

Subaltern Bureaucrats and Postcolonial Rule: Indigenous Professional Registers of Engagement with the Chilean State

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INTRODUCTION

What is the experience of a racial subaltern on becoming an employee of a post-colonial state? And what postcolonial politics take place at the interface between modes of incorporation and modes of resistance? We know something about the ambivalent and ambiguous positioning of marginal subjects recruited into state bureaucracies (Gupta 2001), and how subjects' positionings are re-configured when neoliberalism prompts a re-sorting of relations between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the state (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Mercer 2002; Elyachar 2003). But the situation of subaltern bureaucrats in postcolonial state employment has been less explored, even though such state reconfigurations are becoming more routine with the rise of multicultural policies. This paper explores the discursive positionality of indigenous, racialized civil servants and their non-indigenous colleagues in Chile, and analyzes power dynamics between a postcolonial, neoliberal state and the functionaries it recruits from a colonized population, to work within a policy field historically dedicated to cultural assimilation.¹ While we are attentive to forms of postcolonial governmentality, understanding the recruitment of racially marked civil

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servants also requires a fine-grained analysis of affect, discourse, and positionality (Hanson and Stepputat 2001). Latin America is a site of widespread multicultural state reforms that often respond to ethnic social movements and transnational human rights activism. This provides us a window into how subaltern individuals negotiate their positions within and interactions with a state that has historically been exclusionary, and associated with hegemonic norms of whiteness and European codes and with keeping a literal and metaphoric distance from marginal populations (Marimán 2012; Nahuelpán 2013).

The epistemological and political self-positioning of indigenous professionals in Latin America's multicultural regimes is currently a subject of considerable debate (see Rappaport 2005). In response to demands of indigenous social movements, states introduced reforms in arenas such as education, health, and development, including the recruitment of indigenous professionals whose educational achievements set them apart from most indigenous peoples.² This is not just a matter of affirmative action programs that expand the variety of employment available to educated and qualified indigenous subjects, because in the process subalterns are recruited into new state dependencies.³ Chile's intercultural bilingual education policy instituted in 1995 did precisely this. According to critical readings of neoliberal multiculturalism, when indigenous leaders are employed by the state they become co-opted as *indios permitidos*, or "permitted Indians."⁴ They become disciplined subjects operating within the agency-curtailing spaces of state-sponsored multiculturalism, and leaders of civil society protests become functionaries of regulated and disciplining state formations (Hale 2002; Postero 2007; Park and Richards 2007). When states incorporate indigenous citizens, these readings find, they transform them into subjects who adhere to neoliberal ideologies and goals, thereby "sheering them of radical excesses" (Hale 2002: 496). They serve elite interests, and socio-economic inequalities are left in place.

Drawing on Chilean material, we work to extend previous research and argue that we must be more attentive to the diversity of subaltern bureaucrats' discursive positionings in postcolonial states. The literature on indigenous state employees echoes, if in largely unacknowledged ways, analyses by political

¹ We understand racial (ascription of biophysical differences) and ethnic (ascription of sociocultural differences) distinctions both as rooted in power and as justifications for exclusion and dehumanization, while we recognize the need for non-essentialist analysis of the performance of self-identifications.

² As this suggests, state efforts to assimilate racialized subalterns into identification with dominant society were only partially successful, and as a result both indigenous and non-indigenous people contest mainstream educational philosophy and practice.

³ These are jobs beyond the historically important spheres of NGOs and indigenous rights groups, and beyond mainstream, non-multicultural spheres of teaching, healthcare, and agriculture.

⁴ The Spanish term *indio* retains negative connotations, and is used most frequently by the urban middle classes who comprise the bulk of state employees. Indigenous rights movements prefer to identify themselves by their specific ethnocultural group, or simply as "indigenous."

scientists that have traced the careers of technocratic bureaucrats associated with neoliberal statecraft and have described their experiences in terms of depoliticization and professionalization (Silva 2008; Dezalay and Garth 2002).⁵ We take a different approach here, and examine indigenous state employees associated with intercultural bilingual education in neoliberal Chile in relation to the consequences of stigma and difference, the politics of decolonization, and the imagined geographies within which policy is to act. Our aim is to further parse the distinction between neoliberal and colonial-postcolonial dimensions of state-citizen interaction (compare, among others, Marimán et al. 2006; Gustafson 2009; De la Maza 2012; Goodale and Postero 2013).

In Chile, an essential feature of neoliberal transformations was the replacement of elite-family lawyers with U.S.-educated economists and lawyers, and this resulted in the normalization and reproduction of Washington policy models (Dezalay and Garth 2002). Such networked social capital formation continued to occur largely within political and economic elite families, most of whom define themselves as (white) Chilean in implicit contrast to racialized indigenous subjects (Richards 2013). Chile's governing elites have long been recruited from exclusive, science-oriented higher education institutions (Hale 1996), and elites retain a strongly evolutionist understanding of culture and difference (Larraín 2000: 175). These factors, in turn, influenced the types of jobs indigenous professionals got and the mechanisms through which they were recruited. Consequently, state employees, or "technopols" (Dezalay and Garth 2002), included few indigenous intellectuals or professionals, who instead interfaced with the neoliberal multicultural state largely through civil society representation rather than state employment.⁶ State formation thereby solidified and gave material and social form to distinctions between non-indigenous "Chileans" and indigenous subjects (such as Mapuche, the largest indigenous group), with the latter stigmatized as essentially different and historically uneducated and unprofessional.⁷ Mapuche and other indigenous groups that experienced conquest in the late nineteenth century were transformed into a dominated, subordinate, subaltern minority, "dispossessed and exploited" (Marimán 2012: 14; see also Marimán et al. 2006; Nahuelpán 2013).⁸ Here,

⁵ Their racial-ethnic self-identifications are not systematically mentioned in the literature, which suggests that they are characterized by unmarked whiteness.

⁶ See, for example, Crow (2010), on an indigenous museum curator's experience with this process. There were rare exceptions: Manuel Manquilef was a state school teacher, Manuel Neculman the director of a state school, and Venancio Coñuepan the director of the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas (1952–1958).

⁷ Chile's indigenous organizations worked to slow and reverse the assimilatory effects of schooling starting in the early twentieth century. On the history of Mapuche demands for education, see Foerster and Montecinos 1988; Webb and Radcliffe 2013.

