

Understanding Development Bureaucracies: A Case Study of Mexico's Rural Development Policy

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To the memory of Mau;
you always will be with us

Abstract

This research is about how development practice is produced by development bureaucracies. In 2001, the Mexican Congress enacted a new national law called *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (Sustainable Rural Development Act) seeking to produce the radical change that the Mexican rural sector needed to improve the social and economic conditions of the rural population. Its policy design was based on the dominant paradigm of rural development, of which ideas such as *sustainable livelihoods*, *decentralisation* and *community participation* compose the core elements. Ten years since the launch of this policy it has not triggered the expected changes in social and economic conditions in rural Mexico.

This work seeks to provide grounded explanations about why some 'good' development policies produce unexpected outcomes. The research focus is on understanding how development bureaucracies translate the directives of development programmes. It is possible to see their influence on policy outcomes and in the rationale behind the decisions made by bureaucratic actors in the implementation arena.

Making use of actor-oriented approaches, this thesis develops a case study that describes how, responding to multiple realities, bureaucratic actors make their decisions in the implementation arena. It analyses the different rationales by which bureaucracies at different levels interpret and produce meaning from the notions of decentralisation and community participation in the process of the implementation of Mexico's *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable*.

The case study shows that development bureaucracies play a key role in the generation of policy outcomes. It shows that Mexican development bureaucracies have a particular rationale that is significantly different from the implicit assumptions made in the design of the planned intervention and in which informal institutions such as *compadrazgo* and clientelism are used strategically by bureaucratic actors to produce development practice. The main conclusion of the thesis is that understanding development bureaucracies' rationales provides coherent explanations about the apparently contradictory outcomes produced by novel policy approaches in developing countries.

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Part 1. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Chapter 1. Introduction

This research is about how development practice is produced by development bureaucracies. During the last seven years I have closely observed how huge amounts of public resources have been spent in the name of a 'new' paradigm of sustainable rural development in Mexico – in 2010 alone the annual budget for this purpose was 21 billion US dollars (Federación, 2010). In the course of these ten years I have also witnessed how social and economic conditions in rural Mexico have not changed as expected as a result of this public expenditure.

Mexico is a country that has tested several development paradigms. From the 1950s to the 2000s, the country's rural development policies have been shaped by different development ideas such as the modernisation of production processes, the transformation approach, economies of scale, redistribution with growth, induced innovation, the Green Revolution, food security, environmental sustainability, free markets, small-scale economies and sustainable livelihoods, among many others (Kay, 1989; 2001; Caballero, 1990; 2006; Pérez and Caballero, 2003). Several policy instruments and administrative models were designed to implement such approaches including government programmes based on micro-credit, price compensations, subsidies for supplies, technology transfer, the liberalisation of agricultural product pricing, cash transfers, seasonal jobs, capacity building and land reforms (Tello, 1990; Caballero, 2006). However, despite all of these attempts they have not produced the social and economic change needed in the rural sector to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. In general, the rural sector has maintained its historical trend in social and economic development. The industrialisation of the Mexican economy and the new social dynamics it came with have also created new challenges for rural development policies (Aboites, 1989).

In 2001, the Mexican Congress enacted a new national law called *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (the Sustainable Rural Development Act) seeking to produce the radical change that Mexico's rural sector needed to improve the social and economic conditions of the rural population. Its policy design was based on the dominant paradigm of rural development and it contains ideas such as *sustainable livelihoods*, *decentralisation* and *community participation* at its core. Ten years after this policy was launched, it has not triggered the expected change to the social and economic conditions of rural Mexico. As a study by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2012) points out, the economic, productive and social indicators of the Mexican rural sector reveal great inequality in both the social and the economic-productive sphere of the rural sector.

This trend of Mexican rural development policies make me ask several questions regarding to why these poor policy results have been systematic in Mexico over the years. Specifically in relation to the Law enacted in 2001, I decided to find out why after 10 years did this reform achieved so little in the way of public comment or protest. This issue arise as a real 'puzzle' in terms of finding explanations to understand the way development outcomes are produced and the way actor's involved with the rural development policy see the policy process. I show that focusing on bureaucratic practices we can get comprehensive explanations through the analysis of the way bureaucratic actor's make decisions and produce development outcomes.

Research problem and questions

David Mosse (2004) observes trends in other development policies in the international realm similar to that observed in Mexico: that is to say development policies based on novel approaches that do not seem to

have produced the expected outcomes even when there are apparently no negative funding or operational issues. As a counter-response to instrumental-normative analytical approaches, Mosse raises the following questions: 'What if development practice is not driven by policy? What if the things that make for good policy are quite different from those that make it implementable?' (Mosse, 2004: 640; 2005: 2) Taking Mosse's questions as starting point, this research seeks to provide grounded explanations about why some 'good' development policies produce unexpected outcomes. Thus rather than focusing the analysis on ideas or paradigms of development I focus on understanding the processes through social actors produce development practice. My main interest is in one particular actor: the bureaucracy.

Thus the research focuses on understanding the way development bureaucracies translate the directives of development programmes to implement them. In doing so it investigates their influence on policy outcomes and the rationale behind bureaucratic actors' decisions in the implementation arena. The research stresses the relevance of understanding development bureaucracies' practice to comprehend some development outcomes.

The implementation of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable is used in this work to illustrate how development bureaucracies translate development ideas to produce development practice. In the context of this research, bureaucracy is understood as the network of actors embodied in an organisational system and legally bound to the implementation of a development policy or program. Thus the main research question is *How does Mexico's development bureaucracy produce development practice and influence the outcomes in rural Mexico?*

I have selected the case of the *Programa de Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (PAAP), a federal rural development programme designed

according to the principles of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable, to illustrate how bureaucratic actors in different institutional settings in rural Mexico produce development practice in the context of a new development policy. Making use of the actor-oriented research approach of Norman Long (2001), I develop a case study that shows how bureaucratic actors respond to multiple realities when making their decisions in the implementation arena. It exposes the different rationales on which bureaucracies at every level interpret and produce meaning regarding two key development ideas of the new policy: *decentralisation* and *community participation*.

The following subsidiary research questions inform the main research question:

I. What are the theoretical assumptions underlying Mexico's rural development policy? What is the expected role of bureaucratic structures, according to the policy design? These questions seek to learn the perspective of policy makers on development and the expected role of bureaucratic actors in the policy implementation. These questions are addressed in Chapter 2.

II. How do bureaucratic actors translate rural development policy to produce development practice? How do they interact in implementing development policy, and what is the result of their interactions? These questions seek to discover how bureaucratic actors transform policy directives into development practice. Answering these questions will allow us to know whether the bureaucracy, as an actor, really influences the outcomes of rural development policy, and to what extent bureaucratic practices shape such outcomes. These questions are addressed in Chapter 5 and 6.

III. Why do bureaucratic actors make decisions in the way they do? What

factors account for the practices of the Mexican bureaucracy in the implementation of rural development policy? Answering these questions will show first which and what kind of inner factors shape the decisions of the individuals that compose the bureaucracy, and second, the rationale behind particular decisions that produce unexpected outcomes. These questions are addressed in Chapter 7, using the conceptual framework exposed in chapters 3 and 4.

By addressing these questions I expect this research to contribute to a better understanding of how the so-called developing countries produce their development outcomes. Acknowledging that development ideas and paradigms are important, the message of this research is that understanding development bureaucracies matters more than is usually recognised or studied in the field of development studies. Development processes and interactions may have different meanings for the diverse actors involved in the policy process, who therefore may understand and negotiate the normative components of a development policy differently (Mosse, 2004). Moreover, not only normative components can be understood in different ways but also the social structure: the institutional, cultural and organisational settings that frame actors' decisions may have different meanings in particular circumstances for each actor (Long, 2001: 3).

Research approach

The research questions address two domains of study. On one hand, it is the domain that reveals how bureaucratic actors transform policy directives into development practice. For this domain, the research approach is based on actor network theory, known by its acronym as ANT. Under ANT's lens, outcomes of Mexico's rural development policy can be seen as the result of a series of interpretations by bureaucratic actors as a consequence of their interactions with other network's

actors. A key feature of this approach is that some of the actors are not humans: objects in the material world and even intangible entities in a social setting can be also seen or analysed as actors of the network. Each actor might interpret or give a different meaning to each component of the actors' network differently; hence development outcomes can be understood by knowing how the network's actors are interlocked.

Actor Network Theory has great potential for showing how development practice is produced as a consequence of a broad chain of interpretations or translations in the process of a particular development policy. Thus I use ANT to investigate who produces development practice, which actors influence it and how they interpret one another to make decisions, what those decisions are and how they produce development outcomes. However, what ANT does not tell us is why some human actors make decisions in the way they do. It tells us very little about the rationale behind their decisions; it just describes how actors are related to each other across the whole network and how they interact to produce the network's outcomes.

The other domain of study seeks to understand the rationale behind development bureaucracies' decisions. For this purpose I use the actor-oriented approach developed by Norman Long (2001) which seeks explanations for 'how the meanings, purposes and powers associated with differential modes of human agency converge to shape the outcomes of emergent social forms' (Long, 2001: 4). Long's approach allows study of the outcomes of development policies in light of the diverse cross-cutting discourses, institutional constraints and processes of objectification that take place in the implementation arena. To understand the processes through which individuals interpret and implement development policies, he proposes the concepts of *social fields*, *social domains* and *social arenas* to contextualize the spaces in which actors' decisions take place

A fundamental reason for using Long's actor-oriented approach is its potential for understanding situated social action, which in this research is used to get to know the 'lifeworlds' of Mexico's development bureaucracy. Using this notion of lifeworlds as an analytical referent allows the researcher to explain individuals' actions in terms of their 'effective or meaningful network of social relations [with] at the same time a glimpse of the personal constructs with which the person categorizes, codes, processes and imputes meaning to his or her experiences – past and present' (Long, 2001: 54).

Both research approaches are used here as complementary explanatory frameworks via which to answer the main research question holistically; on the one hand as a macro analysis to understand how development bureaucracies produce development practice and on the other, as a microanalysis to learn about the rationale for such practice. As a whole, the research was expected to provide insights into how understanding development bureaucracies can inform development outcomes.

The interpretations and strategies can be as diverse as the number of actors that compose the network of actors participating in rural development policy, who include peasants, small farmers, agribusiness farmers, farmers' and peasants' organisations, federal government agencies for rural development, state governments, municipal governments (*Municipios*) and non-human actors such as regulations and historic facts.

The research methodology is based on the development of a case study of Mexico's development bureaucracy in the context of the implementation of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. In 2000, after the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party, PRI) lost the federal presidential elections for first

time in 70 years, the new federal government created this national law to address the historical problems of the rural sector. The *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* was seen by specialists in the matter as a milestone in the rural development of Mexico due to the ‘novel’ policy principles on which its design is based. The LDRS explicitly recognises that rural livelihoods transcend agricultural and livestock activities and so non-agricultural activities must also be included in the definition of rural development. The other key aspect that defines the new law is its implementation strategy, which is based on decentralisation and community participation.

Two research methods were mainly used to collect data: semi-structured interviews and participative. Nearly 86 interviews were carried out in formal and informal settings, and participative observation was also carried out, not just during the interviews but also at public events linked to the operation of rural development programmes. I was given permission to join FAO’s staff as observer of their fieldwork, where I made notes of important aspects that could complement my research data. I selected discourse analysis as the method by which to analyse and process the information gathered during my fieldwork.

Findings

The case study developed in Chapters 5 and 6 shows that development bureaucracies play a key role in shaping policy outcomes, so *understanding the rationale behind bureaucratic actors’ decisions is fundamental to explain development outcomes*. The case study shows that the bureaucratic body responsible for carrying out the directives of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable is not a monolithic entity or a huge machine that works steadily to implement. On the contrary; Mexico’s development bureaucracy is composed of a diversity of administrative units which are themselves composed of a diversity of actors such as

operators, supervisors, managers, directors and external personnel who all respond to different organisational, political and personal interests. Moreover, it was possible to observe that even people in similar positions used different rationales to make their decisions.

