grammars for negative *jouissance* (i.e. depicting lost and/or stolen objects) to an identification with positive, productive *jouissance*, reveals that the public-servant-subject can also position himself/herself as an autonomous agent, whose existence is sustained by a particular professional engagement. Autonomy is understood here as the capacity to make rules for oneself or to self-govern one's fate: in this particular case, it can be understood, quite simply, as what most interviewees called 'interpreting' the legal text of policy, that is to say, to 'make the policy-law implementation their own', appropriating and re-prescribing them according to what they are able to think and feel. Both the 'resolution' and 'motivation' features in Julieta's quote point to this. She speaks as if she were standing on the firm base of a resolute collaborative negotiation engagement with key bureaucratic agents (the supervisor), emphasizing the way in which such clarity has led to continued

action. Moreover, it is the particular professional link through which supervisor and supervisee recognize each other that matters. For Julieta they are on the same page in relation to the professional abilities and beliefs that implementation work requires; they have ‘affinity’ (i.e. they share criteria) and they ‘agree’ (i.e. they communicate effectively) on how to ‘strategize’ (i.e. planning tasks and monitoring progress). Javiera, Julieta’s supervisor, is explicit in confirming the importance of narratives on ‘the professional’ for the particular mode of identity at hand:

“Just the other day I was thinking, sure, our job with the schools could be easily done -and I don’t want to devalue their profession - by reporting journalists, as the job is about gathering information and organising it. But there is a reason why we are not journalists²⁶, I mean we are, all of us who work in the team, the team that I lead, we are, umm, we have worked in education ... So when we analyse, we are incorporating the experience we have gained into it, in the way in which we choose the consultants, which consultants we choose, maybe a journalist could not distinguish whom to call in relation to a specific task, so I think that experience can be used, not when the proposals are completed of course, but

²⁶ It must be considered here how in the Chilean context it is usual to talk about professions as something that others ‘are’ or oneself ‘is’, as opposed to a degree that has been studied or a process that has been completed, which appears to be the norm in English-speaking contexts. This custom also extends to official, bureaucratic language, such as the one used in the legal system, where subjects are addressed as ‘being’ the profession they studied. Even though these personal callings do not carry the reverential investments that are placed in cultures like the Mexican or the Argentinian (where certain professionals such as lawyers are addressed as ‘doctors’ regardless of whether they are pursuing doctoral degrees), they indicate a major point of symbolic identification. At the level of the imaginary, there is an ontological claim being made each time the profession of an individual is discussed, because at the level of the symbolic (the Other) people are supposed to ‘be’ (i.e. fully and flawlessly identify) with what they declare or others declare they studied. Accordingly, in this case the claim of “not being a journalist” constitutes a major site of identification, revealing key underpinnings of fantasy that the public-servant-subject constructs to support his/her identity.

through a permanent dialogue with others”. (Underlining indicates an increase in the volume of voice and an intensification of its tone).

In the quote, Javiera is eloquent in signalling the importance of the professional and in promoting, in turn, the ‘autonomous’ capacity of public servants. The key significations in her speech, in this sense, are those around the ‘reasons’ that justify the need for certain professionals and the ‘experience’ that these professionals have. In a projective manner, this supervisor proclaims what she thinks they should be professionally without specifying it but rather by stating how other professionals are and how they do not fit into the setting she works under. Crucially, for her, the kind of professional herself and her team should aspire to be is not the ‘journalist’ kind, which can be stereotypically seen as an expert communicator and analyst. Those skills are not enough. What is also required is the ability to ‘choose’ strategically, which is related to some kind of crucial ‘experience’. This ‘experience’ is the hallmark of autonomy, as it is different from the knowledge of a journalist who, smart as s/he might be, is only supposed to provide a report to a judging audience. ‘Experience’ for Javiera is different and special, as it condenses the notion of judging one’s work for oneself and applying, repeatedly, cumulatively and optimally, what has been learned to the next decision. As Hoedemaekers points out (2010: 392), organisational identity

“is not a coherent or even a fragmented narrative, but an iterative cycle of identification and breakdown ... because collusive identity fails, it unconsciously effects the contestation of the self it seeks to posit. The good employee is always already not-good-enough”

From the perspective of Lacan's fifth paradigm of enjoyment (Miller, 2000), compatible with the 'fourth paradigm' perspective discussed in the previous section, the signification of 'experience' can be seen as a part of a process of 'de-subjectivation' (Binkley, 2011) in which the contents that have been attributed to the self are actively 'emptied' so that the enjoyment of a repeated yet humble (i.e. not sacrificial or heroic) 'filling' can take place. Experience only calls for more experience, *ad infinitum*, establishing a grammar that resembles what Cremin (2012) sees as the relentless injunction over the self by the organised/organisable Other taking the place of the Freudian Super Ego. This is a version of the organised/organisable Other whom the public-servant-subject does not see as desiring him/her to idealize and trust on a delimited bureaucratic object. Rather the subject sees the Other as a 'Big Boss' that desires him/her to simply enjoy everything, that is to say, anything, permanently, so that his/her self can be entrepreneurially improved. In this sense, the inherent failure of policy discourse is not articulated in the interruption of identification with implementation narratives, but rather in the gapping of professional autonomy and self-efficacy. As Javiera says, if bureaucratic coordination/collaboration is to be trusted, then the gaining or production of experience must never stop.

Characterising narratives of professional autonomy further, it is most important to note that stories on systematic work exchanges with other professionals (i.e. 'teamworking') were not heard often. Instead, it was frequent to hear public servants emphasizing how the 'collaborative nature' of

the work they performed within the bureaucratic structure was leading to a strengthened sense of individual self-efficacy. There were, as Julieta pointed out, many moments in which supervisors and supervisees stood shoulder to shoulder, planning the tactics for ‘battle’. Yet these moments can be seen as exceptional, punctuating a performance that was usually autonomous in the sense of being driven by self-prescribed (self-adapted) rules. The idea of collaboration enables and complements the idea of professional autonomy insofar as work operates in a back and forth movement between self-driven labour and a reciprocal relationship of constructive critique. In the latter case, the ‘editing and filtering’ of products, according to formal hierarchical logic, is avoided. What stands out, as the quote by Feliciano previously expressed, is the public servants’ enjoyment of their capacity to make decisions on their own: to act wisely, adaptively and effectively without major guidance but the overly broad conviction about policy being somehow purposeful and the effort of work itself being ‘integral’. The signifier ‘experience’, seen in Julieta’s quote, signals the consolidation of this solitary, autonomous modality of working according to public servant discourse, in some cases, up to the point of representing the figure of the supervisor as ‘fortunately absent’. This is what the following quote by Paulina illustrates:

“I mean, I was clear that implementing a new institution, with all the bureaucracy involved, is hard. So I was respectful of the time it took, and patient, I mean I couldn’t, I knew that my division didn’t have a supervisor yet, to this day, we don’t have a supervisor currently, we have only an advisor. But I knew it wasn’t a priority, because also—we have worked, it helps that I have worked a lot on my

own, alone, without needing a constant guide telling me what to do every day. So it wasn't an issue... [we learned anyway], what I've learned here is knowledge for my life, I mean, the opportunities that you--, I'm speaking from a very personal point of view, the opportunities they gave me to accomplish everything I've accomplished, the trust they placed in me, the responsibility they placed in me, they allowed me to carry on, to keep working in what I believe can mobilize the quality system, because for me education is the cornerstone of many of society's problems, so to contribute a tiny grain of sand (she laughs) to improve society according to your beliefs, because I believe in what I'm doing, if I wasn't I would leave. I mean our job is not easy, the working hours are shitty, the bureaucracy also, it, it, it, blocks many passageways, so, normally you have to go on the harder road to achieve what you think is important, if you do not have the motivation then I think it becomes difficult to work here. You might get criticized, but you need to stand back up with your own two legs. I mean, I know I would be much better rewarded elsewhere, that I would be better with a nicer timetable, um, not behind a desk, you know? But I do it, I do it, I do it because I believe in it".

In this quote, the positive disposition towards the execution of work can be seen as exceeding the concerns about establishing a mutual recognition with the supervisor or colleagues. Like most interviewees, Paulina acknowledges the importance of supervisory agents who 'trusted' her and gave her 'opportunities', yet this enablement seems to have provided her with an enormous sense of autonomous intent. Her drive is portrayed as overcoming what she takes to be 'bureaucracy' in its traditional, hierarchical and overly formalized sense, but her focus is not placed on the enabling of autonomy itself (by 'negotiating collaboratively' as the previous section illustrated) but really in the practical opportunities this opens. This engagement with practice is

assimilated in her discourse to a psychological, affective disposition: she foregrounds the idea of an embodied psyche capable of emotion, by insisting on signifiers like ‘belief’, ‘standing up’, ‘legs’, and above all others, ‘motivation’. As a mid-level supervisor points out in the following brief quote, ‘motivation’ is conceived as the engine of autonomous performance, enhancing it up to the point of rendering it able to counteract traditional bureaucratic constraints:

“Look, here I broke prejudice, I had the prejudice that in the public sector people didn’t really work, that they were the horde of the lazy, and it’s not like that, what happens is that in the private sector you say ‘we need a car’ and then you go and get it. Here, you make the decision to buy it but then you have to work for two months to get clearance and move the paperwork. So it’s absolutely ineffective, but what people don’t understand is that there is immense work behind it. In the end, it’s pure bureaucracy, and yeah it’s pure fat, I agree, but there is a lot work involved! (he laughs) And we’ve managed to make things more agile, in some cases we’ve managed to talk with authorities and reduce times to one third, and I like to share those examples with people, ‘hey mate, it’s possible’, the thing is, you don’t have people who are motivated enough, why? Because they don’t see the impact of their performance” (Alberto)

The last quote, with its notions of ‘laziness’, ‘paperwork’ and the ‘fat’ of traditional bureaucracy, re-affirms the imaginary counterpoints established by Paulina around the image of the ‘desk’, perhaps the most common emblem of the traditional bureaucratic order. By using this image, her last phrase gracefully synthesizes the positive *jouissance* that public servants can achieve when embodying, psychically and behaviourally, an autonomous push for

work activity. Following Alberto, this motivated activity would be the opposite of laziness, a kind of positive exercise that would be able to ‘burn the fat’ of traditional bureaucracy. She assures the interviewer that her role has placed her, in fact, ‘behind a desk’, but also that she has managed to make the desk her own; there is something she does, repeatedly, motivated by ‘belief’. Subjectivity, in this case, seems to emerge out of the act of utterance itself: ‘I do it, I do it, I do it’. She positively exceeds (i.e. overcomes) the ‘desk’ of bureaucracy with her motivation for ‘doing’, an un-specific signification of pure action, pregnant with live *jouissance* (Böhm & Batta, 2010: 355).

Paulina’s testimony is vital for characterising the way in which the public-servant-subject invokes notions of professional autonomy to command an embodied impulse for concrete work that can bring positive *jouissance*. Her speech reveals that the kind of *jouissance* that is lived and ‘felt’, emotionally, relies on a psychological construct; a particular knowledge that is considered to confirm the premises of Psychology as a discipline (De Vos, 2009). In order to gain *jouissance* positively, the public-servant-subject ‘psychologises’ his/her own narration, adopting the key signifiers of ‘motivation’ and ‘belief’, coined by psychological (cognition) theorists, as representative of his/her experience²⁷. Following De Vos’ insights (2009), these psychologically-

²⁷ Following De Vos (2009), this implies a discursive procedure in which the interviewed public servants assume the interviewer’s questions to be psychological assessments, perhaps similar to those they describe they had to go through to get their job (and which are ubiquitous as a human resource tool across the public and private sectors). It is as if the public servants were interpreting the interviewer’s question ‘how do you work?’ as the question ‘how do you feel about the work you do?’. This calls for a further characterisation of the organised/organisable Other that guarantees the meaningfulness of public servant speech. The Other, in this particular instance, is a supposed agent who not only proclaims organisation as a solid truth

derived signifiers can be seen as shoring up the mastery to the general signification of professional autonomy, in relation to the implementation of ‘quality’ policy, as able to lead to some enjoyable (i.e. rewarding) embodiment of work activity. The public-servant-subject’s conception of autonomy in this sense is twofold; it is not only a definition of the opportunity for action that arises once the collaborative bureaucracy has been asserted, but also a definition of the outcome of a psychological process, in which the individual body channels psychic states of motivation, conviction (i.e. belief) and perceived self-efficacy. Of course, from the Lacanian perspective this study has adopted, neither psychology nor autonomy are assumed as universal properties of the individual body. Rather, they are seen as effects of contingently mastered significations (Parker, 2014), particularly those intended to mobilize concrete organisational performances within the bureaucratic workplace.