⁸ An extensive literature documents how Chile retains a binary distinction between "Chileans" and "indigenous" peoples. In this, Chile differs from Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, where racial-ethnic mixing and hybridity occurred and were recognized in political cultures.

assimilation into the national mainstream was at once a result of ethnic degradation and a means of social mobility (Collredo-Mansfeld 2009). In this way, the 1993 Indigenous Law largely reproduced a bicultural approach that did little to respond to indigenous movement demands.⁹

Yet since the early 1990s, state-sponsored programs in education and health have prompted the recruitment of indigenous subjects into agencies, and subcontracting to indigenous-staffed NGOs, on the basis of individuals' educational credentials rather than their participation in social movements.¹⁰ As in other countries, Chile's "shift towards neoliberal social development models has placed more emphasis on stakeholder participation and developing human and social capital that is 'indigenous' to a particular area" (Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2005: 83). Employment for marginal subjects inevitably raises questions about the extent and scope for indigenous agency, and subaltern bureaucrats' relations with "constituent" groups in civil society.

Our reasons for pursuing this inquiry are three-fold. First, although discussions of the *indio permitido* correctly draw attention to the state's impulse to depoliticize indigenous movements, in our view they have been too quick to place such subjects into a political slot, applying a label chosen by the researcher rather than by participants themselves. A close reading of employees' explanations and analyses of state policy can help us begin to unpack the mechanisms by which diversely positioned, racialized employees situate themselves politically, the practices through and places in which they consider themselves to have agency, and the structural factors they must cope with (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Gershon 2011). As we will show, by listening to state employees we gain access to a series of politicized discourses and positionalities regarding the state and its multicultural reforms, articulated by subjects who self-identify as "subaltern" in diverse ways.

Certainly, to examine "the perspectives and actions of [indigenous state workers] is essential to understanding the ambiguities, complexities and mixed consequences of neoliberal multiculturalism" (Park and Richards 2007: 1320). But such ambiguities also adhere to non-indigenous subjects recruited into neoliberal statecraft (Gershon 2011), and therefore what difference race makes becomes an open question rather than a default explanation for reduced agency. Ambivalence about subaltern incorporation into the postcolonial state is also found among non-indigenous citizens who question the validity of multicultural programs (Hale 2006), including intercultural bilingual education (henceforth IBE). Given that a transnationally networked and

⁹ See Marimán 1995; Ortiz 2009; and Cañulef 1998, on late twentieth-century policy.

¹⁰ On Chile, see Park and Richards 2007: 1328; Postero 2007: 154; Boccara and Bolados 2010; and Crow 2011. On Latin America: Hale 2006; Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2003; 2005; and Postero 2007.

internationally recognized indigeneity has emerged in Latin America (Starn and de la Cadena 2007; Andolina, Laurie, and Radcliffe 2009), the Chilean case offers an opportunity to address the relationship between indigenous self-positioning and ambivalent positioning in neoliberal bureaucracies.

We also examine how diverse “indigenous” employees of an exclusionary state identify and portray the potentials for political maneuvering and the spaces where change might occur. Chile’s Program of Intercultural Bilingual Education (hereafter in its Spanish acronym PEIB) is one arena within which indigenous-state relations have remained relatively unconflicted, and one that has produced institutional, policy, and practical changes (see Haughney 2007). Overall, social policies for indigenous populations remain entrenched within the neoliberal macroeconomic and political-institutional system (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Boccara and Bolados 2010; Richards 2013). IBE was implemented as the result of two processes: indigenous people demanding political, social, and cultural rights, and states responding to pressures from international agencies and NGOs (see García 2005 on Peru; and Gustafson 2009 on Bolivia).

In Chile, interculturalism has become a key narrative since the return to democracy, presented by the state as the “political vindication of indigenous people” and their cultural rights (see Meer and Modood 2012).¹¹ In policy circles and academia, interculturalism has been interpreted in multiple and diverse ways that vary in how they articulate dimensions of democracy, justice, neoliberalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism strands. The ways in which interculturalism is interpreted and selectively articulated with these possible meanings can reveal the specific dynamics of subaltern positionalities in state intercultural programs. In Chile, we can place educational professionals along a continuum between functional interculturalism, which treats racial-ethnic difference within liberal terms and as something to be addressed by neoliberal statecraft, and critical interculturalism, which treats intercultural programs as colonizing mechanisms that perpetuate racial-ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities. These semantic parameters inform state employees’ engagements and positionality, as we will discuss.

Our second reason for examining this topic is that we think more attention needs to be paid to the imagined and emplaced geographies in which policy is envisaged, implemented, and contested.¹² Under neoliberal forms of governmentality, the depoliticization of policymaking has been associated with the

¹¹ Unlike Latin American countries, Chile only recently engaged with arguments about multiculturalism, as opposed to *interculturalism* (Government of Chile 2008).

¹² Geographers have long argued that society and space are mutually constituted, engaging material landscapes and geographically defined social relations in addition to discourses, representations, and geographical imaginations (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

global validation of neoliberal policies and the variegated geographies of their enactment (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Li 2007; Silva 2008). Neoliberal forms of governmentality tend to be understood by both practitioners and analysts as scale-neutral, premised upon autonomous rationalizers “all the way down” (Gershon 2011: 541). However, previous research on states’ neoliberalization and state-employees’ “technocratization” (Silva 1991: 336) has shown that global processes of neoliberal governance that facilitate technical professionals’ incorporation into state-craft continuously interact with—and are co-constituted alongside—“local”-national social and professional formations (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2003; 2005; Silva 2008). Opening these geographies to analytical scrutiny reveals how employees of neoliberal states comprehend and negotiate the multiple scales and sites through which multicultural reforms are designed to operate. Examining these sites and mental maps as an integral part of indigenous professionals’ outlooks permits a detailed, grounded analysis that acknowledges the historical and geographical dynamics of statecraft and difference (Larner 2003).

Third, we argue for the need to analyze relational processes of racialization and stigmatization, performance, and affect that underpin and inform the employment of (subaltern) professionals in neoliberal multicultural states. Accounting for these dynamics requires careful parsing of the racialized, postcolonial dimensions of power and associated neoliberal governmentality. Scholars studying neoliberal governmentality and those looking at indigenous incorporation into neoliberal multiculturalism have labeled state employees “hybrids.” For example, Chilean indigenous professionals are characterized as hybrids that shift uneasily between the binary of “Chilean” and “Mapuche” identities, which results in irresolvable tensions (Park and Richards 2007). Similarly, racially unmarked “technopols” acquire “hybrid competences at the crossroads of political economy and area studies” (Dezalay and Garth 2002: 174). In our view, such accounts truncate the analysis of the content and directions of power associated with state recruitment of subjects that are “white but not quite” (Bhabha 1984).

In Chile, two aspects come to the fore. First a contextual point with conceptual implications: the binary of Chilean/indigenous obscures processes of creative cultural bricolage, as well as, in some cases, the calculated re-representation of self as more national and less “indigenous” (through changing surnames, clothes, residence, language, and so forth). This dynamic of power requires careful analysis in order to identify the directions and consequences of hybridization, not merely in relation to visible cultural markers, but also, and crucially, in terms of the positionality of the self, a bureaucrat’s professional position, and wider social relations within which they are embedded (Gershon 2011). Second, the notion of hybridity has to be melded to a closer analysis of power in order to move away from assuming indigenous state employees are mere puppets of postcolonial or neoliberal power.