Thus a key finding is that not all the bureaucrats understand the policy or the programme's directives in the same way, and they may represent different things to each other, shaping bureaucratic practice via a chain of independent interpretations of the development programmes' directives. For example the upper bureaucracy is moved by particular political-electoral interests represented in the political aspirations and career of the Federal Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development, while middle and lower bureaucrats are seeking to satisfy their organisation's needs in order to keep their jobs and fulfil personal commitments made in the implementation arena.

The evidence contained in the case study confirms previous findings on the influence of politics in the development arena (Ferguson, 1992; Escobar, 1995; Chhotray 2011). In Mexico political-electoral factors linked to informal institutions such as clientelism have been identified as well as others non-political drivers that influence bureaucratic actors. These other drivers respond to organisational, cultural and personal reasons which are at the same time influenced by historic informal institutions such as *compadrazgo* –both clientelism and *compadrazgo* explained in Chapter 2.

I observed that decentralisation and community participation have not produced the expected results, because the implementation process has not been carried out intentionally according to the spirit of the *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable*. Decentralising decisions about the allocation of federal rural development resources implies a weakening of the political position of the federal upper bureaucracy and opens a door

to the transfer of political power to state and municipal governments and that is a price that the federal bureaucracy is not willing to pay. Thus the notion of decentralisation and community participation as a development approach is used strategically in public discourse, by federal upper bureaucracy, to create the image of a responsible and reformist federal government. In practice, all strata of bureaucracy – upper, middle and lower federal, state and municipal governments – behave strategically according to their needs, whether political, organisational, cultural or personal; in doing so they pretend that the implementation is going well, but the outcomes are not as intended in the design of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable.

Considering that the LDRS was enacted in times where a political transition took place –the political party that ruled continuously Mexico for 70 years lost the presidential elections, the research provides insights on how understanding development bureaucracies help us explain continuity and change in the Mexican state. A clear example of this is the way that new federal government of 2000 tried to change the mechanisms to allocate public resources using general technical criteria, but at that moment sub-national and local governments took advantage of such mechanisms to promote their political image, so the federal government had to go back to the old traditional practices of PRI's governments as a way to maintain their political capital in rural Mexico. However, not all the bureaucratic practices must be considered as a continuity of the old regime, many practices identified are linked to a new political competition that make government more accountable and transparent to the society. Not just policy outcomes driven by political interests but also by organisational, cultural and personal are explained in this work.

Thesis outline

Chapter 2 provides a general background to the political context in which Mexico's rural development policy was created and is currently implemented. The first section presents a historical review of the development of Mexico's political system since the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921). The Mexican Revolution is an important reference from which to understand the approach behind Mexico's rural development policy, because after the Revolution the peasantry, as a social group, had an important place in the official discourses of post-revolutionary governments. The second section stresses how two particular informal institutions, *clientelism* and *compadrazgo*, were respectively created and reinforced; today they are still important factors in the decisions taken by actors in the public sector. The third section reviews the development concepts and technical rationale behind the design of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable and the key points in its operational rules. This chapter explains how political institutions in Mexico work and how they have shaped many decisions made in the development arena.

Chapter 3 discusses the relevance of studying development bureaucracies and reviews key works in the sociology of organisations and political science fields that have provided the theoretical foundations of what is known as *theories of bureaucracy*. The first section explores theoretical debate in the fields of the anthropology and sociology of development about how implementers of development policies produce development practice in the context of a planned intervention. The second section reviews the idea of the anti-politics machine in development practice, emphasising development bureaucracies' use of political discourses and resources in the implementation of development policies. The last section reviews traditional approaches to the theories of bureaucracy used in public administration and political science. This latter section offers an

interdisciplinary perspective to enrich traditional frameworks used in the field of development studies to understand development practice. It is an attempt to interweave the fields of development studies and theories of organisations.

The review focuses on how scholars from fields other than development studies explain the unplanned consequences of implementation of a public policy. Why is it important to study bureaucracies in the context of development policies? What makes bureaucracies an interesting object of study when seeking explanations for development outcomes? What can theories of bureaucracy tell us about the influence of bureaucratic structures on policy outcomes? These three questions lead the contents of Chapter 3. All the reviewed works reveal not just which factors may influence policy outcomes but also the relevance of knowing what happens in the implementation arena to understand the outputs of a policy. Particular attention is paid to the role of bureaucracies in the implementation of a planned intervention.

Chapter 4 explores theoretical approaches based on actor-oriented perspectives. It explores ANT and its ontological foundations, instrumental principles and potential for understanding outcomes of development policies. ANT can be a powerful theoretical approach to finding out how development practice is produced as a consequence of broad chain of interpretations made by the actors taking part in the implementation of a particular development policy. This chapter also explores Long's actor-oriented approach, also known as the sociology of development, where the questions are not restricted to asking what and how actors produce development practice but also try to understand the rationales behind some actor's decisions which may appear illogical in the context of a specific policy design. Actor-oriented approaches are presented in this chapter as an alternative to the so-called managerial approaches to understanding development practice and outcomes.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are devoted to building the case study of Mexico's development bureaucracies in the context of the implementation of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. They deconstruct the way the Mexican bureaucracy understands and implements the notions of decentralisation and community participation in the context of the country's rural development policy. They offer comprehensive explanations based on the actor-oriented approach that account for the practices of Mexican development bureaucracy. This case is particularly interesting, since its policy design is based on the dominant ideas about rural development currently fostered by international organisations. However, in practice, these dominant ideas are barely working in the Mexican realm, even when enforced by Mexican law. This demonstrates how the bureaucrats' practices are far from the spirit of the policy as a consequence of the diverse chain of bureaucratic interpretations.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter and examines the key aspects of the case study developed to understand Mexico's development bureaucracy in the context of the implementation of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. The first section points out the relevance of development bureaucracies in the implementation of development policies. It shows the most important facts obtained from the case study to emphasise the relevance of bureaucratic actors in delivering development. The second section reflects on the potential of actor-oriented approaches in the quest to understand development practice. It returns to the arguments presented in Chapter 3 to observe the kinds of findings this research approach allowed. The third section presents the dichotomy observed between the political and non-political drivers that influence bureaucratic actors' decisions in the implementation arena. It emphasises how development outcomes are the product of diverse interpretations on the part of bureaucratic actors which however also

depend also on a wide range of motivations shaped by political, cultural, social, organisational and personal factors in Mexico's rural setting.

Chapter 2. Foundations of the Mexican Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable: A historical review of the political and institutional setting in rural Mexico

Introduction

This chapter provides a general view of the political context in which Mexico's rural development policy was created and is currently implemented. The first part presents a historical review of the development of the Mexican political system since the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921). The Mexican Revolution is an important reference by which to understand the development approach behind Mexico's rural development policy, because after the revolution the peasantry, as a social group, had an important place in the official discourses of post-revolutionary governments. This historical review provides a basic background and the historic facts necessary to understand some local institutions, and must not be considered a comprehensive dissertation on the history of the Mexican Revolution, which is not the purpose of this research.

The second section stresses how two informal institutions, clientelism and *compadrazgo*, were respectively created and reinforced during the post-revolutionary period and today still appear to be important factors in the decisions of actors in the public sector. So this section presents some of the informal institutions of the rural sector that function as decision frameworks for bureaucratic actors. In the empirical chapters some of these institutions that have a strong historical background will explain why some decisions took a specific direction.

The third section reviews the development concepts and technical rationale behind the design of the rural development policy called Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable (the Sustainable Rural Development Act,

LDRS) and the key points in its operational rules.

In general terms, this chapter explains how the political institutions of the rural sector in Mexico work and how they can influence some of the decisions made in the development arena.

2.1 Historical background of the rural development discourse in Mexico: The legacy of the Mexican Revolution

Before the Mexican Revolution began in 1910, the total population of the country was 15 million, with 11 million (73 per cent) living in rural areas and 62 per cent of the national labour force engaged in agricultural activities. The time before the revolution was characterised by contradictory economic and social settings. Macroeconomics indicators suggest that the previous 30 years were the most prolific ones since independence times, with annual growth in the industrial sector of 12 per cent and annual export growth 6 per cent, showing the degree of industrialisation and urbanisation in that period (Meyer, 2010; Gonzalez, 1976). In 1887 there was a rail network of just 460 km, which by 1910 had been extended to 19,000 km (Cosío, 1973).

The social sphere was characterised by huge inequity: this economic growth had brought better economic conditions for only a small elite of Mexicans and foreign investors. In 1910 most of the 11 million people living in rural areas were living in poverty. The peasants can be divided into two main groups: the poorest, who had been excluded since colonial times, who spoke only their indigenous language and were totally dependent on landlords and merchants in a relationship similar to slavery; and peasants living in subsistence conditions with well-established labour relations with the *hacendado* – the owner of a big agricultural unit of production called *hacienda* – where they lived and provided the labour force and specialised agricultural skills as part of a

production system. These latter did not only depend on the *hacendado*; some were smallholders, owning on average less than a hectare of land on which they developed subsistence agriculture and complemented their income by as pieceworkers on the *hacienda* or outside of the *hacienda*.

The Mexican revolution broke out in 1910 due to a crisis induced by social inequality and the lack of a democratic political system. One of the most important armed rebel forces was led by the insurgent Emiliano Zapata. It was not the biggest insurgent army or the one with the most financial resources, but it was made up of combative and idealistic peasants. Although peasants from all regions of Mexico fought in various rebel armies in the Revolution, the Zapatista wing represented many of the peasantry's ideals of social justice. Its slogans were: "The land belongs to those who work on it" and "Land and freedom", defining their expectations of the outcomes of the revolution (Ulloa, 1976; Meyer, 2010). In practical terms, Zapata intended to redistribute land more equally through the elimination of *haciendas* and *latifundios* (large landed estates). The movement sought social justice for peasants dispossessed by past government confiscation of their land (Meyer, 2010: 93).



Figure 2.1: Peasantry participating in the Mexican Revolution (Anonymous, 1913)

However, the Zapatista wing had to deal with other revolutionary forces that did not pursue the same ideas and were less idealistic and more pragmatic about seeking political power. These forces were aware that the peasantry would be a key source of legitimisation for the victors of the revolution, so even the leaders of armies that did not belong to or represent peasants agreed to include their concerns, particularly land reform, in their revolutionary political agenda. They saw the peasantry as a means of legitimating their involvement in the Mexican Revolution and governing the nation. According to Meyer (2010), the lack of political space for the peasantry sector in Porfirio Diaz's regime was a key factor in the 1910 political crisis.

When the Mexican Revolution came to an end in 1920, the tangible outcome was the new Constitution of 1917. For the peasantry this represented the hope of a new relationship between the rural sector and the new national government. The new constitution explicitly set out the government's commitment to return to peasants land confiscated during

Porfirio Díaz's regime. Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution sets out two key points in relation to the land reform: a) it will provide land and water to all citizens that do not own any or do not have enough to satisfy their human needs. These citizens will immediately become the owners of that land. This redistribution should not affect small private properties currently used for agricultural production; and b) all the *latifundios* should be eliminated and replaced by the new model of medium-sized estates.

Thus, the rural sector, protagonist in the Mexican Revolution, became a national symbol of the post-revolutionary era. The political discourse of development suddenly took the peasantry and rural poverty as flags of the new post-revolutionary regime, which promised to seek social justice for the poor and to modernise México. Paradoxically, none of the top-level functionaries in the post-revolutionary government were from the rural sector; many had participated in the old regime as military officials or bureaucrats while others were middle- and upper-class intellectuals.