Among the data collected, there are two main narrative variants of professional autonomy that reveal this specific psychologised *jouissance* drawn by public servant subjectivity. One of these thematises the notion of ‘improvising creatively’ in the face of emerging work challenges. The other thematises implementation work as a constant ‘learning’ process, in which individual knowledges and emotional abilities become enriched. Together

but also psychological science. For the public-servant-subject, it becomes a Psychological-Other, one that guarantees that lived experience, including the experience of working to implement policy, is one that contains a psychology, that is to say, a psyche that captures and understands itself as psychic. In this case, such specific characterisation of the Other can be seen as attached to the interpretation of positive *jouissance* in the public servant’s experience.

they portray the fantasy of work performance as positive *jouissance*; simply put, the enjoyment of a job being performed, effectively, through cognitive-emotional activity.

The analysis of the first of these themes, which renders the performance of work as a ‘creative improvisation’, begins by considering what ‘improvising’, as the central action/verb, means for the public servants studied. The following exchange between Feliciano and the interviewer provides plenty of clues in this respect:

“Interviewer: I’d like to ask you about your job, can you tell me a bit about what your job is like?”

Feliciano: OK, my work is pretty chaotic so to speak, because I am a person that has to put out lots of last minute fires regarding a lot of stuff related to the area of design [interviewee laughs], you know? I work on many platforms, I work for inst- -, desi- -, I mean I basically work on the computer but the final products are varied, there are printings, there is web stuff, there is video, there is animation, interactive, PowerPoint, et cetera, um, photo montages, it is like I cover a wide range of work and I’m like the fireman, I mean they have me for the mishaps that arise from one day to the other or for two days’ time and that must be solved promptly, and my work covers stuff related to internal communication, that is to say for example retouching the picture for the executive secretary’s Twitter account and also going through much more elevated stuff like for instance designing infographics or ways of explaining the missions and functions of the agency for different types of audiences and I also work a lot in external communication, meaning like, in issues of, of, of, I don’t know if this is the right word but of merchandising, of, because it’s true the Agency has made exhaustive work in that area because being a new institution it has to position itself, and so

to position itself it has had a great, a great communicational impulse, so I have had to be part of that and design for instance flyers, catalogues, hand-outs, a bunch of stuff also to make the Agency known ... I work basically with organizing, synthetizing and presenting information in a clear way, for different audiences, so as to explain things. This is more or less what I do, I explain things.”

What is striking initially in this passage is the wide variety of contents that are mobilized to fill the space opened by the interviewer’s question about ‘the job’. Feliciano’s speech seems to ramble back and forth about processes, areas and products of work, in search of a stable depiction. The interviewer’s immediate gesture is to declare his job as ‘chaotic’, and he polishes this idea by describing himself, with a passionate tone, as a fireman. At first glance, the latter seems to represent a single stable role that is supposed to deal with a multitude of ‘mishaps’, meaning unexpected and stressful implementation work challenges. Yet the fireman image is denser in its implications. It not only refers, in a more literal sense, to a kind of handyman who serves the community and knows how to work out or ‘put out’ almost any urgent problem; it also refers to a kind of chameleon who is able to render himself useful to deal with ‘different types of audiences’ following the ‘great communicational impulse’ that has taken hold of the organisation he is implementing. The fireman-like implementer in this case appears to embody at least three different types of agency: an office clerk (“I basically work on the computer” with digital products), a sales assistant, which he finds hard to admit yet is clear in its products (“I work in ... I don’t know if this is right word, merchandising ... flyers, catalogues”) and a kind of teacher (“I explain things”).

It is this audacious adaptive capacity, along with 'knowing-how', that conveys the full meaning of the job to be performed. Although initially presented as chaotic, implementation work has certain coherence because there is an individual capacity to manage it: namely, the ability to improvise. The public servant in this case is one who knows how to improvise, not just in terms of responding and anticipating to the unexpected, the things a fireman is commonly expected to do, but also in the sense of a stage actor, whose role is to conjure multiple facets. Above all, the improviser is one who has renounced the scripting of his activity; improvising equates to the ongoing effort of performing differently, and it can only prevail by an embrace of the new, of the renewal of activity. It can be as Feliciano says modestly, 'explaining things', but constantly updating the explanatory style. Yet it is mostly like a real fireman's disposition: an agent who is psychologically always aware and ready to act, and who is able to control his/her composure under a variety of physical and social interactions.

Later on, however, Feliciano qualifies this 'fireman's job' of improvising further. For him, what improvising entails is the work of creativity:

Interviewer: What you said, like, this description you made about putting out fires, it gives me the idea that there might be an idle moment and then a call is received and it is like the alarms go off.

Feliciano: "Right, right. The rhythm of work gets very disrupted and this is something that bothers me personally very much because, yes, I think that, the, the, when-- things have to appear in my mind basically, it's not like I have to do something concrete at first, it's like, like I have to come up with a way to do this,

or present information in a certain way, so you are involved in a creative process, and suddenly, you, the creative process, you go forward and then you go backwards, then you move forward a bit and then you realize the things you did are not so good, you go back and you are pulling out line on the rod all the time, and the thing is that suddenly you manage to get involved and start working and straighten yourself up and the matter starts working and we are told “stop everything, this came up, we have to deliver tomorrow, it’s urgent”, so the process starts again from zero ... but the thing that is important is that there are many hands and eyes that provide feedback about what one does, not only the direct boss but also my boss’ boss, then the chief boss, then the people from the Ministry, then people from the Educational Council, because considering the system is mixed, there are things that affect all of those involved ... there is stuff that must be changed constantly because of decisions taken by people one does not even know, one receives the instruction and has to start thinking how to perform”.

The way in which Feliciano qualifies the improvising work of ‘going forward and then backwards’ is very clear. For him, being put in a position where he has to ‘come up with ways to do things’ implies that he is already ‘involved in a creative process’, to the point of being completely reduced to it. Crucially, as he mirrors himself when speaking to the interviewer he says ‘you, the creative process, you move’, assimilating subjectivity to the psychological process of thinking (‘things have to appear in my mind’) in a way that is new and different in relation to other traditional ways to solve performative tasks. The imaginary that the signification of ‘creativity’ commands suggests that such ‘psychology at work’ is centrally an embodied process, not an abstract one but a physical one. Just like Paulina and Alberto before him used signifiers like ‘standing up

with one's legs' and 'fat', Feliciano emphasizes how improvisation emerges when the creative process is honed by the 'hands and eyes' that provide feedback. For these public servants there seems to be something very concrete and material at stake in the work they call 'performative'. While acknowledging an attachment to the traditional features of bureaucracy (for instance Feliciano's valuation of hierarchy in the chain of 'hands and eyes'), they consider it distant from the abstract, lawyer-driven process of designing policy texts (which soon end up amounting to piles of 'paperwork'). For them it is closer to what, in Julieta's terms, could be seen as a 'battle' requiring permanent performative engagement (like working on weekends for instance).

As suggested above, the concrete 'battlefield' is not so much about group work but about individual, autonomous labour, particularly taking place at the level of the 'motivated' mind. As Feliciano summarizes it: 'there is stuff that must be changed constantly ... one receives the instruction and has to start thinking how to perform'. Professional autonomy becomes enjoyable when it delimitates and enables a space and time for the mind to improvise creatively; in other words, when it 'comes up' with something new, and more importantly, effective, like a fireman facing a fire. Even though scripts, procedures and systems are defined and trained, each 'fire' requires inventive action. And while there is some time for heroism and/or regret, a good fireman, to the studied public servants' eyes, is one who is always-already busy preparing, mentally and physically, for the next 'fire'.

A total reversal of *jouissance* can be appreciated in this, as the subject moves from identifying the negative of satisfaction, that is to say, with an un-realized ideal, to identifying with the performative, positive side of satisfaction — satisfaction re-invented. From the Lacanian perspective of this study, such reversal depends on the way in which a particular signification is mastered, that is, put to mean something by enchaining it with a central or nodal representation; in other words, it depends on how a narrative on the bureaucratic workplace where policy becomes implemented is seen as guaranteed in its meaningfulness and validity by the central representation of ‘quality’ policy. A fascinating contrast can be established in this regard when comparing the abovementioned use of the signifier ‘coming’ by Feliciano with the use that Lucia gives to the same signifier in the following two quotes:

First quote:

“Yes, we’re really confused, we’re not sure how to report [quality learning standards] to school teachers. Sadly, because, I mean, one has the need... you know, to know the audience so that we can tell what it is they don’t understand, what it is that they are missing, and how to guide them better, I mean, it’s not like we know that, but at least we need to start thinking. And this happens I think because we’ve grown too fast, and there are lots of ideas, and the machine is running too fast, and with products, products, products, and we have to come out there and meet the public eye, I don’t know, so a process of reflection has not happened”.

Second quote, one minute later:

“Finally, my professional judgement doesn’t, my professional judgement is annulled (she laughs expressing discouragement), it’s annulled because I end up writing what they say in the last minute, so it’s like go, go, go, I go like that, because we have to do, we have to come out quickly, because the decisions were made just now, and there is little time to, to do reflective work. (11 second pause) Yes, because we have to come out there, the machine...”

Comparing these words by Lucia and Feliciano’s quote on the ‘creative process’ reveals how public servant discourse can be used to direct the subject’s desire into very different, supplementary versions of *jouissance*, one negative and the other positive. Specifically, the comparison reveals how *jouissance* can be geared differently according to the ways in which a central or nodal signifier is mastered by another (chain of) signifier(s). In this case, the signifier at stake is ‘coming’. Uttered originally in Spanish as ‘salir’, the meaning the Chilean public servants assign to this signifier can be legitimately translated to English²⁸ both as ‘coming up’ or ‘creating’ (Feliciano’s use) and as ‘coming out’ or ‘exposing one’s ideas’ (Lucia’s use). Despite the fact that these two uses of the ‘coming’ signifier give way to different narrative senses, it is fair to say that both gain their traction by being closely associated with a central, contingent signification invoking a stable, universal meaning. In this case, it is the signification of ‘coming’, which is associated with the need for the purposeful implementing or the ‘making’ of bureaucracy, in an autonomous way. The crucial aspect to keep in mind is how different ways of

²⁸ The literal translation ‘salir’ to English is ‘to exit’ or ‘to get out’, but its colloquial use in the studied Chilean context is perfectly equivalent to the use given in English to the phrasal verbs ‘come out’ and ‘come up’.

associating and indeed mastering this central signification, that is to say, the different ways to claim validity over its meaning (and exemplify it), can produce different modes of subjective striving for *jouissance*.

On the one hand, as discussed in previous sections, Lucia talks about ‘coming out’ as implementing too hastily and not allowing enough time for bureaucracy to be ‘made’ properly. For her, there is no time for a reflective process to take place, because the ‘machine is running too fast’, pushing for one product after the next, rather blindly (‘go, go, go’). As a professional, she declares to be annulled, and it is as if she enacted her grievance about this annulment by interrupting, rather sacrificially, her ‘professional testimony’ to the interviewer with eleven seconds of silence. (This is a different type of silence than the ‘interruptive’ one analysed in the previous section; it is one that is found in the ‘minute of silence’ that people make in homage to the departed; in other words, the silence that marks loss). Overall, the signifier ‘coming’ is in Lucia’s case enchainé to a narrative on negative *jouissance*, the *jouissance* that is impossible. The signifier’s function, when uttered, is to foreground the lack of a well-made bureaucracy. In Lucia’s terms, implementation is not (yet) what public servants desire it to become; currently, it is merely a ‘machine’ that forces professionals to relentlessly and pointlessly ‘come out’ with work. Having to ‘come out’ according to Lucia’s articulation means to be stripped from bureaucracy’s fullness, to suffer the loss (or the stealing by a hindering agent) of the ‘delayed’ time to do good policy implementation work.