Homi Bhabha highlights how it is the dominant power embedded within post-colonial statecraft that wishes to create (post)colonial avatars, who he terms “mimic men” (1984; 1985). However, he emphasizes that the formation of mimic men does not guarantee subordination, since mimicry can be a means to elude control. Colonized subjects brought into the (post)colonial state can use state institutions simultaneously as a source of employment and as a launch-pad for resistance and critique (Loomba 2005: 79).¹³ Instead of being mere echo-chambers for state discourses of formal interculturalism, mimicry—that is, the resemblance of subaltern subjects to the obedient civil servant desired by (post)colonial power—raises questions about spaces for strategic maneuvering and the registers of resistance and accommodation.¹⁴

With these points in mind, we turn now to examine discursive engagements with interculturalism among Mapuche and non-Mapuche state employees in Chile’s intercultural, bilingual education system. We will explore the positionality of indigenous actors working at various levels in Chile’s Ministry of Education (henceforth MoE) and the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI).¹⁵ We draw from our interviews with diverse civil servants, intellectuals, and secondary school teachers, some of whom self-identify as indigenous, others as of mixed heritage, and still others as non-indigenous.¹⁶ We focus on ways in which state employees connected with intercultural education agendas and practice evaluate the materialities of change. Drawing on qualitative data from our long-term fieldwork in the Araucanía Region, we unpack the political and affective registers through which MoE and CONADI officials talk about interculturalism’s capacity to deliver social equity.

¹³ In this sense, indigenous staff recruited into the state as intercultural professionals are often coming from social movements that have a shared discourse, a point that our data shows indirectly.

¹⁴ Regarding Ecuador and Bolivia, the opening of professional careers to indigenous individuals dislodged a long-standing equation of education with assimilation into dominant national identities (Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2005; Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009).

¹⁵ CONADI’s national division employs seven civil servants to work on culture and education, all of them indigenous. At its regional office in the Araucanía, there were two new non-indigenous employees, who replaced our interviewees during the course of research. In Santiago’s PEIB head office, one non-indigenous director and two senior self-identified indigenous officials were employed, with two indigenous regional-level coordinators. Remaining PEIB staff members were technical advisors who visit schools. During our fieldwork, the ten technical advisors were all Mapuche and most were IBE-trained former teachers. All interviewees remain anonymous here to avoid compromising their professional integrity.

¹⁶ Forty-five in-depth interviews were conducted from 2011–2012 with Mapuche and non-indigenous civil servants, academics from education, and head-teachers and teachers in rural schools in the Araucanía region. Qualitative research focused on teachers’, pupils’, and policy-makers’ perspectives on the context, content, and classroom operation of education and IBE. State employees were asked about the process of IBE design and implementation, its establishment, and their personal experiences and perspectives.

INDIGENOUS STATE EMPLOYEES: BEYOND COOPTATION AND AMBIVALENCE

The employment of indigenous professionals in early IBE pilot schemes and the current ministerial IBE program incorporates their expertise and knowledge into the state.¹⁷ Given the ongoing and at times violent conflict between the Chilean state and indigenous groups, the intercultural education policy might be seen as a strategy for creating “authorized Indians” (*indios permitidos*) to work within the structured procedures of state bureaucracy. Analytically, the concept of authorized Indians presumes the incorporation into state projects of subalterns willing to relinquish racialized identifications and endorse state policy, and emphasizes depoliticized aspects over contestatory politics. However, the subaltern bureaucrats we interviewed went against this expectation by raising political dimensions. One state employee, an Aymara indigenous man from northern Chile, explicitly addressed the risk of cooptation. He highlighted how other leaders became *indios permitidos*, signaling his unwillingness to be placed in such a position: “The issue is that many of the leaders and teachers were co-opted by the state’s institutions. They were no longer the [community] voices—they were state employees. So they lost the opportunity to have an alternative voice. On the other hand, indigenous people’s demands became more evident in terms of natural resources and above all regarding lands” (senior official, CONADI National office, 2012).

Among participants in research on indigenous relationships with Latin America states this has been a common concern—that nominal positions within state bureaucracies are worth less than material gains for indigenous communities (e.g., Antileo 2012). Indigenous intellectuals and scholars have voiced the same trepidation. Indeed, over recent decades Mapuche organizations have focused on struggles for political autonomy and resource control that would bring full indigenous control over education in their communities. In Chile, the history of intercultural education has seen an increasing recruitment of indigenous individuals into intercultural policy sectors such as health, education, and development (see Crow 2011). In 1994, CONADI created a Culture and Education Unit, which designed a proposal for IBE based on new legal and institutional conditions (Cañulef 1998: 172). An MoE special commission on IBE, which included a number of indigenous schoolteachers and intellectuals,¹⁸ as well as pilot IBE schemes, generated

¹⁷ From the Ministry of Education, interviews were undertaken with the PEIB Santiago head office, including two indigenous employees and one non-indigenous one, two regional PEIB coordinators, and two Technical Pedagogical Advisors (ATPs), all Mapuche. At CONADI, interviews included two indigenous officials in the national directive for education and culture, and two regional officials (one Mapuche, one non-Mapuche).

¹⁸ Among the Mapuche were Eliseo Cañulef, Jose Calfuqueo, Juan Huenupi, Beatriz Painiqueo, Isolde Reuque, and José Santos Millao. Others, including Nilsa Rain, Pablo Marimán and Juan

state employment of indigenous professionals. When the official PEIB program was launched (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos 2009; Ortiz 2009), an indigenous bureaucratic presence was established and set to increase.¹⁹

Critiques of Formal Interculturalism

In what follows, we will analyze six idioms through which employees involved in IBE programs described to us their roles and agency, discussed the politics of difference in Chile, and represented alternatives to existing policy and practice. We present these discursive registers according to their significance within interviews.²⁰ State interculturalism was depicted by many of our informants not as a technical and pedagogic challenge—something requiring mere effective delivery and communication—but rather as an intrinsically political dilemma, since it raises contentious questions about plurality, diversity, and policy design in a diverse society. These issues continuously disrupt efforts to create technocratic routines (Li 2007; on Chile, see Montecinos and Williamson 2011). Across all levels of seniority, interviewees were overwhelmingly skeptical about the priorities or motives that led the government to acknowledge indigenous demands for intercultural education. One MoE official who was involved in the initiation of the IBE program distanced himself from politicians who saw IBE's inclusion in the Indigenous Law as a “problem” that could be dealt with in a contained and top-down manner. He recalled, “They talked to me about this problem, ‘We have a problem; there’s a problem here.’ That word problem appeared constantly” (non-indigenous, former head of PEIB, 2012). Positioned at a remove from the problematization of indigenous demands, he critically situated reforms within a political agenda.