The 1917 land reform gradually eliminated the *latifundios* and *haciendas* and assigned the land to peasants who owned none through *ejidos* – common land shared by members of a community. However, this redistribution did not bring the expected social impact. One reason for this was that the redistributed land was not the most productive. The best land was kept by the *hacendados* using tricky legal manoeuvres to keep it under a legal modality called the small property regime, which allowed citizens to keep smallholdings of different sizes depending on the type of activity developed on them. For example, 100 hectares were allowed for land with an irrigation system; 300 hectares were allowed for land used to produce sugar or bananas and 500 hectares could be kept for land used for livestock purposes (Krause, 1997: 98). The *hacendados* manipulated the small property regime by asking relatives'

and friends' permission to use their names to register several smallholdings in order to retain a large estate.

Mendieta y Nuñez (1978) gives two main reasons why land was not redistributed in the spirit of the 1917 Constitution: a) many *hacendados* were generals or politicians, so state governors did not want to upset them and cause military or political conflict in the region; and b) state governments were not willing to use their scarce resources on expropriating land for distribution among the peasants.

In summary, the land redistribution did not reflect the 1917 Constitution's commitment to it. The expected agrarian reform only produced a slight adjustment to rural property rights with minor impacts. Peasants who had participated in the revolution ended up in a worse economic and social situation than before, and the majority, who had not participated in the civil war, were also negatively affected (Meyer, 2010: 122). Nevertheless, the new post-revolutionary regime would reserve a special place and role for the peasantry in a newly-engineered political system.

From 1920 to 1929 was a settling-down period for the post-revolutionary government, in which ambitions to gain political control of the nation produced a series of violent takeovers of the Mexican presidency. President Alvaro Obregon, killed in 1928, was the last of three presidents murdered in this period. In 1924 President Plutarco Elias Calles began engineering what would become a stable political system which, years later, the Nobel prize-winner Mario Vargas Llosa called the 'perfect dictatorship'.¹

¹The winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature called the Mexican political system 'the perfect dictatorship' in 1990 because authority does not rest in persons but in a political party that has ruled all political activity in Mexico since 1929.

The post-revolution political system was based on one political party: the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party (PNR)), a political instrument that gradually integrated all the different social sectors and interests of post-revolution Mexico through the creation of centrally-administrated national organisations with local offices. The urban working classes were organised and represented through a national organisation called Confederación de Trabajadores de México (Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM)); the peasantry sector was represented by the Confederación Nacional Campesina (National Confederation of Peasants (CNC)) and the rest of society, including the bureaucracy, artisans and merchants, by the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (National Confederation of Popular Organisations (CNOP)).

The PNR brought order and discipline after the anarchic revolutionary period. It set basic rules about the occupation of government positions and participation in elections, with all roads pointing to the PNR as the only mean to participate or be part of the government. It created a system of incentives for social organisations to show loyalty to the PNR, where loyal leaders could eventually achieve a position in state or National Congress or even in the public administration. Anyone challenging the new *status quo* was punished by the system.

In the following years the PNR changed its name to Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party, PRI), a name that raises the question of how a party can be both revolutionary and institutional at the same time. Its ideology was based on the legacy of the Mexican Revolution, but its functionality was based on a strong institutional arrangement that set the basic rules of the political system as well as on organisations – public and social – that integrated all the sectors of Mexican society. The change of name changed neither the party's essence nor the structure of its political power distribution. The

highest authority in the PRI was the President of the Mexican Republic, from whom the chain of command in the hierarchical pyramid of political power in Mexico stemmed.

As mentioned, the rural sector became one of the most important symbols of the Mexican Revolution and the new post-revolutionary regime reserved a special place for the peasantry in the political system. The PRI assigned a specific number of seats to members of the CNC in the National Congress as congress-people (Krause, 1997). Specific government programmes were created to subsidise CNC members' agricultural activities. It was taken for granted that all peasants were represented by the CNC. At the beginning of the post-revolutionary era, the government underestimated the peasantry's capacity for improving their economic and social conditions themselves and adopted a paternalistic approach.

However, despite the post-revolutionary symbolism of the peasantry, the development of the rural sector was not included in the new government's development perspective. The influence of Western societies caused Mexico to aim for industrialisation as its economic development policy, with the PRI intending a change to the national economic structure in the 1940s.

A second wave of land redistribution took place in 1935, this time with 18 million hectares of the remaining *haciendas* split up to form *ejidos* for low-income peasants (Peschard, Puga and Tirado, 1998: 36). The agricultural sector was no longer an economic priority for the government; Mexico looked towards industrial development for its economic future. Many *hacendados* lost interest in agriculture and decided to move their business to the industrial sector with the support of the federal government. Others who owned highly productive land

kept their properties by manipulating the small property regime.

A new economic development model called the import substitution model was implemented to develop and protect local industry from external markets. The industrialisation of the Mexican economy registered good figures of economic growth – from 1948 to 1968, average annual growth was 6 per cent, and 8 per cent in the industrial sector. However, as Peschard, Puga and Tirado (1998: 34) point out:

...the economic growth, industrialisation and urbanisation did not necessarily represent a better level of life for the population [...] the statistics show that the household income of 90 per cent of Mexicans did not undergo any substantial modification and actually dropped in the following years with almost 50 per cent of the national income concentrated in a small sector. That is to say, conditions for the poor, mainly the peasants, did not change while the fortunes of a small group of rich people rose.

Thus the economic outcome of many years of fostering industrialisation was not as expected. The industrial development approach brought great change to the social structure. The rural population decreased as the urban population increased in industrial areas, with important migration from rural areas to the cities, mainly Mexico City (Peschard, Puga and Tirado, 1998; Valenzuela Feijóo and Jiménez Ricárdez, 1986). Government policy based on industrialisation clearly differentiated between the two worlds in the Mexican rural sector – low-income peasants in *ejidos* and farmers well-established in an agribusiness model based on the small property regime (Meyer, 2010). These different realities in rural Mexico received different attention from the government, which did not necessarily seek to reduce the social and economic gap between these two strata of the rural population.

2.2 Shaping rural development policy: the PRI politics machine

As discussed in the previous section, the formation of the PRI and the

political system that it created was the main outcome of the Mexican Revolution. The PRI's political system influenced social and economic development in Mexico in the following years. Several adjectives have been used to describe the PRI regime such as 'institutional authoritarian period' (Crespo, 1999), 'imperial presidentialism' (Krause, 1997) and 'perfect dictatorship' (Vargas Llosa, 1990), all of which refer to a political system in which the political power was concentrated in the figure of one person, the President of the Mexican Republic. Presidential power was based on informal institutions that gave one person control over the National Congress and the courts, as well as strong influence over state governors' decisions. It was called a 'perfect dictatorship' because the power did not rest in one person but in one political party for 70 years.

All this political power concentrated in the figure of the president was based on metaconstitutional faculties, as the 1917 Mexican Constitution clearly stated that Mexico is a federal state composed of sovereign states, which warrants a vertical separation of power; as well as by three supreme powers, the executive, the legislative and the judicial, which warrants a horizontal separation of political power (Rodriguez, 1999: 56). The president's metaconstitutional power was actually based on a set of unwritten rules giving him the last word on judicial and electoral issues and the power to amend the Constitution, legislate and appoint and dismiss congresspersons, state governors and municipal authorities (Garrido, 1989; 424).

This political system based on the figure of the president solved many of the chronic problems that the Mexican Revolution had sought to alleviate. For example: a) it solved the problem of violent changes of elected authorities by installing presidential elections every six years with no chance of re-election; b) it developed institutions such as peasants' and workers' associations to include the masses in political

decisions; c) it subordinated the armed forces to the power of the president; and d) it was able to incorporate critics and detractors of the PRI system, creating an image of pluralism (Crespo 1999: 48). All of this helped to create the illusion of a democratic regime, although in practice the President of the Republic had the final word on all decisions. The high institutionalisation of the Mexican political system generated an image of a vanguardist system compared to the existing ones Latin America in those times, which were mainly military dictatorships. It was even seen by some in the international community as a model for the development of Latin America (Crespo 1999: 48).

The PRI regime developed mass institutions, which allowed the integration of a wide range of social sectors [e.g. workers' unions, peasants' unions and bureaucracy] in politics, although in a controlled and limited way. This is what gave [the political system] the characteristic of 'inclusion' [...] it succeeded in bringing together mass participation and highly concentrated power. Institutions that allowed the expansion of participation at the same time worked as devices for political control that hinder the opposition to achieve risky levels [of political power] for the continuity or hegemony of the [PRI] regime.. (Crespo, 1999: 46)

This explains the continuity of the PRI regime in comparison to purely authoritarian regimes. The PRI system was openly conceived as a politics machine based on the discipline of all the actors of which it was composed. The leaders of social organisations such as the CTM, the CNC and the CNOP were not ashamed to openly support the president's decisions. Their loyalty was to the head of the state and their social organisations saw themselves as part of that state. From the 1940s to the 1970s the PRI was a hegemonic party with support in all social sectors. Although the political system rested on the democratic basis of free elections, at this time there was no strong opposition threatening the PRI in elections.

The PRI regime created a strong and complex institutional setting in which the rural sector played a key role in legitimising the national

government. During this regime peasants were the keepers of social peace, in exchange, the government gave prerogatives to peasant organisations, such as public resources in the form of subsidies for supplies for their productive activities. Although it did the same with other sectors such as industry and the army, the rural sector had a historical symbolism that made it different from the rest. This symbolic relevance was important in the economic and social development of rural Mexico as well as its political setting.

Keeping the social peace in the rural sector required an institutional arrangement based on specific rules of exchange between the government and the rural population. However, as mentioned, this population comprised two main categories: peasants living in poverty and engaging in subsistence agriculture and were agricultural producers profiting from internal or external markets. In between were peasants in transition who were beginning to produce a small profit to be invested for the gradual growth of their business. These different strata received different treatments from the government which became institutions in the rural development arena. One strata, the peasantry, were treated as the government's political-electoral clientele and the other, the agribusiness farmers, took advantage of their personal relations with politicians to receive special treatment in the allocation of public resources. The names of the informal institutions that describe these behaviours are clientelism and *compadrazgo* respectively.

The following sections, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, describe how these institutions shape the political setting of the rural development arena in Mexico. In the context of this research, institutions should be understood as the prescriptions that individuals use to organise all forms of repetitive and structured interactions, including those within families, markets, firms, private associations and governments at all scales (Ostrom, 2005). Thus

institutions comprise information about the consequences of certain decisions in specific contexts or circumstances. Institutions are decision-making frameworks that provide them with certainty about the different outcomes that can be produced based on different choices in specific situations.

In the case of clientelism as an institution of the rural development arena, I show how the set of rules created between the peasantry and the government about delivering public goods and services has been strongly internalised by both actors; hence resistance has developed on both sides to changing the rules of exchange between peasantry and government. I also show how *compadrazgo* greatly influences the allocation of public resources because there are personal commitments that shape decisions of public functionaries and farmers in rural Mexico.

2.2.1 Clientelism as an informal institution in the rural development arena

At the beginning of the PRI regime agricultural policy for the peasantry was based on the government's paternalistic relationship with the peasants, for whom it provided supplies for agricultural production such as seeds, fertilisers, machinery, tools and so on. It sought to satisfy even their everyday needs, opening subsidised government convenience stores in rural communities. The peasantry's vulnerable social condition and lack of economic opportunities to achieve a better quality of life made this sector highly dependent on such governmental aid and peasants became used to seeing it as an obligatory legacy of the Mexican Revolution, as did the PRI government for many years. At this point the relationship between the government and the peasantry had not taken the form of clientelism and was more paternalistic on the part of the federal government.