Yet on the other hand Feliciano talks about ‘coming up’ as an autonomous effort that enables and strengthens ‘professional judgement’, up to the point of prompting concrete implementation actions. From this perspective, although the one and same policy implementation challenge is being discussed by both Feliciano and Lucia, the focus changes completely. Emphasis is no longer placed on the dilemma of implementation being ‘full’ or ‘empty’; it is rather placed on the fact that some implementation is being done, particularly, through the emotional-motivational work of ‘thinking’. Implementing policy is in this sense equated to the positive *jouissance* of identifying with the implementation of the performing, embodied self; as Julieta expressed it: ‘I do it, I do it, I do it’. In order to enjoy a professional identity, a valid implementation role in a ‘real’ implementation initiative, the I-self-Ego agency, is supposed to guide and emotionally motivate itself (as an inner proto-psychologist) to ‘doing’ and particularly ‘thinking’, not through the collective ‘we’ but through the autonomous and entrepreneurial ‘I’ (usually mirrored in the interviews by the use of the ‘you’ pronoun). Indeed, this is what Feliciano meant, his words infused with identificatory intent: ‘you the creative process ... go forward and backwards ... you start working and straighten yourself up ... and then start from zero again’.

The comparison outlined above between Lucia’s negative mode of identification and Feliciano’s positive mode of identification illustrates the decisive yet divergent effect that a master signification can have over public servant experience. The central policy implementation signifiers (in general,

the signification of 'quality') that anchor their identificatory process can be seen as accomplishing distinct experiences of satisfaction; one (Lucia's) emphasizing the longing or desire for the ideal bureaucratic object that has been revealed as lost (or stolen), in the hope that its recovery is guaranteed/guaranteeable, the other (Feliciano's) emphasizing the positive production of temporary and failure-prone renditions of the object (what Lacan called 'semblant', Grigg, 2015) whose fragility and repeated breakdown and re-appearance (what Lacan called 'object little-a') serves to shore up the constancy of desire (Hoedemaekers, 2010). The shift between them, as the comparison shows, is clear but also subtle, and together the two sides work to make the other emerge. As Stavrakakis points out (2008), the definition of one calls for the definition of the other in the organisational domain, yet they entail very different interpretations of the bureaucratic organisation of policy. The former encourages the (potential) enjoyment that is impossible to achieve while the latter pushes for the positive re-signification of commands (akin to the Freudian Super Ego) that calls for the endless excess of (entrepreneurial) activity and self-involvement in State administration.

What the data indicates in this case is that any interpretation of discourse (which for Lacan, 2007b, would be about acts of social linkage and not just text) should pay close attention to the way in which master significations hinge on both of these lines of subjective elaboration, gearing the flow of desire from negative to positive enjoyments. Analysis shows that this shifting operates by taking advantage of the inevitable coincidences in the network of signifiers

through which discursivity unfolds (i.e. the symbolic). From a Lacanian perspective, it is assumed a priori that a signifier like 'coming' will reveal to have no stable (universal) meaning but that which is contingently mastered by one mode of subjectivation, yet the way in which central signifiers reveal their mastery to the interpreter through their strange repetition in public servant discourse, opens, at the same time, windows to behold the 'discarding of the past by the progress of the new' and the 'frustration or spoiling of the new by the loving attachment to the past'. There is thus an interpretive choice in reading these repetitions. They could be regarded as attachments to traditions stabilized long ago, that is, as fantasmatic grammars to articulate negative satisfaction, or as compulsions to produce and consume renditions of the new, that is, as interruptive or performative grammars to articulate positive satisfaction.

Following Lacan's conceptualization of a 'fifth paradigm' of enjoyment closely (Miller, 2000), the analysis conducted so far in this section interprets public servant subjectivity no longer as enacting repetition in terms of the 'insistence' of unconscious desire; for instance, when a 'slower' bureaucracy appears to be advocated by using the signifier 'coming' across diverse narratives. It interprets public servant subjectivity as also indicating repetition in terms of the production of an affective experience against the backdrop of negativity that engenders desire itself (Kenny, 2012).

Surely, the iteration of the signifier 'coming' raises some feelings of frustration ('there is little time for reflection'); a reaction that would indicate a desire for

a non-hasty 'making' of bureaucracy. Yet these feelings appear to be fleeting and appear not to get a grip on the public-servant-subject's soul, as if Lucia's long pause, offered in homage to the loss/theft of her 'bureaucratic time', was really too long to be simply an expression of sadness (indeed, eleven seconds is an excessive amount of 'discursive time'). As the data shows, these narratable emotions are overwhelmed by an affective intensity or anxiety about concrete issues, an embodied stance that ignites a desire to engage in constant work performance so as to actively and adaptively fix anything that might have been wrong. Feliciano's speech, with its emphasis on the 'psychological' motivation for performance, best foregrounds this affective edginess that repetition as a positive satisfaction entails. In the case of his speech, there is undoubtedly an 'insisting coincidence', as he is too worried about 'coming out' to face an evaluation of his 'creativity' by the same agents that evaluated and 'stole' Lucia's work. Above, though, there is in his speech an indication of the repeated, incessant experience of 'improvising', in which his own embodied capacity to think and feel is enjoyed as pure performance of work.

The consideration of this repeated enjoyment of the psychological in narratives on 'creative improvisation' helps bring out the second narrative strand through which the idea of 'professional autonomy' is realized. This narrative revolves around the experience of 'learning'.

Essentially, the idea of learning evokes a positive appropriation of the outcomes of a repeated effort to improvise creatively. As such, it could be seen

as the enhancing complement of improvisation. While improvisation pushes for the awareness of and the re-production of the future, learning pushes for an awareness of what improvisation has previously generated, so that future improvisations are carried out with greater effectivity. In this sense, the idea of learning is conceived as the highest form of positivization of *jouissance* at the level of embodied, psychological performance. It goes beyond the motivation and creativity that autonomous professional improvisation entails. In public servant discourse, the identification with narratives on learning is about a kind of superior process of the psychological self, which is able to take those capacities, distil what is good in them as they are performed, and then hone them to a greater degree of enjoyable effectiveness. For the public servants studied, learning is not just about evaluating and changing courses. It is about ‘the capacity to improve the capacity to improve’, that is, about being able to monitor and correct, with emotional sensitivity, the ongoing process of adaptive performance.

A richer appreciation of the learning narrative can begin by paying attention to the following evaluation of an implementation challenge by Feliciano:

“As part of the graphic design team, I had to create an infographic piece in which the whole process of constant quality improvement was explained through ... one image that accounted for the whole educational system. And to do that you not only have to make it look good, you also have to have a way to put everything into a graphic, get it? And you have to make it understandable, not too detailed but also not oversimplified. So twelve versions of the infographic piece were made, one was made by me alone, the first one, and I got lots, lots of corrections, from

my colleagues and supervisor. They said it looked untidy and simplistic, and I said ok, you're right, I'm going to change it, and I did ... but they pointed out that I had used a metaphor that was industrial, as I explained the process of constant improvement in schools using images of machines. And it was a great communicational mistake, you know, comparing an educational process with a factory process. That is bad you know, it's ugly and kind of like [the movie] *The Wall* [by the band Pink Floyd], and I thought they were right, that it was all very reasonable, so we changed everything and went to the opposite, we explained the educational process using the image of plants ... I mean, education is a sensitive subject and government is also a sensitive subject, it's strange because the government has a very rigid graphic concept, a code, we're all normed by it, what we create has to comply with it ... but following the government's graphic standard all the time is a mistake, because we need our autonomy, we have to start from some graphic base but we try to push the boundaries, we need to propose new things, each of us has to have their own seal, I don't know if we will succeed, but that's the intention ... In the case of the infographic piece, we stumbled upon a conceptual problem, a serious problem, we could have suffered if we had compared education to machines, that was basically my fault, you know, I was so naïve, I didn't think that behind that idea was a horrifying picture, and we are very visible you know, there are lots of eyes fixed on us, you get the government's eyes, worried about pulling this thing through, and our own eyes, our own self-discipline, our vision about our work."

This insightful account of a work episode by Feliciano functions as a moral on the importance of learning. The testimony accomplishes this by showing how the narrative of learning emerges as a consequence of the narrative elements focused on creative improvisation. The passage discusses the production of an infographic piece as an instance in which the implementer is supposed to deal

with the enormous pressure of representing the ‘whole educational system’ and the dynamic of quality improvement that recent policy prescriptions have included therein. At first, the implementer is shown as capable of ‘improvising creatively’, after he presents a working solution to his fellow implementers and supervisor. Later, however, the story shifts its focus to the issue of learning, as Feliciano portrays himself as someone who is not only committed to performing responsively but also and crucially to honing his craft as he transitions from one performance to the next. The central portion of the story revolves around this issue, embodied by the change in the concept behind the infographic piece, from a ‘machinery’ metaphor to the ‘less industrial’ metaphor of plants.

The whole of his performance, as a way to draw positive *jouissance* from implementation efforts, is thus shown to be twofold. His energy is not only fully engaged in ‘doing’ something autonomously to synthesize education in one sensitive image. He is also committed to affirming his professional autonomy in accordance with what ‘his own eyes’ see of his own performing, that is to say, in accordance with a ‘self-discipline’ that allows one to have one’s own creative ‘seal’ while keeping maximum implementation effectiveness (in this case, of an explanatory type). Overall, he does not seem to ‘waste time’ being concerned with the relative failure of a creative attempt to push the boundaries. For him, full autonomy means to stop being naïve and to learn from mistakes, using them as a kind of fuel to keep working through implementation.

Learning in this sense implies the further consolidation of professional autonomy as a push for positive, productive satisfaction beyond the lack or the negative in policy implementation discourse. This is best expressed perhaps by the particular way in which Feliciano approaches the shortcomings of the first infographic piece he produced. It is striking to see how the public servant, when discussing how his machinery metaphor resembled Pink Floyd's 'The Wall', is able to acknowledge the 'political interests' that put pressure on him and made him rush what would otherwise be a gradual 'making' of bureaucratic work. Clear signs of the negative could be seen there. It would have been fair to say that the implementation of product design was more or less 'pure improvisation' (twelve versions and many corrections were made) and that the lack of standards and a general vision led somewhat to the annulment of the implementers' professional judgement, as Lucia proposed. Yet Feliciano managed to keep away from any such narrative and to use instead a psycho-social concept to account for the critiques against the politically incorrect infographic rendition based on 'The Wall' machines; namely, the concept of 'communication'²⁹. For him, the moral of the story is that creative improvisation has to comply with good communication skills, including careful conceptualization. From this standpoint, what is enjoyable is the certainty of an increasing capacity to learn how to communicate better.

²⁹ The repetition of signifiers across public servant speeches is again decisive here. *Jouissance* is not signified as the lack of good bureaucracy generated by a manic work 'machine', or by the 'machination' of opportunistic political agents. Rather, it is signified as the ability to communicate the industrial shape of the standardization of quality as something more organic and humane, learning each time how to better reach audiences according to their preferences.

As Feliciano points out, this implies performing in each improvisation instance an interweaving of one's own creativity (the 'seal') with the non-political standards of 'communication' in the public sector.

It is important to note, however, the role that the narrative on learning plays in articulating the excess of *jouissance* that the intensity of work performance brings forth in the public-servant-subject's experience. This is a reference to what Stavrakakis (2008) called 'limit experiences': instances in which the 'affective fact' of desiring, not the lack of the object desire specifies, is realized, but also where the excessive push to persist in the re-attempting satisfaction leaves desire at the brink of losing the connection with the symbolic (and its inherent lack) that regulates its animation.

From a Lacanian perspective based on the 'fifth paradigm of enjoyment' (Miller, 2000), such is the fundamental problem of subjectivation. The problem is not the relation that the subject establishes with any conception of 'reality' (for instance, the features of 'post-bureaucratic' reality). It is rather the relation with the mode of discursivity that contemporary efforts of organisation deploy under a capitalist political economy, based on the endless production and consumption of branded commodities underpinned by the accumulation of the value that is exploited from human activity (Lacan, 2007b). As Miller points out (2000: 28) in relation to Lacan's 'fifth paradigm', the positive enjoyment of identification, such as expressed by narratives on 'organisational learning', has become a proper 'discursive *jouissance*':

"Prior to the fifth paradigm there's always been, first the description of the structure, of the articulation of the signifiers, of the Other, of the dialectics of the subject, and then in a second movement, the question dealt with finding how the living being, the organism, libido, were captured by the structure. The innovation brought with the notion of discourse is the idea that the relation signifier/*jouissance* is primal and underived. Here Lacan underscores the value of repetition as repetition of *jouissance*"

What the analysis of narratives on learning reveals in this case is that enjoyment is directly found in signifying the activity of discursivity itself, not in the transcendental plane of meaning that discourse is able to represent. Enjoyment is thus seen not as outside discourse but rather totally inside it, intertwined in every one of its gestures. From this perspective, the mediation or 'derivation' of the organised/organisable Other between the means of (unconscious) desire, the signifier, and satisfaction is eclipsed in its operation, leading the public-servant-subject to seek an answer about his/her identity, and thus about his/her satisfaction in the bureaucratic environment s/he inhabits, directly the immediate affective fact of his/her self. The subject speaks to his/her self directly, without pausing to let the social authority of the Other be heard, and trusting instead in the scientific facticity of the psychology that has evidenced the functioning of his 'learning mind'. Significantly, as Parker (1995) has insightfully observed, even psychoanalytic knowledge has become part of this discursive *jouissance*, configuring what he calls a 'discursive complex' or what in the context of this organisational study could be called the 'professional autonomy complex', in which narratives on

‘autonomy’, ‘motivation’, ‘creative adaption’ and ‘learning’ provide discursive ‘psy’ templates for identification and enjoyment.