These points were confirmed and extended by interviewees who highlighted a breach between national policy and the types of demands being made by indigenous populations at the grassroots. An official at the regional CONADI office suggested that interculturalism has become a narrative of inclusion that is ingrained in government offices and official documentation, but does not resonate in communities, where demands are grounded in themes of cultural and territorial recuperation and autonomy (male, non-indigenous, 2011). While the subaltern bureaucrats articulated a self-reflexivity

Alvarez Ticuna, had already systematically evaluated grassroots IBE practices through NGOs and the Catholic Church.

¹⁹ PEIB was implemented in 160 primary schools; nine hundred teachers received IBE training, and traditional educators (indigenous elders chosen by communities) were incorporated into classrooms (PEIB-Orígenes 2011: 8; see Boccara and Bolados 2010; Richards 2013).

²⁰ These dimensions did not arise from direct questions, but emerged from post-interview coding and analysis. Most interviewees distinguished their position within the state—their official role and IBE's institutionalization—from their personal perspectives regarding the state's intentionality in implementing intercultural practices.

characteristic of neoliberal expectations of individuals (Gershon 2011), they distanced themselves from state policies, which they identified as largely formal and functional measures. As already noted, functional interculturalism is premised on a symbolic recognition of difference and a commitment to mutual recognition between subjects who come from different cultural situations. From a functional perspective, intercultural bilingual education seeks to add or accommodate diversity into the existing national model for education, and intercultural policies are adopted as a means to reduce or avoid ethnic conflict while doing little to address racial and class hierarchies and exclusion (Walsh 2010). The institutional history of Chile's formal IBE and the social relations that ground it can be usefully understood as products of formal or functional interculturalism.

A number of our interlocutors said the influence of multilateral agencies has been key to forcing the implementation of IBE policy. State-led interculturalism is widely seen as a global-transnational imposition from outside the country, as one informant noted: "We have taken on the issue of intercultural bilingual education because there was also pressure applied. It [IBE] is a task the state is obliged to fulfill since the Inter-American Bank and the World Bank asked for the matter of interculturalism [to be addressed]. And the state responds precisely to their interests" (male, MoE Santiago, PROEIB Andes graduate, Mapuche *lonko*).²¹

Other interviewees identified the process through which the polarization of indigenous/non-indigenous differences has combined with the imposition of transnational policy agendas to produce state multicultural rhetoric rather than a political will for actual change. Although the state parrots a globally-acceptable narrative, indigenous state employees suggest that Chilean governments have not known how to implement transformative reform: "President [Piñera] put the indigenous issue on his governmental agenda and his slogan was to face up to the country, though I don't know. Like it or not, we know that during that government—above all from Ricardo Lagos' government onward—they never knew how to handle the indigenous issue, that's for sure" (female, MoE Santiago, non-indigenous, 2012).

This state employee thereby positions herself as knowing more about the indigenous requirements than do policymakers or politicians, while she also points out the gap between state rhetoric and state practice. Many indigenous state employees and their allies interpret state interculturalism from such critical perspectives, and not as neoliberal technocrats who apply their bundle of skills in ways consistent with producing culture as a resource to be treated within the market (Andolina, Laurie, and Radcliffe 2009; Gershon 2011).

²¹ *Lonko* is the Mapuche term for *cacique*, or head of a community in religious and administrative matters. Interviewees are identified here according to their current, personalized self-positioning within Chile's racial-ethnic dynamics.

Bhabha talks about the creation of “double vision” in postcolonial situations, which “by disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority” (Bhabha 1984: 129; see De la Maza 2012 for a parallel Chilean example). In this case, indigenous state workers’ double vision of intercultural education—their juxtaposition of its rhetoric and its practice—begins to unravel the state’s authority to define and contain what interculturalism means. This doubleness also appears in accounts of who makes up the state. Indigenous bureaucrats and their allied employees talked about other state functionaries as different from themselves: “The guys who know nothing decide for us; that is what couldn’t be changed [even] with the law. Nor did they manage to get interculturalism established for the whole [education] system. It was put in there as a principle, and as you know, principles decorate documents and that’s as far as they go” (female, self-identified Mapuche intellectual, former teacher, 2012).

Indigenous state employees portray national policy commitments as mere formalities, as adornments to the state’s appearance on the global stage. As one self-identified indigenous intellectual involved in policy debates stated, “Politically [the curriculum] contains a very nice discourse, but in practice it doesn’t readily incorporate the knowledges of the children themselves” (male, self-identified Mapuche, 2012). In summary, indigenous officials characterize Chilean IBE as functional, and through this description they distance themselves from the state’s motives for and means of implementing it.

The Difference that Experience Makes: “Better indigenous than non-indigenous professionals”

The majority of interviewees said that their motivation for accepting state positions was to avoid the alternative of leaving non-indigenous technopols in charge. Echoing earlier research among neoliberal, multicultural state employees in Chile (Park and Richards 2007: 1333), one respondent suggested, “It’s better to be on [the MoE’s] side, as a way of following them up, supervising the work the Ministry of Education does. And that is why we are supporting [IBE].... Ideally we would be in charge by ourselves, but we do not yet have an institutional presence or the experience. At the end of the day, we need to create intercultural people—that is also part of an ongoing process and what we are a part of” (male, self-identified Mapuche, in IBE-implementing NGO).

Respondents had technical and professional qualifications for employment, thus fitting the neoliberal requirement for a flexible bundle of skills (Gershon 2011), but they also highlighted their attitudinal positioning in ways that differentiated them from most non-indigenous functionaries. Instead of faceless technopols, interviewees stressed embodied educational and political experiences that informed their practices of statecraft. On one hand, some IBE recruits had distinctive educational histories linked to transnational, indigenous, movement-led curricula and to the critical study of

multiculturalism; at least two interviewees had MA degrees from the renowned, transnationally staffed PROEIB course in Cochabamba, Bolivia, which provided them with comparative and critical perspectives on Latin American IBE (Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2005; Andolina, Laurie, and Radcliffe 2009: ch. 5).²² At the same time, interviewees remained active in Mapuche organizations while employed by the state. While it is true that the official establishment of IBE resulted in the incorporation of indigenous professionals into state positions, it also galvanized support among Mapuche and non-Mapuche civil organizations, largely on a voluntary basis, outside and parallel to the state school system. State employees also remained politically active outside of office hours, like the interviewee who lobbied through an indigenous rights organization to force inclusion of indigenous language rights in the 2009 General Education Law.