However, in the 1980s an economic crisis hit Mexico, directly impacting on government spending. By this time the macroeconomic indicators showed that the industrialisation policy implemented in the 1940s had failed. Trade deficits had been the trend for the last ten years with a huge government deficit with debts in external markets. The economic crisis affected the political hegemony of the PRI and opposition groups arose in civil society promoting political alternatives. In rural areas, independent organisations were created to demand governmental support for agriculture.

In 1988, for first time since its creation, the PRI had to face a competitive election for the presidency. Dissidents from the PRI got together with left-wing parties to support a very competitive candidate. The PRI had to make use of its politics machine for the elections and of public resources to influence and manipulate the election results. According to an official statement, the electoral counting system failed for several hours, and when it was reinstalled the PRI candidate had won the election. There was speculation about the manipulation of results while the counting system was down and the election was strongly questioned in civil society (Crespo, 1999; Alonso Sanchez, 2000). As the electoral system was so precarious there were no mechanisms for verifying the accuracy of the results, at least according to existing law.

The new social and political scenario of 1988 forced the PRI to use an electoral strategy comprising practices to compel votes in its favour, some of which were neither ethical nor legal. That was the case on how public resources were used in electoral times; for example, one irregular practice was based on asymmetrical information about the electoral process, where people linked to PRI –e.g. public functionaries, employers, journalists – generate a fatalistic views between colleagues about the risks of loosing jobs in case other party different to PRI win the

presidential election; even some menaces about firing people were used as a resource to influence the vote in electoral times (Alonso Sanchez, 2000; Ortega Ortiz, 2008).

Local and state government and civil organisations linked to PRI were used as a network through which to exchange goods or money from public funds in exchange for PRI votes. The distribution of public resources in the electoral process took different forms, from very discreet legal channels to highly illegal practice. It could involve a payment in kind, such as a rural development programme or a direct payment from a PRI representative in exchange for proof of voting for a PRI candidate (Alonso Sanchez, 2000; Ortega Ortiz, 2008). All of the practices described so far were not exclusive to the presidential election; they also occurred at local state and municipal elections. Then a reshaping of the relationship between the government and the peasantry from a paternalistic to a clientelistic relation occurred.

The economic crises, the corruption scandals involving public functionaries and the lack of public resources to fulfil the social demands of all sectors of population put pressure on the PRI regime to change the electoral system and contributed to electoral clientelism (Crespo, 1999). Society's specific demand was for an electoral system that would allow other political forces to compete against the official party in fair conditions. In 1990 the Instituto Federal Electoral (Electoral Federal Institute (IFE)) was created as a specialist federal governmental agency to organise and conduct federal elections. In 1996 the IFE would become independent of the federal government. A council of citizens acted as the institute's directive board.

Party/Federal Election	1976	1982	1988	1994	2000*
Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)	20	51	101	119	207
Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)	196	298	262	300	208
Left-wing parties (various)	21	50	137	81	67
Others	0	1	0	20	18

Table 2.1 Composition of the National Congress: Number of Congresspersons by Political Party.

Source: Estadísticas Instituto Federal Electoral (1988-2012) <http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/sisept/default.aspx?t=mgob17&s=est&c=22187> retrieved May 2013

*The PRI loses the presidential election. The PAN candidate was the winner

Although the new electoral system represented a step forward in strengthening political rights in Mexico, the IFE was only effective in reducing uncertainty in the voting and vote-counting processes and eradicating many illegal election day practices; however, the clientelistic use of public resources to influence voting has not yet been fully resolved.

Vicky Randall (2007) distinguishes two main forms of clientelism; the first is a system of patronage linking leaders and subordinates within a political party. In the Mexican case this is called *corporativismo* (corporatism), referring to a system whereby leaders of social civil organisations controlled by the PRI compelled their members to be loyal to the party, as the welfare of the organisation depended on it. In the immediate post-revolutionary era the rural sector leaders found it easy to build social organisations loyal to the PRI such as the CNC, the CTM and the CNOP. However, when the so-called democratic transition began in 1988, the rules changed and new civil organisations appeared, some of which opposed the PRI regime. It was no longer possible to control all social organisations and workers' unions.

Thus in a context of a real electoral competition the PRI regime had to adopt a different approach to maintaining society's support in elections. This is the second form of clientelism, identified by Randall (2007) as an exchange of favours for votes or of support between party representatives and citizens at large. 'Whilst the nature of such favours varies, with the expansion of competitive party politics, the long-term trend appears to be for greater concentration on "electoral clientelism", or outright vote-buying' (Randall, 2007: 646). The PRI had to adapt to the new political rules quickly, as the civil society organisations that it controlled were no longer representative of all sectors of the society or of most of the country's population.

Originally the clientelistic relationship between PRI government and the population was created through the strategic allocation of public resources at election times. For example, in campaign events – whether for a local or a state position – it was common to see authorities in working hours appear in electoral events to openly express support for the PRI candidate; even as part of the event the authorities allocate resources of a public program to the population of the community in which electoral event took place. For example, six months before the elections the governor promised the community tractors to a rural community, so its electoral strategy was to deliver the tractors one or two weeks before the election.

It was also common for local and state governments to transfer resources from public funds to the party to buy goods to give to the local population on behalf of the candidate. The population therefore expected to receive kitchen implements, food, construction materials and so on during a campaign event. The more competitive the elections, the greater the creativity and complexity of the clientelistic strategy. Opposition parties were unable to compete against this mobilisation of financial

resources in campaigns. In fact a common complaint of the opposition was that the PRI made political profit from the poor, who with their lower educational level and greater economic needs are a highly manipulable population.

The IFE created rules against political clientelism and to some extent these helped to eradicate certain practices. Many of the regulations prohibited using the names of political parties in official government events or the implementation of government programmes. However, clientelism was now an institution in Mexico. Those living in poverty quickly got used to demanding that political contenders reward them for voting for them. This behaviour was based on the people's lack of trust in politicians; they wanted at least to receive something at times the election, because they were convinced that they would receive nothing when their candidate won the election.

The evolution of the democracy in Mexico also represented an evolution in public policies. The PRI had to innovate to create programmes that did not look clientelistic, so they had to think about programme design to reduce discretionary decisions about the allocation of public resources. In 1990, still leading the Mexican Republic, it created a social and rural development programme called *Programa Nacional de Solidaridad* (Solidarity National Programme, PRONASOL) to help the country's poorest communities to generate physical infrastructure to urbanise their communities. The programme allocated resources to the community and allowed the citizens to decide what to invest them in. They could choose to build pavements, a road, sports facilities, a sewerage network and even a local church, among many other things.

This programme generated great political capital for President Carlos Salinas, whose election had been questioned at the beginning of his term

in office. PRONASOL sought ways of allocating public resources for social development in order to restore the PRI's political legitimacy in a process of macro-structural adjustment promoted by President Salinas's administration (Dresser, 1991; Cook et al., 1994; Cornelius et al., 1994; Fox, 1994). Its policy directives fostered the emergence of a new generation of community leaders that would bypass the rigid and corrupt traditional political system of elites and party cadres (Rap and Wester, 2013).

However, PRONASOL was dissolved in the following administration because President Ernesto Zedillo broke his political relationship with president Salinas and eliminated all links between the former government and the programme's beneficiaries. Thus in 1997 Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación (*Programme of Education, Health and Food*, PROGRESA), a program of universal access for people living in poverty, was created. While in PRONASOL community representatives could select where to apply the programme, with PROGRESA there was no such empowerment of the community, so every person fitting the parameters of poverty set by the government received an income transfer.

Proudly Zedillo's government explained that PROGRESA was a move away from clientelistic programmes, as indeed it was; at least it represented a new way of allocating public resources in Mexico. The problem was that PROGRESA was the only federal programme operating under such technical principles while other programmes continued to operate on a clientelistic basis.

In 1993 the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (now Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development (SAGARPA)) created a programme called Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo

(Programme of Direct Support for the Farms, PROCAMPO), the aim of which was to provide an income transfer to all peasants and farmers whose income could be negatively affected by Mexico signing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a commercial agreement between the governments of Canada, Mexico and the US. The agreement came into force on January 1st 1994 and many agriculture producers were expected to be affected due to the low productivity levels of small and medium producers in the rural sector. PROCAMPO was a compensation programme to help rural producers to take the necessary measures to improve their productivity so that within ten years they could compete in fair conditions with Canadian and US farmers.

PROGRESA and PROCAMPO represented a secure and steady income for Mexican peasants as most fit the target population of both programmes. In monetary terms PROCAMPO provides US\$60 a year for each hectare the beneficiary owns, and PROGRESA around US\$30 a month per family. This money transfer by the Mexican government moved the programme beneficiaries to just above the UN poverty line (Skoufias, 2005). The rural poor were happy to receive money from the government and the government was happy with the impact of the programmes on the national poverty statistics. Once again, opposition criticism called them populist programmes created to reach the masses with a low impact on development.

SAGARPA also had another important rural development programme, Alianza para el Campo (*the Farming Alliance*), created in 1994 to help peasants and farmers to strengthen their physical capital such as agricultural machinery and tools. The programme focused on all producers in the rural sector, rich and poor. However, its allocation of resources followed a trend similar to that of PROGRESA and PROCAMPO, the poor, individually or as production units, receiving very small

benefits. For example, they received subsidies of US\$100 on average to acquire inexpensive productive assets in contrast to agribusiness farmers, who received subsidies of US\$2000 on average to modernise their productive units. One explanation of this difference is that the beneficiary had to make a partial investment to be eligible for the subsidy, and since peasants generally live in subsistence conditions they could not make such an investment. Another reason is that kinship relations between politicians and public functionaries with agribusiness farmers are a strong determinant in the allocation of public resources, as described in the following section.

The prevalence of clientelism was very relevant to the performance of the PRI in times of political crises; it provided a second chance for the party in a new national democratic setting. But this is not a just a matter of political parties; as Randall (2007) points out, developing countries' societies are typically heavily prone to clientelistic practices of one kind or another:

This is true of all the main regions of the developing world and almost all the countries, though not all parties within them. Explanations often distinguish between demand and supply factors, with poverty and dependence as part of the former and the absence of a professionalised state bureaucracy contributing to the latter, but these may also be exacerbated by political institutional arrangements. (Randall, 2007: 646)

The PRI's clientelistic development approach shows that it was capable of attending to the immediate subsistence needs of the rural poor but not of addressing the roots of poverty. The new democratic scenario in the 1990s created a new institutional setting for maintaining political power and the PRI had to adjust its political system to the new electoral rules in which the use of modern clientelistic practices seemed to be key to win election. Such clientelistic practices were quickly internalised and

became an institution that strongly influences the efficacy of development policies.

Randall (2007) considers that clientelism can play a positive role in party-building and linking parties with their social roots, especially in the early stages. However, it tends to undermine longer-term processes such as the regularised processes of internal decision-making and supporters' identification with a party or its platform (Randall, 2007: 646). This applies in the Mexican case: once conditions for electoral competence were established the potential voters asked not about the political ideas of each party but what kind of goods they offered in exchange for their vote. The more developed the electoral system, the more the peasant sector was seen as clientele rather than as the government's children, as previously.

Peasants started to think strategically about how to maintain their benefits from the government and how to ask for more public resources. When aid did not come as they expected they organised action pressure the government. New independent peasant organisations arose to complain to the regime about the rural development policy, which, from their perspective, had made the rural sector more vulnerable. These organisations used several strategies to put social pressure on the government; for example road blockages, the closure of public offices, the occupation of Mexico City's main square, in El Zócalo, and demonstrations in the City's main avenues. Although some of these acts were illegal the government did not apply the law against them as, after all, they are the 'sons of the Mexican revolution'.