What is crucial is that the psychologization (and ‘psychoanalytization’) of subjectivity, prompted by the entrepreneurial subjectivation of neoliberal policy discourse (Binkley, 2011), allows the re-attachment of the enjoyment of identity to the ‘infinity’ of discourse. In simpler terms, this is the ‘infinity’ of learning: the capacity to re-invent the self by the affective-material manipulation (i.e. the acting, the speaking) of signifiers (‘we need to propose new things, each of us has to have their own seal ... our own eyes, our own self-discipline”). For the working policy implementer it is impossible not to learn more, and so the everyday discursivity that accomplishes bureaucratic work, particularly intellectual or cognitive work, becomes a ‘limit experience’ in Stavrakakis’ terms: the affective (mental, embodied) process of autonomous learning becomes the sole source of repeated satisfaction and repeated overload (Fleming, 2012; Berardi, 2009). The following testimony by Julieta provides further insight into this:

“Here it’s important to be really involved in several issues, but also to take some healthy distance to not go crazy or depressed ... so these are emotional skills that one treasures, I mean, in previous jobs like this I learned to negotiate, and to be strategic, and to be selective, I mean, learning to prioritize things is so important in this scenario where everything is a major thing, so then, let’s prioritize, let’s choose, you know, ‘trying to give our best’ is something that brings cognitive despair, because it sounds a bit condescending, a bit mediocre, although I know it’s also realistic, I mean if I wanted to do everything here I couldn’t, and every other place would be like that as well, so I sometimes think ‘wow, I’ve had the

chance to work in great places, to learn a lot', but always this unrest comes, like maybe I'm not learning anything anymore, or maybe I don't have an impact anymore, so I sometimes wonder, if it's possible to find a great job or not. It depends a lot on how you live your life, also on the place your job has in your life, also in the vital cycle your life is in, but also I think it is very healthy, understanding that a job is a job, a job is not a life, because if this was life, um, it would be maybe frustrating I think."

In this passage, Julieta seems to be playing with the idea of losing her mind or being overwhelmingly confused. This could be observed in other interviews where public servants complained bitterly about overworking and disorganisation practices during implementation, but her speech shows a feature distinct from all others. She is not only telling an explicit story about emotional strains; ultimately, her pattern of speech is not really coherent, in other words, she enacts the confusion as she speaks. What does she speak about the most? She speaks about learning. The quote itself functions like a brief sample of how positive, productive *jouissance* infuses her identificatory experience.

In line with the general narrative on professional autonomy, she begins articulating the idea of honing a psychological capacity in order to deal concretely with implementation, particularly the capacity to learn. Then she articulates the idea that learning must involve a command for constant work performance, in order to avoid the mediocrity of 'giving one's best'. Up to this point, *jouissance* is still well-articulated: it is not a question of wanting to do what is best or worst, but rather about 'doing', about 'prioritising' to 'keep

doing'. However, by the end of her speech she starts digressing strongly from the previous articulation and speaks in a way that resembles what psychologists call 'depersonalization' or 'derealisation', that is to say, in such a way that she does not seem to 'be in herself'. Crucially, she speaks with great awareness of her own psyche, taking the subjective position of a psychologist and using psychological (and psychoanalytic) signifiers ('it's important to take some 'healthy distance' to not go 'crazy' or 'depressed' ... so these are 'emotional skills' that one treasures ... it depends on the 'vital cycle') while simultaneously going into a deeper state of 'tired confusion'.

Learning as a positive satisfaction, based on the productivity of discourse itself, thus is revealed to be closely linked with the tolls taken by overworking in a flexibilized bureaucracy. It is the way in which the subject finds something rewarding, the capacities or contents learned, amidst the constant 'battling' to 'make' something bureaucratic out of the command for (neoliberal) policy implementation. Yet at the same, it is the way in which the subject enters into a spiral of incessant awareness, thinking and performing, as the following quote by supervisor Ivana illustrates:

"Every day there's a lot of stuff, little things, and another, and another, people asking 'how do I do this?', 'what about this transparency form?', so I speak to the judiciary department, OK and so I say 'how are we going to deal with this bulletin?', 'OK, here is a problem, I want to check this problem out, this bulletin that's going to be delivered, people at schools won't understand this number here, they don't understand what percentile is', so I have to explain to them what a percentile is, so we have to add a training session in the project, 'how do we make

them understand?', then I meet with researchers, and I don't have a clue yet why we have to meet, what I can contribute to them, I am meeting with them, I have interviews, also to do some public relations, so that they feel the institution is there for them. So I have to know a lot of things, you know? So, the famous quality standards forms, and defining indicators, I've had to learn these things more, like now it's, that thing, I think that's my expertise, coming to a place, not understanding and then saying to myself 'I am going to learn this', how the machine works, how tests work, how psychometrics works, you know for tests, how sociologists work, because I was never taught that ... all these things have levels, little tasks, that saturate the day, and that make me skip my lunch, I don't have lunch anymore, I bring a salad, something quick, a couple of days I escape to have lunch with my kids in a nearby café, but it doesn't work really ... what I try is, 'what are the things that need me really', I try to know which stage they are going through, all these lines of production, so every day I take notes, I mean, I have to organise, because in my head I can do it, but I say 'well, I have to write down why' ... I try to distribute, and I pay attention to this and that, and it comes to the moment to meet, and then I say 'ok, I am going to have an entire evening, and I stay until I have cleared everything' ... It's like, I think, what's coming weeks ahead, otherwise I am not able to afford it. And I can't really."

It could be said that Ivana's quote stands as the definitive illustration of the 'limit-experience' of (positive) enjoyment that public servants experience when they are commanded to implement policy, that is to say, to organise it, in the public sector bureaucracy.

This can be argued based on the striking features of Ivana's speech, the most salient of which is the immense discursive movement between narrative objects. In frenetic rhythm, Ivana lets the interviewer know about the

multitude of things that occupy her mind and call for her performative response. She describes how bureaucratic objects like ‘bulletins’, ‘forms’ ‘percentile indexes’ and ‘supervisory meetings’ appear in her everyday work and configure a ‘machine’ which she is not sure she is able to ‘operate’ (‘I might not be able to afford it, I really can’t’) because she does not have the know-how (‘I have to know a lot of things you know?’). She declares that she copes with the massive amount of tasks by taking action, ‘checking things’, ‘meeting’ with researchers, ‘speaking’ to a department and/or ‘explaining’ procedures to supervisees. Moreover, she identifies with the diversity of voices that populate the bureaucratic space while running the policy implementation ‘machine’; she impersonates other people’s performance of work, speaking on their behalf and thus identifying with their embodied engagement with work (‘how do I do this?’). Amidst all of this there seems to be only a compulsion to permanent disorganized production, or ‘entropy’ as Miller calls it (2000), an overworking dynamic that takes Ivana up to the point of near exhaustion or stress (‘I don’t have lunch anymore’, ‘I stay until I have cleared’, ‘I really can’t afford it’). Yet this entropy manages to be re-produced or ‘repeated’ according to a minimal principle of self-regulation: Ivana’s self-injunction to learn (‘I am going to learn this’).

Ivana’s identification with the idea of learning, standing out with all clarity in the middle of the quote, is exemplary in illustrating the attachment of public servant subjectivity to the endlessness of performative, productive activity as a source of positive satisfaction. The most interesting feature of her approach

to learning as a performance regards her understanding of work as a fundamental dialogue with her-self, in which she is supposed to evaluate her current capacity to perform in psychological (cognitive) terms. Even though at the beginning of the quote she seems concerned with traditional features of impersonal Weberian bureaucracy, such as hierarchy (supervision), rules and documentation, and also with leading collaborative work (“how are we going to deal with this?”), half way into the quote she speaks as if all work was reduced/reducible to an exercise of introspective reflection. She associates the workings of quality to an ‘expertise’ in that reflexivity, the outcome of which is learning (‘I say to myself, I am going to learn this’).

Once this particular subjective position has been signified, the entirety of bureaucratic work seems to be re-invented anew. After she defines herself as a learner, performing in a learning mode, she can understand everything, including bureaucratic coordination (‘the machine’), bureaucratic objects (‘the tests’), rules and methodologies (‘psychometrics’) and professional agents (‘sociologists’). Above all, in her immense productive capacity as a ‘learner’, Ivana is alone with herself, enjoying her total professional autonomy as it is sustained by her psychologization of her-self. Every day she ‘takes notes to organize’, she says, but wants to be very specific in conveying this effort of organising to the interviewer: she needs to know how her ‘head’ is able to work well, she has to ‘write down why’ her mind is capable. Following De Vos’ insights (2009: 228), Ivana can be seen as invoking a unifying scientific, psychological gaze in order to define her identity and legitimize her position

in a constant “movement of self-dramatization”. She occupies a position from which she can say to herself ‘now that you know, how do you feel? What have you learned?’ Learning is how she ‘makes herself’ as a public servant within the bureaucratic structure. As a public servant, Ivana occupies the ‘subject position’ of a facilitator/counsellor of her own psychological process (De Vos, 2009; Binkley, 2011; Parker, 2014); in the terms used in the studied case, the position of a ‘collaborative, pro-autonomy supervisor’ of her own entrepreneurial process of learning how to ‘make’ or organise bureaucratic work.

* * *

Overall, as the analysis of Ivana’s speech integrally conveys, this section on positive, performative *jouissance* has shown the intense attachment public servants establish to narratives/objects of professional autonomy as expressed through creative improvisation and constant learning.

The general idea of securing and maintaining an autonomous professional status has been revealed to be linked in public servant discourse to the idea of possessing an individual and collective capacity to sustain bureaucratic performative activity, specifically the kind of activity that indicates a recurring and seemingly endless process of reflection, like creative improvisation and learning. This interpretation of autonomy, in turn, reveals a particular positive take on the general idea of the (hybridized) ‘making’ of bureaucracy following the command for neoliberal, ‘post-bureaucratic’ policy implementation, which has been placed as the central analytic problem throughout this thesis

(Carboni, 2010). Such analysis does not situate the ‘making’ of bureaucracy negatively, as a process of organisation that could have been conducted with ideal (i.e. sublime) effectivity if it had not been impeded or ‘stolen’ by intrusive ‘political’ agents. Rather, analysis situates the ‘making’ of bureaucracy as an excessive, frenetic push for work activity in which ideal representations or meanings about the policy command seem to have been, at best, blurred, and bureaucratic discursivity itself seems to have been reduced or eroded to pure affective intensity at the level of public servant experience. While in the previous section such affective intensity was appreciated as the interruption of meaningfulness (i.e. ‘sense’) in reports of coordinated, collaborative public servant work, in this section it has been appreciated as the relentlessness of a critique of public servant self in order to optimize the adaptive engagement with the performance of work.

In general terms, what this section illustrates is that the command of policy over the organisational structure of the public sector requires public servants to identify with the ‘pure repetitiousness’ or positivity of their experience of bureaucratic work; in other words, the fact that they keep doing work, and consuming it quickly in order to produce it again, better, so that they do not dwell on articulating a purpose for policy. Consequently, this section contributes insights to the chapter’s main assumption, posited by Stavrakakis (2008), about the need for ‘limit-experiences’ of embodied satisfaction that can sustain the inherently un-satisfactory discursive articulation of ‘fantasy projects’ like that of an equality-generating, quality-assured public

governance of education, which the studied (neoliberal) policy pursues on behalf of an overwhelming multitude of social demands (Fotaki, 2010; Hoggett, 2006).