Unlike previous accounts of indigenous experiences of neoliberal multiculturalism, in which political activity outside the workplace has been largely unexamined, this evidence suggests that Chilean indigenous functionaries do not consider themselves apolitical and that state employment does not preclude activism. That said, respondents felt they could personally achieve little within their jobs because they were often overworked and burdened by bureaucratic duties, faced daily racial discrimination, and lacked status in office politics and institutional hierarchies. They presented these experiences as undermining the aspirations behind IBE's implementation. Rather than merely fulfilling the neoliberal ideal of local cultural knowledge and requisite professional knowledge (see Gershon 2011: 539), the subaltern bureaucrats that we interviewed self-reflexively embedded themselves within networked collectivities, some more politicized and some more culturalist.

Interculturalism as Discipline and Containment

Another register apparent in interviews was a widespread disillusionment with intercultural policies, and critical evaluations of how such policies work to contain and discipline expressions of indigenous agency. Critiques highlighted the program's small size and limited resources, and that IBE has only been instituted for primary education for indigenous children. In other words, these subaltern bureaucrats envisioned themselves less as neoliberal technopols (combining competences in local realities with neoliberal formulas of human capital and financial efficiency) and more as subalterns advocating a challenge to the postcolonial state. "In terms of the general tendency of national policy there is little that can really be done in [state] IBE. It is such a small, insignificant division that is also underappreciated. It is like in the furthest bit [of the policy]. The national curriculum is everything and the intercultural part is a

²² We did not ask all interviewees about their educational histories.

small branch, so to speak. We are considered to be the differentiated *Other*, but with a lower status and less resources” (male, MoE Santiago, Mapuche *lonko*).

In this commentary and others, state employees draw attention to structured limitations on intercultural education, with financial constraints compounding low status. Neoliberal controls over budgets were blamed for the systematic under-resourcing and inadequate staffing of IBE projects. As one respondent declared, IBE “requires resources; that requires specialized people; that requires research; that requires a *significant body* whereby regional universities, for example, should be on board in its development, and they’re not” (self-identified Mapuche, regional CONADI, 2011, original emphasis). State employees in this way distinguish themselves from neoliberal technopols, articulating the priorities of intercultural agendas and thereby “subtly changing [the state’s] terms” (Bhabha 1985: 160).

Interviewees also pointed out the limitations inherent in the IBE curriculum structure. Despite indigenous participation in the MoE, education continues to perpetuate the valuation of dominant practices, goals, and educational outcomes, all of which are racialized as white and do not reflect the country’s epistemological, pedagogic, and linguistic-cultural diversity (see Martínez and De la Torre 2010, on Ecuador). Interviewees perceived little possibility of interculturalism being implemented in ways that work toward inclusion of indigenous knowledges. Within IBE guidelines and practice, teaching materials related to indigenous practice and history are compartmentalized and treated as small-scale additions to a national curriculum whose normalized status remains completely secure: “If teachers were to deal with Mapuche knowledges and Western knowledges in their classrooms, they would leave out half the national curriculum over the school year. That’s because it is not designed to deal with [indigenous knowledges]” (self-identified Mapuche, IBE teacher, 2012).

These comments highlight the challenges associated with inserting decolonizing content such as indigenous epistemologies or de-colonial pedagogies; the classroom is always already constructed as a site for assimilation, the reproduction of hierarchy, and denial of alterity. Through such statements, indigenous state employees signaled their critical distance from functional interculturalism and their sympathy with critical interculturalism. The latter looks to dissect the colonial power hierarchies of social institutions, including intercultural education programs, and the ways they perpetuate inequalities (Walsh 2010; 2007).²³ From this analytical and political perspective, the state instrumentally deploys intercultural policy to wield hegemonic power over racial, class, and gender subalterns, yet such policy remains embedded within a wider landscape of political struggle to challenge coloniality. There

²³ In this sense, critical interculturalism draws from critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and multicultural education, to unpack the whitening effects of education, unequal power in educational institutions, and racialized policy.

is a risk that intercultural policy will be a concession that is undertaken reluctantly and empties difference of effective significance.

State employees also highlighted how IBE was constituted as valid only for certain subjects and spaces within the nation-state. First, they pointed to the absence of state-sponsored IBE after primary schooling in Chile as evidence of a functional interculturalism that rejects the formation of indigenous leaders and political empowerment. They also observed how IBE is provided only in areas where indigenous populations are a majority. Restricting IBE to primary education in indigenous-majority districts means, according to these respondents, that Chilean society as a whole does not have to confront its racism and the occlusion of heterogeneous, non-dominant epistemologies. Consequently, according to several informants, IBE has become a byword for indigenous education, a way to assimilate subaltern pupils into the mainstream while appeasing critics of the Western education model. One regional official told us, "I would say that for a long time intercultural bilingual education has been oriented toward satisfying the requirements of Western society. It is written for the West, translated for the West, and specific policies are developed for the West" (male, self-identified Mapuche, CONADI, 2011).

According to these interviewees, official IBE policy focuses on preparing indigenous children for integration into what the state terms "global society."²⁴ Pro-indigenous state employees noted that indigenous populations are already adept at crossing between non-indigenous society and indigenous society, while non-indigenous subjects are not: "This country lacks interculturalism. Recently, I have realized that ultimately we indigenous people are fairly intercultural, but [non-indigenous] Chileans are not. They need more [interculturalism] than we do, because they continue to see the world from a single perspective and everything else is left out" (female, self-identified Mapuche, intellectual, former teacher, 2012).

Some informants rejected mainstream distinctions between (white) global citizens and (indigenous) non-citizens, and drew on subaltern epistemologies and imagined geographies to do so. If IBE's containment within indigenous-majority areas constrained its reach and legitimacy, interviewees pointed out, this was compounded by a governmental decree that gave parents and pupils the right to opt out. In this ambiguously worded decree on the parameters of IBE, rights are withdrawn just at the point where they have been established. As such, the decree amounts to an "invisible asterix," a legal intervention to limit the extent and depth of subaltern indigenous rights by creating an exception to the application of rights (Engle 2010). In situations where parents think

²⁴ The Indigenous Law's Article 32 states, "The National Indigenous Development Corporation in areas of high indigenous density, ... will develop a system of Intercultural Bilingual Education with a view to preparing the educated indigenous to interact (*desenvolverse*) in an adequate way within their society of origin and in global society."

that intercultural education is prejudicial to their children's opportunities (see García 2005 on Peru), the Chilean decree frames interculturalism as a form of neoliberal citizenship constituted as "individual choice" in an educational market, rather than as a political achievement. Indigenous employees and their allies clearly understood the ways in which "the unitary voice of command is interrupted by questions that arise from ... heterogeneous sites and circuits of power" (Bhabha 1985: 158). According to one informant, "The issue of interculturalism is only thought about in relation to the Mapuche. *It isn't* thought about in relation to the whole society" (male, self-identified indigenous, regional MoE, 2011, his emphasis). Questioning the scope and driving agenda behind state IBE, employees interrupt the "unitary voice of command" (ibid.) embodied in state policy and institutions vis-à-vis the indigenous population.