2.2.2 *Compadrazgo* as an informal institution in the rural development arena

The term *compadrazgo* does not come from Mexican political

terminology but from the social-religious sphere. However, there is a way in which *compadrazgo* has been developed in the political environment and it is important to explain the implications of a relationship of this type in a political setting. *Compadrazgo* is a system of ritual fictive kinship resulting in reciprocal relationships between two families. The tradition of *compadrazgo* comes from colonial times (López, 1999); it arose in Mexico through the conversion of the indigenous population to Catholicism, which required baptismal sponsorship according to the Roman Catholic doctrine, although today sponsorship is used for a variety of sacramental occasions such as first communion, confirmation and weddings.

The sponsors are called *padrinos* by the sponsored child and *compadres* by the child's parents – that is why the relationship is called *compadrazgo*. The key role of the *padrinos* is to look after the sponsored child – called *ahijado* if he is male or *ahijada* if she is female – and encourage him/her to live the life as a good Catholic. The *padrinos* are expected to take on the parents' role of the in their temporary or permanent absence. In the latter case, the *padrinos* must provide shelter, education, healthcare and love just as if the child was their own. Although *padrinos* are not biological relatives they are seen as chosen family with the same rights and obligations as biological family members (Gill-Hopple and Brage-Hudson, 2012: 118).

Unlike godfathering of other parts of the world, in the Mexican *compadrazgo* the sense of belonging, identity and obligation associated with kinship is very strong and very functional in the goal of securing reciprocal support and trust (Durstun, 2001: 13). 'Not only should *compadres* respect each other and reciprocate the term in conversation; the tie is semi-sacred, stronger than that between first cousins and often compared to that between brothers' (Friedrich, 1965: 195). Once two

individuals are linked by this ritual or fictitious kinship, reciprocity in the relationship can go beyond the compromises acquired with the *ahijado* or *ahijada*. It represents a new source of work opportunities, loans and help in difficult economic and social circumstances.

The *compadre* link has also political functions. In their community or working environments *compadres* tend to vote together and to ally themselves at public meetings (Friedrich, 1965 : 196). In Mexico there has been a diversion of the term *compadrazgo* in the political arena, where it refers to a strong relationship created between two individuals in order to take advantage of political position to reproduce and extend their political or economic power. For example, one individual can set up a *compadrazgo* relationship with several others and at the same time his own *compadre* can have others *compadrazgo* relations with other individuals, all of these relationships creating a network of indirectly-connected individuals. One of the aims of *compadrazgo* for an individual is to create new alliances of support and obligatory respect rather than reinforcing those for which such behaviour is axiomatic, such as with relatives (Friedrich, 1965 : 196).

In recent years the connotation of *compadrazgo* in the political arena has changed. It not only refers to a relationship formalised by religious ritual; it can also be a strong friendship between two individuals represented by loyalty in the political arena. The lack of other forms of social capital in Mexico makes the *compadrazgo* a valuable source of trustworthy relations. However, in the political arena these relations of reciprocity and trust are commonly used to carry out corrupt and unethical practices in the public sector and *compadrazgo* has acquired a negative connotation. This is one of the main reasons why the PRI regime is seen as corrupt.

As reviewed in section 2.1, the redistribution of land was only partially successful as the generals and politicians maintained their right to the most productive land in Mexico. Others who were not politicians or generals were protected by politicians through a *compadrazgo* relation. Any *compadrazgo* relationship implies reciprocity, so the protected normally pay the *compadre* back, whether with financial resources for his political career or other services.

In the implementation of rural development programmes, the *compadrazgo* relationship has produced non-technical allocation of public resources. Thus the resources of a programme such as Alianza por el Campo have been given to productive units that do not need a government subsidy to be productive or profitable because there is a *compadrazgo* relationship between the agribusiness farmer and the public functionary or politician. Another example of the allocation of public resources based on *compadrazgo* is the conditioned allocation of resources, where several producers receive benefits from a specific programme under the informally-agreed condition that they buy the subsidised assets from a specific provider: a *compadre* of the public functionaries or politician. The problem arises when the asset provided by the politician's *compadre* is of low quality or overpriced. *Compadrazgo* relations in the political arena have produced inefficiency in the allocation of public resources and therefore low impact in rural development programmes.

On October 24 2010, *La Prensa* newspaper ran the headline, 'el amiguismo y *compadrazgo* dañan el sistema político' (Friendship relations y *compadrazgo* hurt the political system), reporting the feelings of opposition leaders in relation to the President of the Republic's appointment of Secretaries of State who did not have the correct technical and political profile to develop the responsibilities of the post

successfully. The opposition leaders claimed that the appointments were based on the President's friendship and *compadrazgo* with the appointed officials and demanded political reform to ensure that the Senate must approve all appointments at that level (García Heredia, 2010). The interesting thing about this story is that one of the opposition leaders is presenting the PRI's official view, which means that even when the PRI lost the presidency in 2000 the current Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) government seems to be reproducing the old *compadrazgo* practices.

2.3 New government, new paradigm: the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable

I have described how the PRI regime was built and shaped Mexico's political system in the twentieth century and explained some of the factors that allowed that regime to create strong political stability for many years. However, in the early 1980s its political hegemony started to break down as a consequence of the economic crisis that hit the country and of the regime's corruption (Crespo, 1999). In 1996 a period of democratic transition began during which a fair electoral system was gradually constructed.

President Zedillo saw the democratisation of the political regime as necessary in order to avoid a deeper political and economic crisis in Mexico, so he broke with the traditional PRI practice of fixing local electoral processes (Crespo, 1999). As a consequence the opposition began to win local elections and the PRI suffered several losses, until in 1995 it lost the elections for the states of Baja California, Jalisco and Guanajuato and in 1997, in the states of Queretaro, Nuevo León and Mexico D.F. and many municipal elections (Rodriguez, 1999). At the same gradual pace a plural political composition of the Congress and municipal governments was created. For the first time in 60 years the political map changed and the PRI regime did not look as hegemonic as it

had in the past, and in 2000, for first time in 70 years, a presidential candidate from a political party other than the PRI was elected.

The new president, Vicente Fox, was nominated by PAN, a right-wing party linked to religious conservatives and big national corporations. In his political campaign the candidate promised to eliminate the corrupt PRI system and eliminate clientelism, *compadrazgo* and nepotism from public administration. The development discourse of PRI's detractors, including PAN, was little different from that currently prevailing in other developing countries. Its main argument rests on the idea that the poor have historically been the victims of governments' political manoeuvres, which has exacerbated their vulnerability, so it is necessary to create and implement 'politics-free' development policies (Crespo, 1999; Medina, 1994).

One of the first of the new government's changes to public policy was its rural development policy reform. In 2001 a new law was passed to address the historical problems of the rural sector from a new development perspective. The bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (the Sustainable Rural Development Act, LDRS) was strongly supported by members of the Mexican Congress and the President, receiving 412 out of 500 votes in favour in Chamber of Deputies and 102 out of 128 in the Senate. In December 2001 the LDRS was enacted, and since then has ruled public policy on the rural sector.

Representatives of both the ruling party and the opposition had only compliments for the new law and saw it as a milestone in Mexico's rural development. A Congress technical commission analysed the bill in 2001 and its chairman, Silvano Aureoles, found that it left no room for the allocation of public resources to groups linked to political interests; in his words, 'It is a great base to satisfy the demands of the rural sector

without clientelism, corporatism or political party interests' (Teherán and Lelo, 2001). The Secretary of SAGARPA asserted that the creation of this law represented a historic moment for the Mexican rural sector as it provides a 'vital instrument for the full development of the sector' (Teherán and Lelo, 2001).

These compliments rest on the 'novel' policy principles on which its design is based. First, the LDRS explicitly recognises that rural-sector livelihoods go beyond agriculture and livestock and therefore non-agricultural activities as well as other types of assets that form part of rural life must be considered central in the definition of rural development. Second, it states that development must be seen from a territorial perspective; that is, problems must be defined in terms of causes and effects that are common in particular regions and not just in terms of geographical or political boundaries. Third, the development of the rural sector, whether applied to productive processes or to rural livelihoods, must be attached to the notion of sustainability. Finally, another key aspect that defines the LDRS is its implementation strategy, which is based on decentralisation and democratic governance and includes the participation of citizens in the planning and allocation of public resources as well as the convergence of federal, state and municipal governments to carry out rural development programmes and actions across the country.

The following section presents the key aspects of the design of the LDRS, which account for its theoretical foundations and explain its goals and the assumptions behind the policy design, its implementation strategy and the actors involved in its implementation.

2.3.1 Features of the LDRS

Objectives

The LDRS is shaped by several development objectives and courses of action. Its general objective is:

... [to] steadily and sustainably improve the life conditions of the population in the rural sector by fostering productive activities and social development activities in the diverse regions of the rural sector, promoting the optimal use, conservation and improvement of natural resources and addressing the diversification of productive activities in the sector, including non-agricultural activities; [and to] improve the productivity, profitability, competitiveness, income and employment of the rural population.. (LDRS, 2001: Article 4)

The specific objectives of the LDRS are stated as actions by the Mexican state to:

...foster public policies, actions and programmes in the rural sector as priorities for the development of the country, with the following objectives: 1. Promote the social and economic welfare of producers, their communities, workers of rural sector and agents of rural society in general through the diversification and generation of jobs, including non-agricultural jobs, in the rural sector, as well as higher incomes; 2) Eliminate the disparities in regional development by paying particular attention to backward regions with integral action by the State to boost their transformation and productive and economic reconversion [to feasible crops or cattle], using a sustainable and productive rural development approach; 3) Contribute to the food security and sovereignty of the nation's food production by boosting agricultural production in the country; 4) Foster the conservation of biodiversity and improvement of the quality of natural resources through their sustainable use; and 5) Respect all the various economic, environmental, social and cultural functions of all the different manifestations of national agriculture. (LDRS, 2001: Article 5)

These objectives match several of the development objectives set by international development agencies such as the World Bank. For example, the World Bank's development agenda (see www.worldbank.org) includes agricultural education and training, extension, research, risk management and agricultural trade;

biodiversity, climate change, community-based rural development, fisheries and aquaculture, forests and forestry, gender and rural development, land policy and administration, land resource management, livestock and animal resources, rural finance, rural livelihoods, rural transport, rural water supply and sanitation, and water resource management. Along the same lines, the US and the UK governments' international development agencies, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development (DFID), state similar policy aims and instruments based on the Millennium Development Goals.

This trend in development thinking is in the LDRS clearer where it addresses specific topics. Article 7 states:

The State must foster the capitalization of the sector through infrastructure projects and productive projects as well as cash transfers to producers, allowing them to make the necessary investments to increase the efficacy of their productive units, improve their income and strengthen competitiveness.

Thus according to the LDRS these investments in productive infrastructure should:

- improve economic efficiency;
- improve the position of producers commercialising their products;
- increase, diversify and reconvert production to satisfy domestic demand, strengthen and expand the national market and improve terms of economic exchange with external markets;
- increase productive capacity to strengthen the peasant economy, self-sufficiency and the development of regional markets to help the rural population access food and food market exchange;
- foster sustainable use of productive natural resources to increase and diversify sources of employment and income;
- improve the quantity and quality of services available to the rural

population.

In the same direction, according to the LDRS the orientation of the development policy instruments for sustainable rural development must be linked to the following topics:

- research and technology transfer;
- training and technical assistance;
- sustainable and productive reconversion;
- capitalisation, income compensation and cash transfers;
- water management infrastructure, electrification and rural roads;
- rural enterprises: formation, consolidation and productivity improvement;
- plant health;
- the certification of agricultural products;
- commercialisation;
- financial systems for rural development;
- risk management;
- information systems of economic and productive indicators;
- attention to social welfare and marginal zones;
- sustainable rural production;
- food security and sovereignty.