In a way, the analysis of experiential testimonies in this section shows that public servants cannot help but to develop a subjective state of 'manic defence' (Winnicott, 1958) in which 'a flight toward reality', in this case the reality of performative bureaucratic work, is sought rather desperately in order to prevent contact with an internal world 'contaminated' by the massive social anxieties that the contemporary bureaucratic workplace has come to 'contain' (Hoggett, 2006; Fotaki, 2010).

Yet this section and the chapter as a whole suggest more than that. They indicate that the command for policy implement is calling for an incessant and excessive 'creative destruction' of the coordinates of bureaucratic reality altogether, including the selves of public servants developed therein. They suggest that there is little room for the realities of discursive articulation, except for the technocratic discourse that calls relentlessly for the optimal re-implementation of bureaucratic performance. This is something not dissimilar to the injunction given by the International Monetary Fund's Managing Director Christine Lagarde to officials working for a Public Administration (the Greek State) in a similar 'path to development' to the Chilean State: "implementation, implementation, implementation!" (Lagarde in Stavrakakis, 2014: 46).

What the data analysis conducted in this chapter indicates, and what Lagarde's words express dramatically (for Greeks and Chileans alike), is that the symbolic mediation between the public servants actual experience and the imaginary narrations or depictions they construct in their coordination of bureaucratic work seems to have been suppressed or at least reduced to an inefficacious minimum. What is being argued with this is not that there is not a symbolic network (i.e. language) prescribing and regulating the organisation of the bureaucratic anymore, since the discursive network of policy or what Ball (2008:1) has called 'educational policy-speak' is, according to the data analysed, fully operative in the public servants' discursive construction of self-representations. Rather, what is being argued is that the symbolic network of policy, which indeed operates in public servant discourse, is no longer being construed by the public-servant-subject as arranged/arrangeable into a guarantee or promise of bureaucratic meaningfulness, that is to say, no longer construed as if a 'secret meaning' or 'transcendental purpose' of bureaucratic work had been ciphered or hidden in its many prescriptions. Thus, what is being argued, in light of the data analysed, is that the function of the symbolic network of policy discourse in the experience of the public servant is just to allow the repetition or 'refreshing' of its own discursive components, letting the subject enjoy a compulsion towards the iteration of the execution of work tasks because of their 'pure novelty' (the novelty of 'the next task' or 'multitasking') and not because of their 'old', solid meaning (which does not change into 'the next thing').

Following this line of analysis of subjectivity, the different regions of the bureaucratic world that the public servant inhabits appear to be re-invented anew under the command of policy discourse, which calls plainly for implementation!, and then for the next implementation, and then for the next one after that, and so on and so forth, *ad infinitum*. And the subject appears to enjoy the radical re-invention itself, re-enacted many times over a week or even a day, rather than understanding its (supposedly ‘hidden’ or ‘deep’) meaning and/or consequences, as Ivana’s words so eloquently condense and express:

“I meet with researchers, and I don’t have a clue yet why we have to meet, what I can contribute to them, I am meeting with them, I have interviews, also to do some public relations, so that they feel the institution is there for them. So I have to know a lot of things, you know? So, the famous quality standards forms, and defining indicators ... all these things have levels, little tasks, that saturate the day, and that make me skip my lunch ... so every day I take notes, I mean, I have to organise”

Paradoxically, while Ivana declares she wants to organise, she acts as if the meaning and delimitation of an organisation effort was not relevant at all; in the Lacanian terms of the ‘fifth paradigm’ of *jouissance* used throughout this chapter, for her the organised/organisable Other has almost vanished in its supposed presence; she enjoys the discourse of policy, and the imaginary supervisor-identity she constructs through it, autonomously, seemingly without the Other and without having to know why a policy prescription is made. Yet despite this reduction of the function of the Other, the Other is still

invoked, as autonomy has to be guaranteed in its meaningfulness nonetheless. The data indicates in this sense the famous Lacanian formula 'the Other does not exist': the organised/organisable Other operates, but its 'existence', the time and place of its emergence in the experience of the subject, is no longer relevant. The organizability of policy, that is, the capacity of policy to be organised into some-thing, only operates in the subjects experience as a minimal guarantee of enjoyable, normal repetition, as a guarantee about how one thing leads to the next. The public-servant-subject consciously declares to be organising policy into bureaucratic coordination, but his/her desire is placed on organising the constant re-invention of his professional self, using bureaucracy as a temporary and quotidian crucible. This is what this chapter in its two main analytic sections has brought forth. It has shown how the public servant enjoys his/her identity as part of a constant process of interrupting and productively emptying and re-inventing the discursive construction of self.

The diverse implications of these analytic insights, along with those of the other data analysis chapters, will be discussed in the following chapter. There the main conclusions of the research effort will also be presented.

Mythologies

We attend the rebirth of mythology
 once again, the function of the myth

Which does not think with its head
 but which opportunely rides the jet to the top of it and crushes it
 like a piano on top of which all the members of a committee would sit
 it takes the jet of speech as in the worst days of the cult
 with loudspeakers set in each alley of the promenade
 the lighted jet that seems to pour out magically
 pride of the Vivac aesthetic and of all, because the myth
 although superficial is a top quality glue
 the Right and the Left of the North and South ends, the diagonal New
 York street and all the alleys

they hold each other in embrace within the lighted jet of the myth,
 which the piano rides while being played fourhandedly
 by a single pianist, and Liberace himself

would not do a better job than the fourhanded one who rides the
 piano's jet
 which oscillates, liquid when in height, with all its sequins
 the very platoons that keep the oppressors' order become ecstatic
 while they believe to be hearing the siren of the
 oppressed

or at least they keep the jet as if it was the order

because everything that is myth as myth proper
is national patrimony

something no less important than the striker of a football club

Penguin take your measures, Become famous once and for all

order the light to be turned off and the jet to be closed

and the people to think with their heads, as long as it is not yours

You have spoken.

ENRIQUE LIHN

From the book "Paseo Ahumada" [Ahumada Promenade] (1983)



A photo of the Paseo Ahumada [Ahumada Promenade], located in downtown Santiago de Chile, taken in 1980. The water fountains, with their jets emerging from the ground, were built in 1977 to mark the boundaries of the promenade. As of 2015, they no longer stand.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and discussion: On the ‘new face’ of the public sector

In previous chapters, the empirical data on public servant identity has been analysed. Drawing from Lacanian theory, depictions of several aspects of the professional self and narratives on bureaucratic coordination have been interpreted, foregrounding the process of public servant identification via discourse as a paradoxical one, constant and persistent yet inconsistent, and also as a multifaceted one, expressing itself through diverse modes of articulation and actual embodied satisfaction.

This chapter will summarize the analytic insights generated during analysis and then discuss their significance and relevance in relation to the research question and to debates discussed in the initial chapters. Furthermore, the chapter will present the new questions that the study’s insights have generated, which signal the way for future research challenges.

Insisting once again in the inductive style used throughout the thesis, the discussion of the main analytic insights this study has generated should begin, in my view, by considering one comment a senior implementation manager made to me at the time when I was negotiating my access to collectable data at one of the departments/autonomous agencies that were part of the National Educational Quality Assurance System.

I had just arrived at the site, an old, elegant house remodelled into an office building, and I was asked to wait for the senior manager, a woman just over 40 years of age, in a sophisticatedly decorated living room, filled with ornaments made with typical Chilean materials (such as copper and wood). Only a few minutes after I had sat down the senior manager came down the stairs from her top floor office and greeted me with a kind smile that seemed also diplomatic. She addressed me by my first name, which she had learned beforehand, and asked me about my experience of higher education in the United Kingdom. And then she made the following comment to me, as she was pointing towards the stairs indicating that it was time to go up to her office to discuss access seriously:

“I’m glad you’ll be able to see the new face of the public service ... we acknowledge how complicated the grounding [of the law] into [educational practice] programs is, we try our best. We try to condense as much as we can in the reports and then hope the board members will swallow (she laughs quietly in upbeat fashion).”

Considering the diverse aspects of the relation that public servants establish with bureaucratic work that have been empirically analysed in the studied case, it is fair to say that the quoted comment condenses, subtly and in one formulation, the main features of the process through which public servants construct their identity. This is because the comment as a discursive gesture is able to signify different dimensions and implications of public servant experience.

Firstly, the comment puts forward the idea that public servant experience is involved in a process of organisational change or development affecting the public sector as a whole, in which an 'old' face is supposedly being replaced by 'the new face'. It is not clear what the 'new face' looks like, not only because the change has not finished taking place in many aspects, but also and mostly because its meaning seems to be taken for granted; this is at least what the senior manager seems to be doing when she decides to add nothing to qualify her comment (she did not add anything later either). Yet despite the lack of clarity, the 'new face' is celebrated, as for the senior manager it is something to be 'glad' about.

Secondly, the comment situates the signifier 'face' as the representation that signals the process through which policy is translated or 'grounded' into coordinated bureaucratic work or what the senior manager calls 'programs'. In her declaration, this appears to be a 'complicated' process that public servants tackle by 'doing their best', that is to say, by committing themselves, professionally and vocationally, to a valuation of an active engagement with the bureaucratic structure that policy commands rely on. Yet such commitment with the bureaucratic structure is not expressed in the senior manager's comment through the notion of 'efficiency', 'efficacy', 'quality' or even 'structure' itself (or 'bureaucracy' for that matter), but rather through the notion of 'face'; by the singularity of identity and the ethos that is inherent to the subjective experience that underpins identification. The 'new face' suggests in this sense the production, and re-production, of 'new experiences' of public

service, and thus, a call for new committed ways of making sense, at a subjective level, of the 'grounding of policy' and of actually enjoying something during such endeavour. What the comments appears to signify is that a 'face' that feels 'new' must be generated somehow, a kind of subjectivity that celebrates its own capacity to 're-appropriate bureaucracy anew', that is, to 'give up' the obsolete, incapable parts of the bureaucratic structure around which the self can be constructed (whatever the 'old face' showed) and 'come up' with new ways of making bureaucracy work better.

Thirdly, the comment considers the bureaucratic work of policy implementation, such as that of 'reporting', to be an activity that is done 'hopefully', thus qualifying or giving a 'tone' to the 'new face' that public service shows. In that brief articulation bureaucracy is invoked in all its operational capacity, and it is also valued as beneficial, as some-thing (i.e. some bureaucratized work task) whose outcomes can be hoped for.

Fourthly, and perhaps most significantly, the comment situates bureaucratic work, over which, it has been said, public servants place their 'hopes', as a process that seeks the 'swallowing' of 'board members' or politically-swayed policy-making agents.

Crucially, in this case, the signifier 'swallow' appears to be articulating, at once, two different meanings. On the one hand, 'swallow' appears to be equated to the notions of 'being seduced' (rather than 'persuaded') and of 'gullibly believing' or 'unknowingly accepting' the real implications of the bureaucratic work (i.e. 'reporting') that public servants have produced by 'doing their best'.

In this sense, the idea of 'making receiving agents swallow' implies to committedly and even passionately affirm and impose the terms and conditions of bureaucracy, as an order that works, over those that policy champions are likely to promote, in such a way that the capacity of policy to command bureaucracy is not undermined but rather adjusted or corrected.

On the other hand, the notion of 'swallowing' seems to be signifying the idea of 'force-feeding', especially since the senior manager's expression does not add an 'it' at the end of the declaration, as if the act of 'swallowing' was not related to a bureaucratic object but rather directly to the embodied activity of public servants (i.e. as a response to the command 'swallow!'). Interpreted this way, the bureaucratic work of policy implementation appears to not only require an effort of sophisticated, seductive persuasion or negotiation that could make the strict formal boundaries of bureaucracy 'swallowable' by policy-makers. It also requires a rather nasty effort of making sure the custodians of the policy realm are concretely 'pushed' in a certain direction that is convenient for all parts and 'kept alive' in their commanding capacity. According to this line of interpretation, which differs from that of a rational-yet-seductive persuasion, this process of 'force-feeding' could be a response either to the 'insatiable appetite' or the 'refusal of certain food-contents', yet it points out to a single process taking place at the of the public servant's embodied experience, a process of bureaucratic work in which the latter must push himself/herself to produce, at all costs, 'swallowable' products that can be 'fed' into the 'commanding mechanism' that keeps bureaucracy in place. In this sense, the

signifier 'swallow' is taken at face value, as an index of an embodied process that is urgent, constant and iterated over time, and which takes place not at the discursive, symbolic level of the policy prescriptions that shape the bureaucratic (and the desires of the 'bureaucrats') but rather at the experiential level of public servant subjectivity, where imaginary expectations clash with the real of affective satisfaction.