The Containment of IBE versus the Ubiquity of Racism

Several of Chile's diverse IBE employees also brought to the fore a critical account of the stigmatizing and exclusionary effects of anti-indigenous racism, which informed their discourses around state employment, policy objectives, and the privileged spaces for change. These interviewees asserted that, despite advances, intercultural policy has failed to challenge the widespread racism that exists in the education system and Chilean society as a whole. In the discourses of subaltern functionaries, racism exceeds the capacity of current IBE policy to address it. "There is a racism that blocks any action to incorporate sociocultural differences—and especially linguistic differences and indigenous knowledges—into the school environment. Because the school, by its very definition, is conceived of in Chile as homogenizing. That is to say, the fewer the differences between children at the end of the education process the better for Chilean society" (male, self-identified Mapuche, 2012). While in some places and times intercultural education can offer a vehicle for directly challenging racism and generating "a new dialogue on citizenship" (Gustafson 2009: 256 on Bolivia), the Chilean state employees portrayed themselves as trapped between a rigid interpretation of interculturalism and an unacknowledged and pervasive racism.

One of the strongest concerns expressed by interviewees was that IBE was a move of paternalistic postcolonial governmentality, and Mapuche educators and policymakers perceived state attempts at IBE as condescending. They described state intercultural measures sarcastically as being carried out within the affective tone of *con cariño* ("with affection"), a term senior family members use to describe relations with their juniors. In light of colonial histories, state-indigenous relationships are judged as colonizing, as ways of (yet again) treating indigenous peoples as childlike minors and incomplete subjects, unworthy of full citizenship and juridical status (Wade 1997). One state employee told us, "A lot of head teachers ... said to me, 'How nice interculturalism is! How nice!'

And that is as far as their analysis goes. ‘How nice!’ in an unexpectedly romantic and folkloric way. And one tries to delve deeper: ‘But what do you think about it? Why would you want to implement interculturalism?’ Well, they come out with phrases like, ‘Well, it’s important to protect the culture’” (female, self-identified Mapuche, regional MoE, 2012).

Postcolonial statecraft hence becomes “not opposed to the affective, but about its mastery” (Stoler 2004: 10), the re-deployment of emotional registers that speak more to a dominant will to power than to subalterns’ nonconformity with dominant dispositions. In this vein, Mapuche functionaries perceived state actions as indicative of well-rehearsed gestures of “respect,” a behavior entrenched in colonial affective hierarchies and that also left them firmly in place. Here indigenous functionaries perceived IBE in ways that harmonized with critical interculturalism’s account of the strategic deployment of IBE as a means to disempower racialized subalterns. Formal interculturalism offers the subaltern subject a place *within* an unquestioned and epistemologically static national context that reinforces racial hierarchies and dynamics (Chioldi 2005). In this way, interculturalism quickly becomes biculturalism, which presumes and reproduces the indigenous and the non-indigenous as separate socio-cultures.

In opposition to these forms of power, indigenous employees and their allies spoke at length about the validity, coherence, and pedagogic potential of indigenous epistemologies. “From the starting point of Western society’s language, from Western society’s *codes*, it is very difficult to advance with real equality. We could suggest that we might start by working up from indigenous society’s language structure.... In Mapuche society, we would be able to talk about using the codes and signifiers of indigenous society” (male, self-identified Mapuche, CONADI, 2011).

Although the state recruited these subalterns on the basis of a skills set, the functionaries brought to their employment a viewpoint and set of knowledges that exceeded and indeed challenged the premise of neoliberal, human capital educational policy. The slippage away from and resistance toward statecraft’s unquestioned reproduction of racial difference and hierarchy came through clearly. While Bhabha highlights how subalterns “do this under the eye of authority, through the production of ‘partial’ knowledges and positionalities” (1985: 160), the Chilean case brings home that preexisting (though not timeless) Other knowledges reveal the cracks in colonial power.²⁵

Interculturalism and Cultural Difference

Among critical educators, one of the most prominent explanations for why IBE is necessary is that it affirms or strengthens ethnic identity (Cañulef 1998;

²⁵ A full discussion of Other knowledges is beyond this paper’s scope; see, among others, Carrihuentro 2007.

López and Küper 2002). An examination of indigenous recruitment into neoliberal statecraft via a critical reading of Bhabha suggests that, counter to previous interpretations, hybridity is not located within Mapuche subjects but is instead a fundamental problem for dominant forms of representation that permit Other “‘denied’ knowledges to enter the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority” (1985: 156). Critics of functional interculturalism, including our informants, argue that teaching indigenous children about their own identity is not just a matter of intraculturalism within communities and families; it is through diversifying social relationships that one learns the value of the other.

This raises the question of why IBE is restricted to areas of high-density, indigenous populations. Our interviewees concluded that interculturalism is a term restricted to the indigenous for their “development.” It positions them in a binary with other Chileans as the undeveloped and the developed, respectively (e.g., a self-identified Mapuche, IBE school director, 2012). Echoing critical intercultural viewpoints (e.g., Giroux 1992), our respondents argued that existing pedagogies in schools with diverse cultures depoliticize and de-historicize cultural differences so as to present neutralized forms of tolerance that fail to address social injustice or structural inequalities. One functionary provided a neat summary of IBE’s structural basis in state biculturalism: “Because in Chile’s national model, we are not talking about [various] models for forming people; we are talking about education in *one model*, just one model that is monocultural in its vision and intentions” (male, MoE Santiago, PROEIB Andes graduate, *lonko*, his emphasis).

Intercultural education thereby reinforces a politics of cultural and racialized dichotomies between “Chileans” and indigenous subjects (Chiodi 2005). Bicultural hierarchies are constituted in education through the national curriculum and IBE “add-ons,” the retention of classic classroom practices and pedagogies, the treatment of indigenous languages as foreign languages, and unquestioned Western evaluation standards. An indigenous official in the PEIB office argued that this was a further instance of the Chilean state determining what counts as appropriate development, which “deforms individuals rather than forming them” through a monocultural model (self-identified Mapuche, national MoE, 2011). Indigenous intellectuals argue that IBE has become a postcolonial gesture of power that keeps subordination in place.

Further, formal interculturalism is conceptually restricted to cultural expressions—languages, customs, and knowledges—and seeks positive discrimination on behalf of indigenous populations while rejecting their demands for recognition as “a people” (ibid.: 46–48). The state’s recognition of cultural diversity is carefully and precisely composed to sidestep recognition of collective rights and self-governance (Engle 2010). In the face of this, subaltern functionaries criticize the state’s limited incorporation of Other practices as expressing more the giver’s supposed generosity than the justice of subaltern

demands (Kapoor 2008: ch. 5). Chile's intercultural education thereby works to create a subaltern subject of neoliberal interculturalism who is, to extend Bhabha's (1984: 126) notion, almost a Chilean citizen, almost an autonomous subject, but not quite.