At this point it is possible to see the basic aims of the LDRS and the rationale behind them. The general objectives give the impression that the main aim is to improve the quality of rural life, but the specific objectives and topics make it clear that it goes beyond this to target not just the vulnerable rural population but also agribusiness. At some points it looks like a combination of social objectives for the rural poor with productive objectives for agribusiness.

The target population is defined in the LDRS as ‘...*ejidos* [productive units based on common land], communities and national, regional, district, municipal or community organisations or associations of producers in the rural sector [...] and in general all persons, whether individually or as group, who are mainly engaged in activities in the rural sector’ (LDRS, 2001: Article 2). This definition covers anyone living in a rural area or performing a productive activity in the rural sector, who can apply to receive public resources from rural development programmes ruled by this law. Hence while the LDRS is not as focused on the rural poor as the discourses used in its creation, it also rules public resources to agribusiness.

This distinction is accentuated in parts of the LDRS where there is a mixture of development approaches linked to social justice versus economic-efficiency arguments. For example, principles linked to social justice are expressed in the following terms: [Actions under the LDRS] ‘must be carried out according to criteria of social equity and gender equity, inclusion, productivity and sustainability, and can involve the participation of social and private sectors’ (LDRS, 2001: Article 6); all governmental action must be oriented to ‘regions and zones with the highest levels of social and economic backwardness [...] fostering links between rural and urban spaces’ (LDRS, 2001: Article 8); ‘Programmes and governmental action for sustainable rural development executed by the federal government and in agreement with other levels of government [...] must specify and recognize the socio-economic and cultural heterogeneity of the subjects of this Law [...] it must consider the availability and quality of natural resources as an aspect of social, economic, cultural and environmental nature.’ (LDRS, 2001: Article 9). Understanding the dichotomy between the social and economic spheres of development is important in the development of the case study in Chapters 5 and 6.

The LDRS implementation strategy: from decentralisation to community participation

The previous section described the LDRS's aims and target population. This section presents the implementation strategy set out in its policy model, which is based on a democratic governance implementation model resting on two notions of development: decentralisation and community participation. Thus the implementation model enforces the idea of taking the monopoly out from federal government of planning and implementation of federal rural development programmes.

The LDRS creates alternative decision-making spaces to the formal ones that have prevailed in the past for the allocation of public resources for rural development. These alternative spaces rest on the roles of civil society actors, peasants, producers' organisations and some private agents in tripartite local councils called Sustainable Rural Development Councils. This is a community-driven approach that empowers society to decide on the allocation of public resources for rural development. On the other hand, it aims to establish intergovernmental and interagency relations under the notion of concurrent planning and collective effort, which decentralises the planning, the definition of priorities in different regions and the execution of federal programmes.

The decentralisation strategy for implementing the LDRS

As explained earlier, Mexico has had a federal political system since 1917; however, in practice political power has been centralised in the figure of the President of the Republic (Carpizo, 2002:167). According to Victoria Rodriguez (1999: 35), the Mexican decentralisation process would respond to a mixture of administrative and political reasons. From 1982 to 1988 the political aspect of decentralisation was evident in

one of the most popular declarations of the president of the time: 'Decentralising is democratising, and democratising is decentralising'. With this declaration he was responding to the opposition and civil society's pressure for political equity. In 1994, President Zedillo called for renewed federalism to 'support a healthy economy, a tidy democracy and transparent justice' (ibid).

All of these efforts to foster administrative and political decentralisation at the national level was seen by scholars such as Rodriguez (1999), Crespo (1999) and Bailey (1994) as the PRI regime's attempt to maintain its power base and recover its credibility; in other words, to recover its political legitimacy. However, the main arguments for decentralisation in official discourse rested on technical arguments addressing governmental efficiency and efficacy criteria.

The decentralisation of rural development programmes was seen as a source of strength for federalism in Mexico. In several official documents and discourses (see Ruiz Garcia, 2006) the technical justification for decentralising the operation of federal programmes was based on four assumptions: 1) the use of existing sub-national government administrative structures in programme implementation would reduce red tape at the national level; 2) sub-national governments would feel compelled to professionalise their administrative structures, i.e. build their capacity, in order to be able to implement programmes; 3) sub-national governments know their own local problems best, so it would be a more effective allocation of programme resources; and 4) the proximity of sub-national governments to the population would create more effective accountability for bureaucratic decisions. All of these assumptions clearly reflect the various theoretical arguments of the proponents of decentralisation (see Bardhan, 2002; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Faguet, 2004; Gershberg, 1998; Rondinelli, Nellis, and

Cheema, 1983).

The effort to base the LDRS on a decentralised mode of operation is expressed in article 23 of the LDRS, which states that ‘the federalism and decentralisation of public management will be the main criteria in implementing programmes intended to foster sustainable rural development’ (LDRS, 2001: 11). The LDRS further states that federal, state and municipal governments must sign formal agreements defining the responsibility at each level of government for carrying out actions to implement federal programmes, i.e. programmes that are funded from federal government resources.

To decentralise the management of rural development programmes, the LDRS established a State Council for Sustainable Rural Development in each state. Each council is composed of representatives of the federal and state secretaries and departments related to the management of rural development, and of representatives of civil organisations that represent the interests of the rural population. It is recommended that the governor of each state chairs his or her own council. The way in which these state councils are defined in the LDRS presents them as spaces for planning rural development from the bottom up.

Theoretically, state councils should prioritise the investment of public resources according to the problems faced in each region and incorporate them all in the Programa Especial Concurrente – (Concurrent Special Programme, PEC), which is intended to be the lead budgetary document used by federal government to organise the budget for rural development according to the technical profile of each secretariat of state. The Concurrent Special Programme seeks to avoid duplication or contrapositioning between federal programmes addressing rural development issues. Once the Concurrent Special

Programme is approved by the Mexican Congress it is the turn of the federal, state and municipal governments to participate in the implementation of the decentralised federal programmes, with SAGARPA coordinating all rural development.

In the Mexican context, the basic idea of providing federal resources to sub-national governments and giving them the power to decide on their allocation was in itself an important step towards reducing the country's historical dependency on central government and fostering a truly federalised state. Behind this notion of decentralisation is the aim of reducing the influence of clientelism and *compadrazgo* in the allocation of public resources. However, in practice decentralisation as a policy model has produced diverse results in Mexico, some contradicting theoretical assumptions. The case study presented in Chapter 5 is based on SAGARPA's *Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets, PAAP) and illustrates how the decentralisation of federal rural development programmes was implemented and the translation of the notion of decentralisation into practice by the network of bureaucratic actors involved in implementing this rural development programme.

Community participation and community-driven development in the LDRS

Just as decentralisation can be seen as one pillar of the LDRS implementation strategy, community participation is the other. Both are closely related, as purists of decentralisation would consider community participation the last link in the decentralisation of decision-making processes. However for analytical purposes, in this work the notion of decentralisation is associated with the delegation of decisions on the allocation of public resources from federal government to state and municipal governments and with the notion of vertical coordination at

different levels of government to produce collective action.

On the other hand, the notion of community participation is constrained to the involvement of civil society in some actions that in the past were exclusively the responsibility of governmental operational structures. As mentioned, the LDRS incorporates Sustainable Rural Development Councils as a mechanism by which to decentralise the planning of rural development programmes in Mexico. However, these councils were also conceived as spaces for the convergence of different levels of government and civil society. According to article 24 of the LDRS, Sustainable Rural Development Councils 'are participation spaces for producers and other agents of rural society to define regional priorities, plan and distribute the resources that federal government, state governments and municipal governments provide for productive investment and for sustainable rural development in general...' (LDRS, 2001: 12).

The strategy of introducing the participation of civil society in public decisions was conceptualised by Sustainable Rural Development Councils embedded at four administrative levels at which bureaucratic structures operate the rural development programmes: the council at national level; 32 councils at state level; and other potential councils at municipal and district or regional level, according to the specific needs or circumstances. The LDRS states that Sustainable Rural Development councils must incorporate members of civil society, who may be representatives of civil organisations pursuing social or economic aims in the rural sector. This measure also sought to reduce the potential for clientelism and *compadrazgo* to influence the allocation of public resources. Examples of organisations that are considered suitable to take part in the councils are a national tomato producers' association; a local women's group fighting for gender equity; a cooperative managing local

fisheries; a regional maize producers' association; an association of young farmers, and so on. These representatives take part, according to their size and the origin of their group or association, in Sustainable Rural Development Councils at national, regional, district or municipal level.

Theoretically, the councils should work like any democratic body. One member, the mayor, chairs the council; a co-chairperson performs as council secretary and the rest of the members comprise government representatives at different levels and civil society representatives. All council members have the same right to vote on propositions posed in the council. As it was conceptualised, this mode of operation aims to empower representatives of civil society to directly, and in a formal space, influence public decisions on the allocation of governmental resources for rural development. The case developed in Chapter 6 describes how the notion of community participation has been interpreted by implementers to deliver rural development.

In operational terms, the main distinction between decentralisation and community participation in the LDRS is that the former addresses coordinated action at different levels of government to implement federal rural development programmes, while the latter was intended as a space in which to gather opinions from civil society about the priorities and types of rural development projects to be addressed by federal programmes based on the LDRS.

Conclusion

The historical review presented in the first part of this chapter has addressed the influence of the Mexican Revolution on the development

of rural development policy in Mexico. The Revolution took place in 1910-1920 and at its end the peasantry were given a very important place in Mexico's political outlook. Post-revolutionary governments included the peasantry in all official discourses, acknowledging that they are the most vulnerable population as a result of all the social injustices they have historically faced, and creating an image of a country that is indebted to this social sector. However, the immediate post-revolutionary government did not reward the peasantry. There was no change in property rights to agricultural land, which was the peasants' main demand.

Changes to land rights took place 20 years after the Mexican Revolution when the federal government decided to base the national economic development model on industrialisation rather than, as previously, agriculture. So the change in land rights was not a measure to right the historical backwardness of the peasantry but appears to have been a populist move by the federal government to strengthen the ideological discourse about the relevance of the rural population. Moreover, the rural development policies of the 1920s to 1990s were strongly oriented towards perpetuating poverty in the rural sector rather than improving the quality of rural life. Peasants organised themselves into unions to seek public resources in order that social peace might be maintained; this was the origin of the Confederación Nacional Campesina, a national peasants' organisation that in the 1960s and 1970s was a very strong political arm of the PRI government. The development of the Mexican political system around the figure of the peasantry created political-electoral clientelism between the latter and the federal government. Peasants' organisations exchanged their support for the regime for the allocation of public resources to their organisations in the form of rural development programmes.

Thus the electoral-political clientelism created during the PRI regime was consolidated into a national institution that set the rules for political interaction between the peasantry as a social sector and the federal government. Another important institution presented in this chapter is the *compadrazgo*, which in the political arena refers to a strong relationship between two individuals, exploiting their political position to reproduce and extend their political or economic power. The lack of other forms of social capital in Mexico makes the *compadrazgo* a valuable source to access to trustworthy relations. However, in the political arena these relations of reciprocity and trust are commonly used to carry out corrupt or unethical practices in the public sector, giving *compadrazgo* a negative connotation linked to corruption.

The chapter has discussed how in the PRI's implementation of rural development programmes, *compadrazgo* led to the allocation of public resources based on non-technical decisions under programmes such as Alianza para el Campo (*the Farming Alliance*), in which resources were allocated to many productive units that did not need government subsidy to be productive or profitable. This part of the chapter explains how the Mexican Revolution shaped the development discourse of Mexico's rural development policy and the two important institutions that influence the actors' decisions in the rural development arena. As I will show, these institutions are not a deterministic structure but a very influential set of rules that give actors involved in the implementation arena room to play them strategically to achieve their aims, which sometimes contradict those set by the policy-makers.