Fifthly, and conclusively, the comment by the senior management, particularly the mode of its delivery to the researcher, suggests that identification is a psycho-social process that is central in the experience of public servants. The use of the first-person at the very beginning of the comment ('I'm glad') and the straightforward call for the other's attention and recognition ('I'm glad you'll see') in a potentially impersonal and awkward introductory situation indicates there is a strong desire to make sense of self in relation to all the rest of signified elements (e.g. 'new face', 'grounding', 'hope', 'trying our best', 'swallow'). Notwithstanding the intricate and often inconsistent significations that underlie (and disrupt) the construction of a contextualized meaning of self, some of which the quoted comment subtly points to, the senior manager's declaration indicates that identification is a persistent process that mobilizes an affective intensity, like a sense of 'gladness' or a quiet yet upbeat laugh, in public servant experience. The comment was articulated as part of a series of gestures through which senior management invited me, the researcher, to actively inquire over the 'new face' of the public service, and which indicate that somehow the public servant is engaged and even proud of his/her

involvement in efforts of bureaucratic organising following policy implementation commands.

* * *

The five abovementioned insights that are drawn from the senior manager's comment represent and synthesize, in turn, the main insights drawn from the data analysis conducted from a Lacanian perspective in previous chapters. The brief analysis of the quote above sets the stage for the articulation of a general conclusion about the process through which public servants construct an identity during their experience of bureaucratic work.

Overall, what the analysis of data indicates is that public servants develop a strong affective attachment to the discourse (and practices) of bureaucratic work following policy implementation commands.

This attachment, as it will be discussed later on this chapter, is not established in a single modality but rather through diverse modes, involving either bureaucratic objects stably signified, in relation to which a substantial, clear 'hope' can be nurtured, or bureaucratic objects of ephemeral presence, which can be used and re-used iteratively for making the 'grounding' and 'feeding' of policy more effective every time. Furthermore, what the Lacanian interpretive lens allows distinguishing is that the terms (i.e. the language or the narratives) that orientate and validate the establishment of the attachment are articulated inconsistently. Such inconsistency reveals to be related both to the misrecognition of ideal (i.e. sublime) possibilities for the realization of the 'new

faces' of bureaucracy and the public servant self, and to the contradiction, confusion or even disintegration of the arguments that public servants invoke to justify a 'complicated' position in the bureaucratic order, a position from which the 'swallowing' of implemented products must be ensured. Yet despite of its diversity and inconsistency, this attachment reveals to be steady, as it sustains (i.e. motivates) the process, of a narrative kind, through which public servants make sense of their self-experience of having the responsibility of turning policy prescriptions, the symbolic network of policy discourse, into an organised/organisable reality.

Accordingly, what the data leads to conclude, in general terms, is that it is precisely because of the inconsistency of its terms and the divergence of its modes that the public servants' attachment to bureaucracy prevails.

The analysis of data indicates that public servants find a certain refuge in their steady embodied engagement with bureaucratic work from the often overwhelming conditions that policy implementation commands impose over the organisational structure of the public sector. It indicates that they find this refuge by insisting and persisting in finding practical ways of finding satisfaction in their involvement with bureaucracy as professionals working for the State administration, and that is the persistence itself that they find enjoyable, rather than the outcomes or products that it generates. Crucially, what the analysis of public servant discourse shows is that such persistent commitment with bureaucratic work relies on incomplete (i.e. lacking) or disrupted (i.e. exceeded) articulations of identity that are able to configure a

calling for the public-servant-subject to re-invigorate his/her identification with the bureaucratic object(s) that have populated the realm of State administration for decades.

In this case, State bureaucracy, as experienced and 'worked out' by public servants, does not reveal to configure neither a clear nor stable identity. Rather, bureaucracy reveals to serve as a site where the partial construction and ensuing (and often very quick) disintegration of identity is intensely enjoyable and where, consequently, such enjoyable affects propel multiple, overlapping efforts of identity construction that risk turning satisfaction into anxieties of confusion or even meaninglessness. Accordingly, it is fair to affirm that the data does not indicate the operation of a unified subjectivation process (in this case, public servant subjectivation) commanded by policy or any of its discursive features and generating (i.e. determining) specific effects of identity (i.e. intelligibility of self), meaning or practice. What the data does indicate is that bureaucracy, as an inconsistently defined (or perhaps undefinable) dynamic of organisation, plays an indispensable role in the constant division or 'undoing' of subjectivity, the precise division that allows public servants to persist in implementing and 'serving' citizens that benefit from public services.

Succinctly put, the study shows that the organisation and re-organisation of bureaucracy (*via* discourse), following policy, sustains an embodiment rather than a truth of public service. Beyond the formal (semiotic) limits that have traditionally (and ideally) characterized it, bureaucracy reveals to stand for the gendered, material affectivity that sustains the work that the administration of

the State requires from public servants. Despite and precisely because of the efforts that policy-makers make to master (i.e. to render manageable) State administration by (discursively) instituting the meanings contained in neoliberally-inspired programmes and prescriptions, public servants appear to be able to articulate their experience of finding some-thing of themselves (i.e. an identity) only in the ongoing-ness of 'bureaucracy for the sake of bureaucracy'.

Public servants find some-thing of public service in the bureaucratic order, what the senior manager quoted above called a 'new face', then lose it, and then find it again rather joyously, and such movement only reinforces the attachment to State administration, thus keeping it in site. Hence, it is the 'pure fact' of policy's command that appears to drive public service, rather than any social, economic or political meaning that policy might stand for. Elaborating on the terms used by the quoted senior manager, the 'feeding' that the organisation of public service seeks is about something being 'made to swallow' rather than the construction of a nuanced identity, a meaning of public servant self at work, that can be 'tasted' and appreciated.

Following the broad conclusions expressed above, this study on identification with(in) bureaucracy can be said to make a general contribution to selected debates in organisation studies introduced previously in this thesis. The latter include, first, the debate regarding 'governmentality' and subjectivation in organizations under a neoliberal political economy (e.g. McKinlay, Carter & Pezet, 2012; McKinlay & Taylor, 2012; Jackson & Carter, 1998; Barratt, 2009;

Clarke & Knights, forthcoming); second, the debate regarding the ‘irrational’, affective (i.e. unconscious) side of policy implementation (Fotaki, 2006, 2010; Hogget, 2006; Hoedemaekers, 2010; Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010; Clarke, 2014; McSwite, 1997); third, the debate regarding the entrepreneurialization and ‘post-bureaucratization’ of the central discourse(s) (and practices) that guide (and enact) State administration (du Gay, 2000a, 2000b; De Cock & Böhm, 2007).

The specific contributions made to these debates by the deployment of a Lacanian-informed interpretation of public servant identification within bureaucracy can be summarized, respectively, as follows:

First, in relation to the problematization of ‘governmentality’ as the subjective enactment of neoliberal political economy, under the auspices of the later Foucault, this study on public servant identity contributes a richer understanding of the ‘grammars’ through which the subject comes to identify with (policy) narratives that celebrate the necessity of economic rationality and entrepreneurialism in individual experience, particularly in terms of a psychological reflexivity (Binkley, 2011). This contribution is based on the interpretive study of a subject, understood as a discursive effectuation, who not only has established a desire for policies that advocate and prescribe a ‘governmentality’ (of an educational kind) but who also have come to desire the features of the latter in his/her own policy implementation work. As discussed in the three data analysis chapters, these grammars include the highly coherent sublimation and/or antagonization of the agents and objects

of organised bureaucratic ‘governmentality’ and also the barely coherent performative (psychologizing) enactment of the terms of ‘governmentality’ in the face of blatant inconsistencies (i.e. contradictions, interruptions, etc.).

Crucially, adopting a stance signalled by scholars like Vighi & Feldner (2007), this study does not corroborate the premise of governmentality’s insidiousness as an effect of the genealogy of power that has come to legitimize the truth of its entrepreneurial knowledges/discourses to the eyes of an individual who seeks meaning for his/her own experience. Instead, this study contributes a modification to such premise, one that emphasizes both the ideological capture of the subject *via* the insidiousness of his/her desire for the managerial and psychological features attributed to neoliberalism and the affective roots that of subjectivity, which equate the individualizing insidiousness of neoliberal narratives to an inevitable attachment to the conditions of discursivity.

In sum, the study accounts for ‘governmentality’ as a never-exhausting love for a neoliberal rendition of society (and the world) that is constantly being re-corroborated in personal experience. Thus, it contributes an understanding of the critique of governmentality that focuses more on the conditions of affective attachment rather than the conditions of self-coherence.

Second, in relation to the discussion of the irrational side of policy implementation, this study contributes a richer and more refined understanding of the limits of rationality as based on the embodied, affective dimension of experience, not as the (neuro-)biological, emotional substrate of the subject’s mind but as an embodiment of discursivity and thus as a material

effect of the subjective positions that policy implementation discursivity makes available for the speaking being.

By observing the activity of policy implementation and particularly the subjective positions that shore up the discursive guarantees about the implementability of policy, interpreted from public servants' testimonies, this study is able to offer a categorization of the affective attachments or 'forces' that sustain the efforts to organise policy within the bureaucratic order of the State.

Crucially, this categorization includes yet goes beyond accounts of the affective attachments towards overly-idealized policy outcomes, which, because of their impossible realization, have been deemed as recipes for public sector misfire (Fotaki, 2010; Gunder & Hillier, 2009). In addition to the latter, this study accounts for affective attachments towards the endlessness of autonomous implementation, which disregard the coherence of policy outcomes narratives entirely. This indicates a mode of irrationality that thrives in a kind of de-subjectivation, where the affectively-charged desire for policy discourse is propelled by the pure ongoingness of implementation discourse and not by specific, dominant significations within it. This finally contributes to further furbish a constructive critique of policy making and implementation, as it indicates the need to counteract its constitutive, unconscious irrationality not only by deciphering and denouncing the ambitions and fantasies in policy outcome narratives, but also by actively 'ciphering' the evermore intense efforts of policy implementers. The latter implies insisting on minimal

symbolic boundaries for implementation activity, as if they unequivocally represented larger social purposes/agendas. The imposition of the need to discuss the meaningfulness of policy levers (such as the notion of educational quality) on an everyday basis would exemplify this, and should be discussed further as a potential strategy.

Third, in relation to the debate about the post-bureaucratic status of contemporary State administration (in the case of Chile and elsewhere), and in consideration of the two previous contributions outlined above, this study contributes qualitative evidence about the durability of the structural features and identities of bureaucracy (Schofield, 2001; Rhodes & Milani Price, 2010). This can be seen as the study's most central contribution and will be elaborated deeply in the following paragraphs. Suffice it to say at this point, regarding debates about the durable functionality of bureaucracy, that the public servants studied have shown an intense affective attachment not just towards bureaucratic activity but towards the very idea (i.e. the signification) of the need for bureaucracy as the ground (i.e. the guarantee) for the organizability of human interaction, and certainly for the implementation of policy, even if, and precisely because, the policy prescription narratives being organised present the subject with imaginaries of a post-bureaucratic world.

In the studied public servants' experience, bureaucracy demonstrate to equate to discursivity itself, as the neoliberal push for post-bureaucratization requires a management that cannot help but to seek its fit within the already-existing bureaucratic fabric of the State, understood as a complex semiotic-affective

assembly at the level of public servant activity. In this sense, since the desire for neoliberal policy implementation is revealed as a desire for the inhabitancy of bureaucracy, this study contributes a vital ethnographic insight about the need to rely on bureaucracy precisely to foster post-bureaucratic ideologies.

Overall, what the study's empirical insights contribute most centrally is an understanding of bureaucracy as an undetermined/undeterminable process of organisation, in which the institution and regulation of identity *via* discourse (i.e. subjectivation) appears to be necessary yet at the same time emptied of much, if not all, of its coherence of meaning (i.e. the fixability of the 'truth value' of an utterance/statement) and of its practical consistency.