It is striking how some subaltern bureaucrats situate themselves politically and affectively as fundamentally opposed to the state's policy and its conception of citizenship. In this sense they are bureaucrats alienated from their own bureaucracy. By parsing the nature of hybridity that emerges from subaltern recruitment into a multicultural, neoliberal civil service, our Chilean case reveals how neoliberal precepts are routinely rejected, as are the politics of multicultural difference espoused by the state and foundational to its policies. These positionalities, in turn, inform the political positionalities that people adopt.

Critical Interculturalism among State Employees

A majority of actors involved in educational planning and implementation, in both the private and public sectors, expressed an active interest in further reform of IBE. Intercultural state policy is, from their perspective, an ongoing process or project rather than an actually existing achievement. Central to these visions for change was the demand for new spaces for dialogue and radical recognition, both inside and outside the classroom. As one official told us, "The idea is to take action, and to work in indigenous territories, in the *comunas*, in the regions where the necessary facilities are made available, in order to expand. [The goal is] to create a dynamism, recover and recreate the language, and in the classrooms to make it consistent" (male, self-identified indigenous, CONADI, 2012).

His mention of the spaces for subaltern projects illustrates how Mapuche officials' views swung from optimism to consternation. Others spoke explicitly about the need for critical interculturalism: "In my opinion, a dialogue of [different] knowledges is necessary. So the reconstruction of Mapuche or indigenous knowledges is necessary because only then can intercultural or bilingual relations advance" (male, self-identified Mapuche, CONADI, 2011). Others spoke clearly about decolonization in a way that distanced them discursively from the policy offered in postcolonial state formation: "As we work on decolonizing in this process, we decolonize ourselves and every one of the traditional educators decolonizes themselves as we deepen our knowledge, [although] it is a long process" (male, self-identified indigenous, education NGO, 2012).²⁶ Subaltern bureaucrats and their allies drew on indigenous and non-indigenous struggles to diversify their sources of

²⁶ This respondent continued, "I don't think that [formal] interculturalism will save us. A [critical] model of intercultural education does not exist. It simply does not exist. I mean, the concept is there but not the practice."

ideas, knowledge, and education, and create the possibility of a new epistemological space and political autonomy.

Interviewees envisioned IBE within the spaces of schools and classrooms mainly in terms of its capacity to permit the cultural recovery of an Other epistemology and pedagogy, generally labeled *lo propio* (“what is ours”). Indigenous demands for IBE consistently focus on regaining control over aspects of cultural knowledge (*lo propio*) that have historically been excluded from classrooms (see Walsh 2000; Garcia 2005; Gustafson 2009). By placing the emphasis on indigenous creativity, interviewees challenged elite discourses that emphasize cultural authenticity as the means to claim authority: “I see this [state IBE] process as a transition leading in the end to us recovering what is ours. We can’t start today with what is ours because there are many adverse factors. But [state IBE] can be a bridge for us to get back to that, because we have the option of either moving into the system, or toward our own [education system]” (male, self-identified Mapuche, educationalist, 2012). Accordingly, a number of interviewees suggested that their role was to foment a profound shift in affective positioning among indigenous pupils toward self-respect and ethnic valorization. Similar expressions are found among indigenous functionaries elsewhere in the Chilean state (see De la Maza 2012).

Such views echo aforementioned criticisms of state interculturalism for its superficial demonstrations of respect and its lack of commitment to truly challenging racial hierarchies. State employees in the field of Chilean IBE, in dialogue with indigenous intellectuals, voice highly skeptical perspectives on state agendas. Serving the state, according to their comments, does not require one to become a “permitted indian,” and they see their primary aspiration as to bring about the incorporation of what is epistemologically distinctive.

SPACES FOR SUBALTERN AGENCY

In summary, indigenous subaltern employees viewed Chilean state policy as being largely formal and cosmetic. Although they remained skeptical about their own room for maneuver, they argued that their employment nonetheless made it more likely that the state would incorporate or validate broader and critical agendas. This informed their sense of their doubleness. Keeping these complex positionings regarding education and difference in mind, we now turn to ways in which state employees envisage and imagine the spaces within which (formal or critical) interculturalism can be put in place and the practices through which it can be realized. As the above quotations show, indigenous people and their non-indigenous allies working in the Chilean state IBE program clearly perceive, articulate, and imagine spaces and sites through which policy can be implemented or projected. They are highly conscious of the variegated geographies of neoliberal interculturalism (see Larner 2003; Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2005). Whilst their scope for action is

restricted at a national level, several interviewees argued that at the local level there are opportunities for moving beyond the “indigenous slot” (Li 2000). According to López and Küper, IBE has the potential to substantially modify local spaces by bringing “the school even closer to the daily life and community of the people it serve[s],” and thereby influence national spaces from below (2002: 30). Our study of subaltern bureaucrat perspectives in Chilean IBE suggests that the schoolroom represents an imagined and emplaced setting for a critical and ethical interculturalism. Classroom-based agendas and practices have been bolstered during the past twenty years by practical measures brought about by national and regional bureaucrats, including the elements quoted above. Mapuzungun language teaching is being rolled out through successive primary grades (and in a handful of secondary schools), two universities offer IBE teacher training, and traditional educators are trained to take classes rather than accompany “mainstream” teachers.²⁷ In some cases indigenous groups and settlements have instituted their own educational establishments outside the framework of MoE programs, as, for example, in the Araucanía (Luna 2014).

Teachers at intercultural secondary schools emphasized how the legal framework permitted work within the classroom that challenges racial hierarchies. There, a teacher has flexibility in choosing the pedagogy they employ, which offers the possibility of critical intercultural practice: “Many cultural elements are being actively practiced [in the school], like the majority of rituals celebrated in the area. So I think that this is an advantage that ought to oblige the Ministry of Education to be more flexible and adapt the curricula in this area. However, I always say that in the end it is the teachers’ responsibility” (male, self-identified Mapuche teacher, 2012).

Agency comes about through school staff taking responsibility for the content and purpose of their teaching. That is to say, this was not a vision of a neoliberal individualization of responsibility, but instead represented a personal commitment to a critical de-colonial agenda. Two teachers in an intercultural secondary school argued that in the classroom certain pedagogic practices are implemented in order to reorient hierarchies between knowledges and socio-cultural groups. In the words of one:

Now I think that what the teachers place the greatest emphasis on is the issue of interculturalism. Not on the incorporation of Mapuche knowledge, because there are differences [in practice among teachers]. One is the incorporation of Mapuche thought, which not all teach. But on the issue of what is valuable about interculturalism, I think that we all look to the same goal—respect for each other, the importance of difference, tolerance, and that sort of thing (male, self-identified Mapuche, teacher and intellectual, 2012).