In 2000, after the PRI regime lost the federal presidential elections for first time in 70 years, the new federal government created a national law to address the historical problems of the rural sector. The new law, the *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (Sustainable Rural Development Act,

LDRS), was enacted with the full support of the Mexican Congress. Many specialists in the matter saw the new law as a milestone in the rural development of Mexico due to the 'novel' policy principles on which its design is based. The LDRS explicitly recognises that rural livelihoods transcend agricultural and livestock activities and so non-agricultural activities must also be included in the definition of rural development. Another key aspect that defines the new law is its implementation strategy, which is based on decentralisation and community participation, including citizens in planning and the allocation of public resources and the concurrence of federal, state and municipal governments in carrying out rural development programmes and action across the country.

The second part of the chapter has described the development paradigm behind the LDRS. It shows how the design of Mexico's new rural development policy rests on dominant development approaches and appears to address historical problems such as clientelism and *compadrazgo* in its implementation strategy. All the key features of the LDRS described in this chapter create a clear idea of what the policy-makers were seeking with its enactment. However, development practice can take a different course to that expected by policy-makers, as the case study presented in Chapters 5 and 6 shows.

The third part of this chapter has provided a general view of the design of the LDRS. The law implicitly acknowledges the existence of such undesirable practices as clientelism and *compadrazgo* and therefore seeks to improve the efficiency of federal programmes for rural development through a decentralised mode of operation and the incorporation of community participation. A big question answered by the case study is whether a country that is so close to a centralised mode of operation can understand the technical rationale of the decentralised

mode of operation, and how the implementation is done in the practice. This, and the observed consequences of the implementation of the new rural development approach, is explored in the case study developed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 3. Bureaucracies and Development

Introduction

In 1985, the main topic of a United Nations international conference, held in Indonesia, was development organisations. The purpose of the conference was to make clear the fact that development organisations are part and parcel of development problems and not just neutral actors in the development arena (van Ufford, 1988: 7). The main aim of the conference was to stop the use of mechanical approaches to planning development, as there is strong empirical evidence that development policy is constructed and reconstructed by development organisations.

Most development studies research has focused on the nature and perspectives of development, with less attention paid to the implementation of development plans. Few studies have investigated how the actors involved in the implementation process produce development practice (Bebbington et al., 2007; Heeks and Stanforth, 2011). This research is concerned with the role of development bureaucracies in the development arena, and this chapter presents a review of theoretical approaches that can be useful in understanding how development bureaucracies produce development practice.

The first section explores theoretical debate in the fields of the anthropology and sociology of development about how implementers of development policy produce development practice in the context of a planned intervention. The second section reviews the idea of the 'anti-politics machine' in development practice. Emphasis is placed on development bureaucracies' use of political discourses and resources in the implementation of development policy. The last section presents a review of the traditional approaches to theories of bureaucracy used in

public administration and political science. This latter section provides an interdisciplinary perspective that brings together the fields of development studies and organisation theories and could enrich the approaches used in the field of development studies, reviewed in the previous sections, to understanding development bureaucracies.

The theoretical review presented in this chapter investigates past and current developments relevant to this research. In general, it focuses on how scholars in different fields account for unexpected outcomes of development policy, and analyses the influence of the implementers. All the works reviewed reveal not only what factors might influence policy outcomes but also the relevance of understanding how different actors make implementation decisions in the context of planned interventions aiming to reach development objectives. Those works reinforce implicitly the argument of this thesis: understanding the rationale behind bureaucratic actors' decisions is fundamental to explain development outcomes.

3.1 Unexpected outcomes of planned interventions: the need to focus on development bureaucracies

The term *development* was introduced by Harry S. Truman in 1949 and has been subject to several interpretations.² Gustavo Esteva (1992) argues that the way Truman employed the term created the dichotomy of the *developed* world versus the *underdeveloped* world. Suddenly, two thirds of the world's population was marked as underdeveloped (Esteva, 1992: 6). Independently of the particularities that shape the definition of development in different governmental or academic spheres, the basic notion addresses the need to reduce the gap between these two 'worlds'.

² Harry S. Truman stated in a speech that the 'old imperialism,' understood as exploitation for foreign profit, was no longer a US aim. Instead, he envisaged a program of development based on ideas of democratic fair dealing, where the US could share the benefits of their scientific advantages and industrial progress for the improvement and growth of 'undeveloped areas' (Truman, 1967).

Truman's discourse represented a trigger for a new global race to transform 'undeveloped' countries into 'developed' ones. In the following years ten years of Truman's discourse several organisations devoted to development were created and internal administrative units of governments and international organisations were restructured for the same purpose. In 1961 the US created the US Agency for International Development (USAID); in 1963 the United Nations created the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); and the World Bank, after facilitating post-war reconstruction, underwent a radical internal restructuring, replacing its homogeneous staff of engineers and financial analysts with a multidisciplinary staff including economists, public policy and sector experts and social scientists, with the sole aim of fostering development.

At the beginning the 'gap' between the developed and undeveloped world was posed in economic terms; later a social dimension was integrated, and recently the environmental dimension has been included in the international development agenda.³ However, after 50 years of development policy, there is still a gap. Huge human and financial resources have been deployed to achieve development goals. The results of most policies fall short of their original goals, and so adjustment of their design or the amount of financial resources has become common practice in the international development arena.

The traditional approach of governments and international organisations to reducing the gap between the developed and undeveloped world has been based on the idea of planned interventions, that is, a set of actions that may change undesirable trends in economic, social or environmental social indicators. Planned interventions rest on

³ The extent of development goals nowadays can clearly be seen in Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations. See <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

the basic assumption that social change can be induced, a theory of change (see Anderson, 2005). Policy-making processes are usually attached to the instrumental analyses (e.g. technical, political, economic, financial, etc) of several potential courses of action to solve a public problem. These courses of action are commonly structured or integrated in a logical way *means to an end* into governmental programmes to achieve specific development goals; together such courses of action compose a public policy.

Most research in the field of development studies focuses on the nature and perspectives of development and little attention has been paid to the process by which implementers produce development outcomes (Bebbington et al., 2007; Heeks and Stanforth, 2011). Heeks and Stanforth (2011: 2) illustrate this trend by reviewing research published in seven leading development studies journals from 2000 to 2010.⁴ Their review identifies just five works investigating the specific practice of development project implementation and management

A stream of development anthropologists and sociologists have:

...engaged with development instrumentally. They have been enrolled as 'applied' researchers, consultants, managers, or bureaucrats [...] Such anthropologists have often been compelled to adopt the instrumental 'means-end' rationality that characterises these policy worlds, paying their way with knowledge products that are normative/prescriptive, predictive, and usable in enhancing development effectiveness., (Lewis and Mosse, 2006: 3)

As counterpart to this, there is a stream of development anthropologists who:

...refuse to frame the relationship between development intentions and outcomes, policy and practice in simple instrumental terms and instead pay equal attention to the social processes of policy and the informal

⁴ Heeks and Stanforth review *World Development*; *Journal of Development Studies*; *Development and Change*; *Development Policy Review*; *European Journal of Development Research*; *Studies in Comparative International Development* and *Third World Quarterly*.

relationships and real-life situations of development workers.. (Lewis and Mosse, 2006: 3)

Scholars of the latter are represented by Norman Long, (1989; 2001), James Law (1997), Bruno Latour (1999; 2005), David Mosse (2004; 2005), Oliver de Sardan (2005) and David Lewis (2006) among many others.

Norman Long (2001) argues that following several disappointments associated with the poor outcomes of various development policies it is necessary to demythologise planned interventions. This means accepting that policy practice can differ greatly from the presupposed practices of the policy model. A development policy model is expressed through the policy-making and implementation processes of development policy, programmes and projects. The traditional view of the policy model is that of a linear process, a step-by-step progression from policy formulation to implementation to outcomes followed by an *ex post facto* evaluation to establish how far the original objectives have been achieved (Long, 2001: 31). It is under this notion that planned development has its roots in testing theoretical models through planned interventions.

Long's central research problem is understanding the process by which interventions enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and contribute to the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop.

In this way so-called external factors become 'internalized' and come to mean different things to different interest groups or to different individual actors involved, whether they be implementers, clients or bystanders.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the concept of intervention needs deconstructing so that we recognize it for what it fundamentally is, namely, an ongoing socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected outcomes. (Long, 2001: 31)

To understand the outcomes of development policy one must accept that planned development does not rest only on ideas and paradigms of development but also on the sphere of implementation, in which a network of actors interact to carry out the actions put forward in the policy design. Planned interventions are highly dependent on the actors involved, whether they formulate policy instruments or carry out specific actions. This research focuses on bureaucracies as key actors in the arena of development policy.

Why bureaucracies? Bureaucracies are *par excellence* the public policy implementation body; they have the legitimacy and authority to carry out the will of the elective authorities. Whether federal, state or local, the main responsibility of bureaucracies is to directly or indirectly carry out the will of elected officials. It is direct when they use existing or newly-created infrastructure to produce goods and services that require implementation of a policy, and indirect when their role is to coordinate and distribute resources among private or social actors in the implementation network. Whatever role it plays, bureaucracy is a key actor in the implementation of planned interventions.

The ambiguity in the meaning of the term *development* combined with the complexity of bureaucratic organisations creates a particular research arena in the field of development studies. In 1985 the main topic of a United Nations international conference held in Indonesia was development organisations. The purpose of the conference was to point out that development organisations are not just neutral actors in the development arena but themselves contribute to development problems (van Ufford, 1988: 7). The main call at the conference was for development organisations to stop using mechanical approaches to planning development, as there is strong empirical evidence that these both construct and reconstruct development policy.

Philip Q. van Ufford (1988:20) points out that the fast succession of development fashions and priorities in comparison to the slow developmental change can only be understood by understanding the changing arenas in which these policies are made. He calls for a study of the links between definitions of development and policy design – the theoretical and policy models of development – and the policy process, particularly in relation to bureaucratic organisations.

James Ferguson's *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (1994) is one of the seminal works to present an original analysis of the key role of development bureaucracies in the implementation of development policy. As explained in the following section, Ferguson use the term the *anti-politics machine* to show the strategic use that development bureaucracies make of the apparently politics-free standpoint of development discourses, paradoxically to reinforce their political position in the decision-making arena in Lesotho.

David Lewis and David Mosse's *Development Brokers and Translators: The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies* (2006) presents a set of studies that stress the relevance of aid organisations and agencies in producing development outcomes. The emphasis is on how development practice is constructed as a consequence of the different rationales, nature, experience and knowledge of the actors involved in implementing development policy. The authors' explanations about how some policies take a path different to that which was planned offer a novel and fresh approach to how development policy can be analysed from the actors' perspective.

These alternative approaches to studying development practice offer

interesting analytical frameworks which take development research to a different level to understand development practice from different angles. Most such attempts are embedded in the tradition of anthropological studies and there is room to incorporate other social disciplines in this research approach that might enrich the case study built in this research as well as combining smoothly with the knowledge fields of development and bureaucracies.

In the field of Mexican rural studies, there is vast literature about the development of the rural sector from the economic and political perspective. There is plenty of literature on the peasantry and its connection with Mexican Revolution, as seen in Chapter 2. Mexican rural development policy has been widely studied, mainly from an economic perspective. However, the role that bureaucratic structures have played influencing development outcomes is not an issue that has been explored with the same attention. In this sense, there are few representative works that have linked the influence of bureaucratic structures on development outcomes from a policy analysis perspective. The work of Jonathan Fox (1993; 1994) has provided important insights about the bargaining relations between rural development agencies and grassroots indigenous movements in Mexico. He has widely explored the clientelism as a factor that hinders the effectiveness of rural development and proposes the instauration of state-society relations in order to create a real citizenship as in developed democracies. The focus of Fox has been put on understanding Mexico's political system and historic institutions that are part of the setting in which development policies are implemented.