Essentially, this understanding situates bureaucracy as an organised social order whose conditions of possibility and effects do not fully correspond neither with hegemonic readings of the neoliberalized political economy of State administration (e.g. du Gay, 2000a) nor with readings that aim at revealing the 'technologization of self' and the neoliberal governmentality instituted by policies prescribing enterprising values in both public service and educational institutions (e.g. McKinlay & Taylor, 2012). Even though the analysis of this study has shown some of the discursive features and dynamics these readings aim at revealing (for example, the de-politicization of bureaucratic work and the entrepreneurial narratives that guide the practice of autonomous professional public servants), it has mostly shown that the subjective attachment of public servants to the bureaucratic order as

organised/organisable requires but also subverts the efficacy of discursivity as hegemonized/hegemonizable.

Indeed, the study has shown that the subjective attachment to bureaucracy, that is, the inter-subjective 'glue' that keeps the coordinated work between public servants together, is ultimately sustained by the unceasing production of affective intensity or what Lacanian theory calls *jouissance* or enjoyment, a dynamic linked but separated from semiotic exchange, whose effectual relation with sense (i.e. of intelligibility of self and workplace narratives) is fleeting, lacking in consistency and/or tending to disintegration. By showing the prevalence of such side of bureaucratic organisation this study introduces a critical but solidary interpretation of the abovementioned approaches to neoliberal discourse(s) and subjectivity under neoliberalized political economies. Elaborating on the work of Jones & Spicer (2005), this study shows that the notion of bureaucracy, like the notion of enterprise that occupies a central place in neoliberal programmes (implicitly or explicitly), is an empty one, discursively undetermined and undeterminable in its subjective effects, but one to which public servants are affectively attached in a very strong way.

In this sense, as Jones & Spicer have proposed (2005: 239) in their discussion of the literature of du Gay (2000a, 2000b, 2005), perhaps the most influential living scholar on bureaucracy, it is fair to say this study has aimed at leaving the 'question of the subject', in this case the public-servant-subject, open and not answerable in a determined way. For what exactly are the meanings/narratives that mobilize public servants to engage with bureaucratic

work and construct a self-identity, according to the empirical this study has drawn?

The study has not been able to provide an exact answer but only a collection of inexact ones, all of them composing a conflictive, incomplete yet rich picture of the narratives through which public servants endow public service with meaning. Moreover and crucially, the study has shown that public servants develop strong affective attachments to such inexact elaborations, establishing a sustained commitment to the conditions and effects of bureaucracy and confirming its resilience against all kinds of economicist, technocratic critiques (Schofield, 2001; du Gay, 2005).

Public servants persist in bureaucratization yet they cannot say why in consistent fashion: in practice, they do not know, and the study indicates they do not have to in order to find some-thing of self in the bureaucratic order.

This leaves open the question of identity regulation and subjectivation in the bureaucratic context of public administration. This occurs not just because the data indicates that public servant discourse(s) invoking the unity of bureaucracy's meaning can only unfold by emptying its own conditions of meaning mastery. It also occurs because the research interpretations that have revealed such inconsistency have shown divergent yet equally operative and strong modes of public servant attachment to bureaucratic practice. The research effort itself, because of its own aspirations to know, has only be able to observe its own in-exactitude, revealing a process of 'bureaucratic enjoyment' that unfolds simultaneously in diverse ways.

Certainly, this defines a substantive space for the critical promotion of what du Gay (2008) has called a formal, rational 'ethics of responsibility' that can overcome the excessive push for 'enthusiasms' and the enjoyment of sacrificial commitment to policy implementation that the data has clearly shown as part of a general governmentality, yet it does not saturate that space by defining it as a privileged site of resistance inevitably determined by the instituting action of the discursive regimes of neoliberal policy (e.g. Thomas & Davies, 2005). Coinciding with the insights of Barratt (2003, 2008) and echoing the Lacanian-influenced conceptualization of De Certeau (2011) this study has shown that bureaucratic work is experienced by public servants not as an traceable effect of the discursive 'strategies' for the institution of power but rather as a 'tactical' link in which the activity and commitment (i.e. motivation) to work are part of a constant flux that is internal yet, paradoxically, external to the formal rules or 'policy-implementation-strategies' of bureaucracy.

Using Barratt's terms (2003: 1083), the study reveals that public servant discourse (and practice), with its affective investments and 'grip', has not been arranged as to configure a 'definite solution' to regimes of subjectivation and managerial control or regulation *via* identification; rather it has been configured to only 'intimate' provisional ways of enduring the overwhelming (neoliberal) policy-commandment of the bureaucratic workplace and of making bureaucracy endure, inconsistently and even cynically, in order to convert anxiety into states of satisfaction. In turn, the study reveals the research effort can also only 'intimate' the modes in which subjectivity is

affected by the discursive order of bureaucracy and *vice versa*, if public servant experience is to be appreciated richly and truthfully. There is here a bridge between Foucauldian and Lacanian approaches to the critical study of public administration and its 'subjects': a shared emphasis on what Barratt (2003) calls the 'tactical' deployment of knowledge, that is, a (research) aspiration to understand organisations that is usefully in-exact and in-consistent, in which the ethos, that is, the desire, of the researcher-analyst, whether a 'discourse analyst' or an extra-clinical 'psychoanalyst', is assumed in its tentativeness, precariousness and its ultimate impossibility to know (Lacan, 1998; Lapping, 2013; Nobus & Quinn, 2005).

Following the insights expressed above, the study can be said to make a final, general contribution to debates in psychoanalytic and psycho-social approaches to organisation studies concerning the 'irrational', affective processes that mediate the bureaucratic organisation of policy implementation programmes/commands (Fotaki, 2006, 2010; Hoggett, 2006; Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010). This contribution can be articulated through the concept of *jouissance* or enjoyment, which has played a central role during data analysis.

What this study shows, elaborating on the guiding terms proposed by Fotaki (2010), is that the implementation of policy often fails not just because of the impossible enjoyments with which policy discourse has been impregnated (see also Clarke, 2012; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). It fails often also because of the way those discourses are affectively embodied by public servants during their experience with the bureaucratic means for implementation, insofar as such

embodiment, the material basis of subjectivity, calls for experiences of actual, positive satisfaction or enjoyment in order to sustain the animation of subjective experience (i.e. the desire that drives it), and ultimately, public service labour (McSwite, 2001). Analysis has revealed that the affective attachment to bureaucratic labour unfolds simultaneously in divergent modes, and consequently, that the discursive regimes of policy do not determine a singular mode of subjectivation but only prompt a movement of constant and excessively swift re-invention of subjectivity that can sustain embodiment.

This accounts for a dynamic of bureaucratic organisation whose conditions and affective-psychic effects cannot be solely captured by a reading of what has been rendered hegemonic in symbolic-semiotic terms, that is, what has been elevated as a universal truth, aspiring at scientific validity, that is supposed to satisfy a multitude of socio-political questionings and expectations (Fotaki, 2010; Müller, 2012; Clarke, 2012). This study of bureaucracy as an organisational process of identification indicates that there is a level that sustains but also subverts the formal and rationalistic edifice of policy prescriptions and bureaucratic rules and procedures, in which a trust in the institutionalizing and re-institutionalizing capacity of the semiotic has been implicitly or explicitly placed. These findings do not imply that rationality is to be rejected and devaluated but rather that the trust in the means to intervene over it and correct it, either in Müller's Lacanian-Laclauian terms (2012; see also Clarke, 2012) or in Fotaki's Lacanian-Kleinian terms (2010) (and certainly in du Gay's Lacanian-Foucauldian terms as Jones & Spicer have put

it, 2005), has to be developed further (or perhaps somewhat ‘undeveloped’). In coincidence with Hoedemaekers’s own empirical insights (2010: 391), this study “demonstrates how lived identities are, in their flawed manifestation...” - that is to say, in the way in which the divergent affective embodiments of public servant discourse indicate the inefficacy of (policy) discourse to hegemonize bureaucracy-as-organisation - “... already an unintentional contestation of themselves”.

Thus, overall, the study provides general empirical confirmation of the function that Lacan considers bureaucracy to fulfil in a globalized, modern capitalist political economy, including of course its neoliberal variants and the policy programmes such variant imposes.

According to Lacan (2007b), bureaucracy is the most common expression of what he calls the discourse of science, a mode of subjective attachment and inter-subjective link in which the mastery of meaning, that is, the capacity to signify and institute identity (regardless of its inconsistency), tends to disappear as a concern, as it gets replaced by a concern with measuring, administering and optimizing life according to economic rationality, in a way that Foucault would see as expressing bio-political power and governmentality (Binkley, 2011).

From this perspective, as many Lacanian-inspired Žižekian scholars propose rather passionately (e.g. Dean, 2006; Sharpe & Boucher, 2010), bureaucracy is seen as the language or ‘applied-policy-speak’ of neoliberalism and the exploitative instrument of scientific capitalism, since it functions to reduce the

subject to a kind of passive residue of a neoliberal-scientific policy command with no master or dominating agent behind its bureaucratic implementation. This is what this study's data has certainly illustrated in many occasions and what the abovementioned senior manager's comment on the idea of 'swallowing' represents; namely, the fact that, regardless of all its 'new faces', bureaucracy serves to keep up a 'force feeding' of neoliberal policy results for which the subject, in this case the public-servant-subject, is autonomously responsible.

Yet this reading of bureaucracy misses a crucial implication of Lacan's theorization of bureaucracy, one that this empirical study is able to capture with sufficient clarity. This implication relates to the dimension of production and the positive side of *jouissance* or satisfaction, which as Miller (2000) points out, only appears in the later stages of Lacan's theoretical trajectory. Essentially, for Lacan (2007b) the interpretation of bureaucracy as the discourse of science does not coincide neither with the capacity to master meaning (what he calls the 'discourse of the master') nor with the exertion of bio-political power via a 'governmentality' that 'de-subjectivizes' experience and renders it an endless effort of enterprising the self (Binkley, 2011), because his theorization is based on the assumption that all forms of discourse produce something that exceeds its own conditions of possibility. For Miller (2000) this is what differentiates the 'early Lacan' from the 'late Lacan': the fact that the excessive side of subjectivity and the social link is no longer associated exclusively with fantasy or the 'desire for the impossible' but with all other

forms of discourse as social linkage, including that of psychoanalysis itself. In other words, for the 'late Lacan' all discursivity is excessive to itself and the role of psychoanalysis is to endure and navigate that excessiveness of its own means, rather than to seek console, in a way similar to that suggested by Barnett (2005), in invoking guarantees of its interpretability and amassing confirmatory empirical data (Lacan, 2007b; Parker, 2005, 2014; Lapping, 2013).

From this perspective, even though the structure and function of bureaucracy under neoliberalized capitalist political economy can be interpreted as formally corresponding with what Lacan calls the discourse of science, the implications of such interpretations are not directly that bureaucracy is responsible for an excessive exploitation of public servant labour and an excessive technologization of public servant selves, among other possibilities. Instead, the implications are that the interpretation of bureaucracy as corresponding formally with the discourse of science is always-already excessive (and in turn, following Wozniak, 2010, that any direct interpretation of the discourse of science is always-already an instance of the discourse of science itself!).

More specifically, following Lacan's conceptualization of 'four discourses' (Lacan, 2007b; Žižek, 2008), the interpretation of bureaucracy as the discourse of science must be seen as generating a unique excess-product: the production of affectivity or embodied desire (what Lacan termed the divided subject, driven to the activity of speech).

This is what this empirical study indicates, above anything else: that an affective attachment of public servants to bureaucracy is produced, excessively, under a discursive frame akin to what can be called seen as a governmentality promoting the economicist administration of all life, including the experience of public servants and the beneficiaries of public educational services. This is an affectivity that sustains the abovementioned discursive frame, but which cannot help but escape it and subvert it. And this redefines the conditions for a critical reading of bureaucracy and the ethos and vocation of the public servant, signalling the need to move from strategic discursivist comprehensions to tactical comprehensions of the undetermined/undeterminable potential (and risks) of the affective side of bureaucratic labour (Parker, 2014; Barratt, 2003; Wozniak, 2010; see also Berardi, 2009).