Other interviewees argued that only a critical intercultural education placed firmly in the hands of indigenous leaders will be sufficient, with their assuming

²⁷ The training of teachers and traditional educators was beyond the scope of our research.

responsibility for delivery of cultural practice (for example, a female, not identified as indigenous, IBE educationalist, 2012).

Critical intercultural education is linked semantically with a new set of bodily dispositions, forms of knowledge production, and affective registers: “The best way to learn . . . is to be in [direct] contact with [indigenous] cultural practices, to participate in them, apart from the theory that one can learn in books, or classes, or in relations with people who are different” (female, self-identified non-indigenous, educationalist, 2012). The classroom, then, was widely seen to be a key site for critical interculturalism in practice. The school’s most effective work was in teaching pupils to respect Mapuche identity as a valid and valuable subject, advocating empathetic relations, and aiming for ethical social relations (Altarejos Martinez 2006). This form of interculturalism seeks to rise above multiculturalism as condescending respect and create forms of empathy for and solidarity with the subaltern (Abdallah-Preteuille 2006). According to the subaltern bureaucrats who worked closely with teachers, the challenge remains to turn these accepted practices into a broader and transformative ethics, as one teacher suggested, “In the twenty-first century, it is very important for us to be intercultural. The nationalist paradigm must be replaced; it has caused too many problems and has to be transcended. So we focus on [the idea that] interculturalism is a modern ethical position” (female, self-identified Mapuche, teacher, 2012).

Indigenous state employees working in education envisioned the classroom, and the affective and ethical relations formed there between teacher, pupil, and indigenous cultural practices, as the site where a hybrid practice “from below” can be instituted and made meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS

Beyond the abstractions of political philosophy or the legal emplacement of rights, indigenous professionalization and the emergence of state bureaucracies staffed by indigenous intellectuals, leaders, and educated elites remains under-explored. This even though their emergence is crucial to understanding the shifting nature of racial formations and racialized exclusion in the twenty-first century. While in this paper we extend ethnographic explorations of state formation, we are also contributing to debates about the scope for political agency among racialized subalterns in their interactions with neoliberal state institutionality. We investigated practical consequences of devolving intercultural management and delivery to indigenous people who are newly incorporated into state structures, and what we found highlights the existence of entangled arenas of power and resistance.

Our analysis reveals how indigenous state employees and non-indigenous allies retain a critical sensibility regarding the nature of government practices and the possibilities for change. Although politically our respondents varied from critical to more socially conservative, these variations did not map directly

onto an indigenous/non-indigenous distinction. Nonetheless, most indigenous professionals' statements about state-led multiculturalism did express highly politicized visions grounded in diverse subaltern projects and practices. Chile developed its intercultural education policy within the terms of formal or managed interculturalism. Yet indigenous and non-indigenous state employees widely and systematically challenged interculturalism's formal dimensions, though this did not interrupt the neoliberal project (Goodale and Postero 2013).²⁸

Nevertheless, rather than passively accepting or being co-opted into governmentality, the interviewees consistently expressed interests, political perspectives, and policy interpretations that harmonized with subaltern and de-colonial interpretations of interculturalism. In light of this, we have worked to frame such perspectives as forms of neoliberal agency (Gershon 2011), which requires a more careful dissection of power and difference than has been offered by accounts of state employees' hybridity. To the extent that the technopol of neoliberalism operates in a "fractal" manner (ibid.: 541), it relies upon the routinization of conduct, equally and uniformly, at every level, and the same can be said of postcolonial state attempts to produce mimic men. Utilizing Bhabha's theoretical insights concerning the limits to colonial power (1984; 1985), we have reinterpreted indigenous state employees (and non-indigenous allies) as mimic men. But the Chilean case reveals how both mimicry and neoliberalism open up opportunities for subaltern action.

Our Chilean material highlights the differentiated positionality of indigenous employees who actively seize opportunities for critique and localized interventions. These owe less to state-enabled hegemony and more to a subaltern positionality sustained at a critical remove from the state's policies, one that indirectly brings these employees into contradiction with the neoliberal precepts that inform policy. One way Chilean indigenous educational professionals articulate this positionality is through a notion of cultural difference—"lo propio." This translates not into subaltern enrolment in state biculturalism, but rather into an emergent sense of how the postcolonial state could be re-made by simultaneously working from within and from outside of the state. This said, Chile's unexamined racism and the tenacity of European interpretations of good governance limit the extent to which the de-colonial views expressed by indigenous and non-indigenous state functionaries can be translated into policy initiatives with national reach.

²⁸ Chilean state employees' critiques and epistemologies do echo those found in Latin American countries influenced by post-neoliberalism and decolonization. It remains to be seen how President Bachelet's second-term commitment to education and social democracy might change these dynamics.

The indigenous bureaucrats employed in the service of Chile's intercultural education are active participants in crafting postcolonial rule on the borders of its own contradictions. The term "hybrid" has been used to refer to both racial subalterns and neoliberal technocrats. We argue that the types of power, cultural reference points, and slippages in meaning found in Chilean neoliberal multiculturalism permit us to identify the postcolonial features of this ambivalent positioning. Examination of how the epistemologies emerging from subaltern politics, together with forms of social connection outside the frame of neoliberal statecraft, are interconnected and practiced provides insights that can move forward debates around subaltern agency and postcolonial statecraft. Indigenous state employees and their allies have insightfully dissected the state's ambivalence towards intercultural policy, while remaining politicized. We have identified several dimensions that, at least in the context of Chilean intercultural education, allow us to distinguish neoliberal dimensions from racial subaltern aspects. With respect to racialized subaltern status, interviewees made regular reference to Other epistemologies, and critiques of the workings of colonial power.

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Abstract: What is the experience of a racial subaltern on becoming an employee of a postcolonial state? Latin America has undertaken widespread multicultural state reform, often in response to pressure from nation-wide social movements and transnational human rights activism. This provides us with a window into ways in which subaltern individuals negotiate their place in a historically exclusionary state with norms of whiteness, European codes, and literal and metaphorical distance from marginal populations. Previous research has emphasized the cooptation of subaltern actors by neoliberal postcolonial states, but we argue that a close reading of subaltern accounts yields important insights into their experiences of ambivalence, ambiguity, and agency. Neoliberal state restructuring entrained a parallel, and in many cases interconnected process that generated ambivalence among civil servants. We draw on interviews with state employees associated with multicultural educational reforms in Chile to document the registers through which indigenous subalterns position themselves regarding the politics of interculturalism and the costs of serving the state.