In this sense, this study's most significant contribution is not far from what Fotaki & Harding have recently proposed following concepts found in Lacan's late work (2013). In light of insights on both the empirical data and the conduction of the research effort this study is able to contribute an understanding of public servant identification, bureaucracy and organisation in general that coincides with what Fotaki & Harding (2013) have termed an 'hysterical' approach. This is because the study is able to reveal how both the public servants' and the researcher's reliance on forms of scientific discourse - their respective engagement with 'policy-speak' and 'academic-speak' - enact, simultaneously in each case, a passionately drive for knowledge and the

inexorable engendering of ignorance. The study reveals that not only is their affective experience framed by discourse, but also that their engagement with discourse, and the capacity to define an identity through such engagement, is framed by affectivity. Above all, the study shows that their subjective experience unfolds as an enmeshment of both these framings, and that the critique their potential subjective re-positioning must take such dynamic into account.

* * *

In order to relate these general conclusions to the conduction of the empirical study it is convenient to summarize the main features of the observed identification process as they were captured and interpreted from the standpoint of Lacanian theory, an approach that focuses on the psychic and affective underpinnings of discursivity as the semiotic and material means through which the social and the political are inters-subjectively articulated. This kind of 'final thesis abstract' will allow the Lacanian interpretive gesture to be foregrounded as a contingent, ethical and embodied effort of research and will clarify the extent to which an organisational domain has been depicted and invoked, from a particular position as an empirical reality.

Firstly, in broad terms, the analysis of data shows that the organisation of bureaucracy following policy implementation commands requires a specific mode of inter-subjective coordination via discourse. This can be expressed by distinguishing between the three registers of (inter-) subjective experience that Lacan conceptualized, namely, the registers of the imaginary, the symbolic and

the real, as applied to organisational discourse (Cederström & Spicer, 2014; Roberts, 2005; Driver, 2009b; Fotaki, 2010).

Although these registers have been defined in more detail throughout the thesis, they can be summarized as follows. The imaginary register can be equated to the Freudian idea of consciousness and the agency of the Ego as instances of false mastery, in contrast to the governing of the psyche by the unconscious drives and the Id, yet specifically to the unrealistic illusion of the subject having his image faithfully and truthfully mirrored by the inter-subjective, synced discursive coordination with others in the workplace (Lacan, 2007a; Roberts, 2005). The symbolic register can be equated to the structure or network of signifiers that enables and frames discursive exchanges, what Lacan saw as the catalogue of relevant knowledges specifying and validating how to act socially, yet specifically to the constant motion of displacement or decentring that the subject, in its libidinal or desiring connection to discursivity, cannot help but to impose over the fixity of a signifier in relation to the meaning they are set to index, particularly the meaning of identity as an imaginary construction (Lacan, 1998; Stavrakakis, 2008). The real register can be equated to the inherent inconsistency (or excess) of any imaginary-symbolic montage performed by the subject due to the absolute difference between the fullness of the identity project s/he aims at and the nature of the discursive means, not just semiotic but also affective (i.e. performance and/or anxious desire), through which the subject pursues its accomplishment (Lacan, 2007b; Hoedemaekers, 2010; Kenny, 2012). The

register of the real, the one that must be most carefully elaborated in order to establish a critical interpretive position of imaginary-symbolic discursive means through the imaginary-symbolic means of research will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Based on these distinctions, bureaucratic work, as the object that occupies public servant subjectivity and thus the threads of organisational discourse (i.e. narrative) that public servants articulate to construct an identity, can be seen as unfolding practically at the imaginary level, while policy prescriptions, which the public-servant-subject considers to be endowed with the authority to command bureaucratic work, can be seen as taking place at the symbolic level. Meanwhile, the register of the real can be seen as expressed by the affective investment that the practical realization of the bureaucratic imaginary, prescribed by the symbolic network or language of policy, calls for; particularly, as expressed by the relative inconsistency of policy language (or simply 'knowledge' as Lacan would call it, 2007b) in guaranteeing the fullness, completeness or integrity in the realization of the multiple meanings of 'policy implemented' that bureaucratic work aims at organising (see chapter 3).

Despite of the divergence between its elaborations throughout Lacan's oeuvre (Miller, 2000) the notion of *jouissance* or enjoyment (i.e. satisfaction), one of the central interpretive devices used in the analysis of this case, can be seen as expressing the affectivity of the register of the real. This is because *jouissance* signals precisely the subject's persistence in 'working out' the elements of bureaucracy for the sake of policy implementation against the recurrent

obstacles (see chapter 4) or failures (see chapter 5) whose emergence the symbolic network cannot help but to trigger in imaginary, inter-subjectively coordinated experience. In other words, *jouissance* signals the constant, motivated search, via discourse as an embodied activity, for the satisfaction that a 'policy well-bureaucratized' would provide, and which the language of policy, because of the negative or lacking ontology of the symbolic register, can never prompt.

It is important to note how this initial, broad insight on the discursive set-up of the organisation of policy implementation, as interpreted in narratives on public servant experience, contributes an understanding that can complement previous Lacanian readings of bureaucracy and its relation to policy.

Mainly, what the study reveals is that despite of its strict and traditional reliance on paperwork and official records, bureaucracy should not be reduced exclusively to the register of the symbolic, as Styhre (2008) has argued while aligning 'post-bureaucracy' with the imaginary, and that the role of policy in relation to the challenge of its implementation should not be considered only in terms of the imaginary, as Fotaki (2010) has argued. By considering the process of policy implementation from the perspective of public servant experience, which is set to take place in the bureaucratic structure of the public sector, the study observes that the symbolic network of policy, or 'policy-speak' as Ball (2008) calls it, provides the discursive means through which a consistent imaginary sense of identity will be negotiated inter-subjectively by public servants as bureaucratic agents at work. This situates the register of the

real, in turn, as the impossibility of fully mastering the reality of bureaucratic work with any signification of policy.

In general psychoanalytic terms, the study shows that the unconscious side of policy implementation is policy itself and that bureaucracy, as an organisational domain, can serve either as a fundamental defence to protect the consciousness of everyday work against the impossible societal aims of scientificist and economicist (neoliberal) policies or as a way to regulate the excessive 'energetic' intensity that such overly-ambitious policies impose over implementation as a practical bureaucratic activity. By any measure, the organisation of the bureaucratic realm, as an imaginary engagement that captures, representationally and always only partially, a very real, material dynamic, demonstrates to be unreducible to the language of policy that commands the need for a bureaucracy. As Lacan pointed out (2007b), the latter, as a pure form, implies a reduction of human existence to a problem of scientific calculation. On the contrary, the former is what opens a space for subjectivity, allowing a sense of identity, that is, of temporary mastery of self, to emerge for those who serve the public sector, even though such identification can only feed, paradoxically, from policy's capacity to articulate and command social reality (McSwite, 1997b; Lacan, 2007b; Stavrakakis, 2008). This is what accounts for the steady identification of the public servant with the objects that take part in the organisation of bureaucratic work: bureaucracy, as organised/organisable, brings solace to the experience of the public-servant-subject.

Secondly, in more specific terms, the analysis of data shows that public servants establish, via discourse, a strong attachment to bureaucratic work as an organised/organisable domain (composed of organisational objects). This is an attachment that not only involves an insistence in articulating self-experience by using particular significations, which the subject too-hastily assumes can give him/her mastery over self-meanings, but also an affective 'force' that links such selection of semiotic, formal means for the construction of identity with dimensions of emotional investment and embodied satisfaction (Cederström & Spicer, 2014: 189). Furthermore, and most importantly, this is an attachment that, according to the empirical findings of this study, can be seen as being established by the public-servant-subject in two different modalities of semiotic-affective linkage.

One of these modalities, analysed in chapter 4 of this thesis, consists of a fantasmatic attachment, in which the subject (unconsciously) defends from the impossibilities of the symbolic network of policy that commands bureaucratic organisation (e.g. the incoherence in overlapping meanings attributed to policy signifiers) by rendering bureaucratic objects desirable as ideal 'complements' or 'missing pieces' within a work relationship that is assumed, imaginarily and consciously, as stable and fluently coordinated. In this modality, the attachment is sustained semiotically by a trust in the efficacy of certain signifiers indexing the meaning and 'reality' of ideal objects in delivering what can be expected of them, and thus what they can promise to those who embrace them. Correspondingly, in affective terms, the attachment is sustained by the

intense anxiety of deprivation, which can lead to emotions of hope in relation to the expected objects or anger against agents hindering their acquisition, and which can ultimately shift to states of high, full (i.e. not-deprived) yet fleeting satisfaction, in instances where the logic of expectancy is only temporarily transgressed and 'exceptions' to the idealizing rule are enacted.

The other of these modalities, analysed in chapter 5 of this thesis, consists of what can be called a 'normalized yet excessive' attachment, in which the subject renounces any kind of fantasmatic (unconscious) 'heroic defence' against the impossibilities of the symbolic network of policy. Instead, the subject (unconsciously) embraces certain levels of meaninglessness or inconsistency in his/her own involvement with the network of policy-language, under the condition of being able to draw actual positive satisfaction from its inconsistent structures, not 'exceptionally' but repeatedly in everyday engagements with bureaucratic work. From this standpoint, the attachment is seen as a 'normalized' one as it (unconsciously) assumes a recurrent compromising or tolerance with whatever incoherence might be found in the set of policy prescriptions. Yet at the same time it is seen as an 'excessive' one, as the satisfaction that the subject obtains from not being paralyzed in his/her frustration about policy incoherence but being constantly committed to 'working it out' bureaucratically in practical fashion only leads him/her to rely deeper and deeper in the inconsistency of the symbolic network, and thus, to incrementally intensify his/her work activity beyond the pleasurable.

In this modality, the attachment is established semiotically in two main ways (discussed respectively in the 2nd and 3rd sections of chapter 5): on the one hand, it is established as an interruption of the narratives that public servants articulate to coordinate bureaucratic work and to express meanings of their professional selves, specifically, in the form of contradictions, ambiguity and silence/pauses; on the other hand, it is established as the pure performativity of narration, the mere 'fact' of engaging repeatedly in discursivity to narrate the involvement with bureaucratic work, in detriment of the articulation of meanings that can be achieved through it. In both variants, the incoherence of the symbolic is realized, yet also re-produced.

Correspondingly, in affective terms, the attachment is sustained by what can be seen as a kind of 'performance anxiety', which is related not to instances of deprivation or loss but rather to the prospects of having to actually perform, and enjoy, successfully, recurrently and almost endlessly in the bureaucratic workplace. The intensity of the affective 'force' of the attachment varies according to the abovementioned semiotic variants in this modality. The 'interruptive' variant presents affects linked to the breakdown of narratives but also to its swift re-constitution, affects of shock and surprise, which are not so 'traumatic' as to impede the swift re-constitution (and subsequent re-collapse, and so on) of the flow of narration. The 'performative' variant presents affects of high intensity, linked to manic motivation towards activity and states of exhaustion, which are not so 'depleting' as to impede the impulse to re-engage with the production of implementation outcomes with the use of bureaucratic

means. In both of its variants of semiotic articulation, affect in this modality is about the actual, positive enjoyment of bureaucratic work, yet relying on the inconsistent terms of the symbolic, a condition that quickly turns the production of this affect of satisfaction into the production of an excessive affect of anxiety and impulsivity towards the performance of work. Hence, the affective side of this modality can be seen as the oscillation between these two poles.

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Appendix 1 – Interview schedule

The following table presents the interview schedule followed during the data collection phase of this study, arranged in chronological order. Considering the methodological decisions made, particularly in relation to confidentiality issues, it only includes some of the interviewees' pseudonyms and a general reference to their enrolment in organizations within the Chilean public sector.

Interview number	Interview date (all data collected during 2013)		Interviewee info	Organizational context of the interviewee
	Month	Date		
1	August	13	Romina – Senior implementer (negotiation of access)	Ministry
2		13	Senior implementer (negotiation of access)	Autonomous agency B
3		14	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
4		16	Implementer	Ministry
5		20	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
6		23	Lucia – Implementer	Autonomous agency A
7		23	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
8		27	Feliciano - Implementer	Autonomous agency A
9		28	Senior implementer	Ministry
10		28	Fernando - Implementer	Autonomous agency A
11		30	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
12		30	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
13	September	3	Julieta - Implementer	Autonomous agency B
14		5	Implementer	Autonomous agency A
15		5	Ivana – Senior implementer	Autonomous agency A
16		5	Implementer	Ministry
17		9	Javiera – Senior implementer	Autonomous agency B
18		13	Senior implementer	Autonomous agency A
19		13	Paulina – Implementer	Autonomous agency A
20		24	Implementer	Ministry
21		24	Alberto – Senior implementer	Autonomous agency A
22		26	Implementer	Ministry
23		26	Implementer	Autonomous agency B