Another key work that accounts for the links between bureaucratic actors and development practice in Mexico is the one developed by Norman Long (2001) which uses the case of the irrigation organisation in rural Mexico to illustrate how various actors or parties organise

themselves around the problems of water management and distribution in the agriculture sector. His analysis goes beyond the physical and technical properties of the different systems of irrigation to consider how different interests, often in conflict, attempt to control water distribution or to secure access to it and to other necessary inputs for irrigated agriculture (Long, 2001: 26). Long's work accounts for the encounters between the different groups and individuals involved in the processes this particular planned intervention in which the study of peasant-based development initiatives and the ways in which local actors –including bureaucratic ones – attempt to create room for manoeuvre in pursuit of their own 'projects' –interests. Although the main objective of Long (2001) is to present an analytical approach, the illustrations reveal some of the drivers of development bureaucracies to produce development practice.

Applying the actor-oriented research approach proposed by of Norman Long (2001), there are the works of Edwin Rap, Phillipus Wester and Luz Nereida Pérez-Prado (2004) and Edwin Rap (2006) in which is analysed the Mexican policy of Irrigation Management Transfer. Their analysis focuses on contrasting the process of policy-making that generated the policy model or irrigation management and development practice. In doing so, the researchers found out the high influence of the local political system to produce development practice as well as the identification of bureaucratic actors in the interpretation of policy directives. Edwin Rap (2006) main conclusion is that the success of a policy model rest on the cultural and ideological understanding of the policy network rather than on straightforward management performance improvements. This particular work of Rap (2006) is one of the few that explicitly gives special attention to the relation of development bureaucracies and development practice

As mentioned before, the aim of the present work is to show how

development practice is produced by bureaucratic actors in the context of the implementation process of Mexico's Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. The main difference with the works of Fox (1993; 1994; 1996), Long (2001); Rap, Wester and Pérez-Prado (2004) and Rap (2006) is the focus on development bureaucracy from the beginning and the exhaustive analysis of different drivers that shape bureaucratic decisions at different levels to influence development outcomes.

The following two sections review two theoretical frameworks that represent interesting conceptual bodies to study development bureaucracies. First, the idea of an anti-politics machine in the context of the role of development bureaucracies in implementing development policy is explored. As mentioned, this idea was originally applied to development studies by James Ferguson (1994), and it has recently been enriched by Vasudha Chhotray (2011) with strong conceptual political science foundations. Second, a review of the disciplines of organisational studies and public policy in relation to theories of bureaucracies is presented. The section below explores the main scholarly streams that, regardless of the type of policy, provide an explicative framework for why bureaucratic organisations behave in specific ways.

3.2 The idea of the anti-politics machine

James Ferguson (1994) used the term *the anti-politics machine* to describe the complex institutional arrangement that he discovered in his analysis of the policy process behind a large-scale development project in Lesotho's Thaba-Tseka district in 1975-1984. The policy model for the project had set, as expected outcomes, improving the economy of low-income farmers in the district through commercial agriculture and eventually exporting their produce. The intermediate goals of the planned intervention were to improve crop and livestock-keeping productivity, improve the commercial infrastructure and

decentralisation of the projects to include community participation in some project decisions.

In his analysis of Lesotho's donor-driven development project Ferguson (ibid) observes that even when the project design was based on rational models and technical discourses of development, such politics-free discourse was used strategically by implementers to strengthen their own bureaucratic power:

One striking feature of the 'development' discourse on Lesotho is the way in which 'development' agencies present the country's economy and society as lying within the control of a neutral, unitary and effective national government, and almost perfectly responsive to the blueprints of planners. The state is seen as impartial instrument for implementing plans and the government as machine for providing social services and engineering growth [...] The state is taken to have no interests except 'development': where 'bureaucracy' is seen as a problem, it is not a political matter, but the unfortunate result of poor organisation or lack of training. (Ferguson, 1994: 178)

This quote illustrates the idealistic image that development discourses have created around the agencies, public and private, responsible for the implementation of development policy. Ferguson shows that politics influences all the decisions of development agencies, observing that development projects and the activities to implement them represent a very important political instrument by which governmental actors reproduce their bureaucratic power.

Ferguson describes how the project outcomes in Lesotho were not as expected in the policy design. He points out:

[The project] did not transform crop farming or livestock keeping, but it did build a road to link Thaba-Tseka more strongly with the capital; it did not bring about 'decentralisation' or 'popular participation,' but it was instrumental in establishing a new district administration and giving the Government of Lesotho a much stronger presence than it had ever had before. The construction of the road and the 'administrative center' may have a little effect on agricultural production, but they were powerful effects in themselves. (Ferguson, 1994: 252)

That is to say the policy did not produce the expected outcomes but the unexpected outcomes performed an important function in reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power. Ferguson expresses this idea in the following terms:

The 'development' apparatus in Lesotho is not a machine for eliminating poverty that is incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy; it is a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power, which incidentally takes 'poverty' as its point of entry – launching an intervention that may have no effect on the poverty but does in fact have other concrete effects. Such a result may be no part of the planners' intentions – indeed, it almost never is – but resultant systems have an intelligibility of their own. (Ferguson, 1994: 255-256)

Vasudha Chhotray (2011) uses the notion of Ferguson's anti-politics machine to analyse the case of a watershed development project in India. Chhotray goes beyond the general notion of politics exposed by Ferguson: she found that actors manage different notions of politics in the implementation of a development policy, most of which were associated with negative connotations:

Politics was being referred to as shorthand for all manner of distasteful but widely prevalent activities, ranging from corruption to factionalism to violent conflict [...] It was also directed against the involvement of elected political representatives in watershed development. (Chhotray, 2011: xvi)

For Chhotray, the negative connotation that politics has acquired in the development arena is the result of the influence that neoliberal thinking has had on international development agencies. Neoliberal economists have used their rational-instrumental approach to promote the idea that development policy must and can be determined and implemented using politics-neutral arguments. In this economists' view there is no room for politics in the development policy process, where decisions should respond only to technical arguments that seek the maximisation of utility under the rules of the market (Chhotray, 2011:23). Chhotray points out

that the dissociation of politics from development is an artificial construction of neoliberal economists which has produced a stigmatisation of politics in the context of development policy, with the result that all decisions not based on rational choice models are seen as distasteful by the advocates of this neoliberal stance. Chhotray (2011) is against the reduction of politics to a disgraceful activity as it has a very important function in reducing conflict, achieving consensus and making governments accountable – a positive view of politics endorsed by the field of knowledge known as political science.

Both Ferguson (1994) and Chhotray (2011) show how in Lesotho and India, respectively, the depolitisation of development discourse has strengthened the power of state bureaucratic apparatus to influence decisions about resources for development. Both make clear that politics is part and parcel of the development policy arena and must not be neglected when seeking to understand development practice. Both arrive at the general conclusion that the use of anti-politics arguments nullifies the institutional channels that politics provide to solve social conflict. That is to say, each country has its own political setting based on formal and informal institutions that shape the actors' decisions and that give certainty to social actors about the outcomes that they can achieve if they make specific decisions (Ostrom, 2005; North, 1990). However, when a new policy design is based on assumptions that neglect or avoid existing channels aimed at reducing conflict, the policy output may be nullified by traditional practices associated with established institutions.

Thus under the logic of anti-politics discourse there is no room for political negotiation in development policy. The decision-making, then, rests in the hands of the technocrats that deliver development as a new source of legitimisation for public decisions (Ferguson, 1992; Harriss, 2002: 12; Chhotray, 2011). This is why Ferguson (1992) names this phenomenon the 'anti-politics machine'. In the context of this research,

Ferguson's notion of anti-politics is relevant in explaining some practices of development bureaucracies in Mexico, as the author poses the problems associated to planned development in the realm of local politics.

As explained in Chapter 2, in Mexico the notion of anti-politics has been used to try to influence public decisions. It was introduced into public discourse during the country's democratic transition, which involved reforming the electoral system. The anti-politics discourse was used to criticise the development policy and practices of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party), the party that ruled Mexico from 1929 to 2000. Opposition parties and critics argued that since the Mexican revolution the PRI had created a political clientele amongst the citizens based on mutual exchanges at the time of elections. The mechanics of this political exchange system were characterised by the provision of governmental resources from specific programmes to specific social groups in exchange for votes for specific candidates in specific elections. In a broader sense, the public administration system under PRI could be called a political machine, as it was created to provide not only public services but also the basic rules to reduce social conflict and to make effective public decisions (Crespo, 1999).

The opposition to PRI promoted a politics-free view as the antithesis to PRI's so-called populist policies. Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable (the Sustainable Rural Development Act, henceforth LDRS) was enacted in 2001 by a federal government ruled by a different political party to PRI, the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN, National Action Party). Attempting to separate politics from public action is idealistic from the perspective of some scholars (see Ferguson, 1994; Harriss, 2002; Chhotray, 2011), who note that in dominant development discourses, fundamental political issues are articulated or framed in an apolitical idiom, creating the idea

that development should be divorced of politics in which non-political interests of social actors should shape development policy (Chhotray, 2011: 2).

The case study presented in Chapters 5 and 6 shows how development practice is produced in the context of a new policy model of rural development in Mexico. It illustrates how in Mexico the development discourse of political neutrality has been used by several bureaucratic actors to create a public image that there is no political-electoral approach to the design and implementation process of rural development policy. However, in practice several bureaucratic actors have been driven by political interests, sometimes such interests closer to a negative and at other times to a positive political connotation.

One of the key aspects of this analysis developed using the notion of the anti-politics machine is the focus on identifying all the factors influencing bureaucratic actors' decisions, where it is expected that politics play an important role as Ferguson (1992) and Chhotray (2011) found in developing countries. In doing so, it pays particular attention to the institutional setting, both formal and informal, linked to the Mexican political system, that explains the current status of prevailing institutions in the development arena related to the implementation of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable in Mexico.

3.3 Theories of Bureaucracy: views of public administration and public policy disciplines

When scholars of development studies began to turn their attention to organisational processes and focus on development bureaucracies it opened the way to explore what other disciplines can contribute to the field of development studies to understand the influence of bureaucratic actors on development. However, so far the inclusion in the field of

development studies of theoretical frameworks from knowledge areas beyond political science has been narrow. This section presents a conceptual review of what authors writing on disciplines linked to theories of organisations and public administration have said about how bureaucracies produce their outcomes, with the aim of finding whether these conceptual frameworks can provide plausible explanations for some of the practices observed in the case study developed in this research.

The review focuses on how all these authors explain unexpected consequences in the implementation stage of public policy as result of specific practices by the implementers. Grindle and Thomas (1989) present a model for analysing the implementation sphere. Their approach is based on a critique of the use of linear approaches to analyse public policy. Thomas and Grindle (1990) point out that linear approaches ignore the implementation process because they take the policy design to be a critical choice, so the implementation is automatically considered a given. Hence they propose focusing on the social conflicts that a policy generates as well as the political and bureaucratic resources that policymakers need to mobilise to deal with the conflicts that arise in the implementation arena and to sustain the policy (ibid; Rap and Wester, 2013). Their main argument is that ‘implementation is an interactive and ongoing process of decision-making by policy elites and managers in response to actual or anticipated reactions to reformist initiatives’ (Thomas and Grindle, 1990)).

To some extent Thomas and Grindle’s view is along the same lines as those of Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1973) and Eugene Bardach (1977), who show that the implementation process is more important than is generally recognised if expected results are to be achieved. They demonstrate that even when a policy is designed using

rational and comprehensive technical methods, specific considerations in the implementation process are critical for the success of the policy, and call for more attention to the sphere of implementation.

In this section all the works reviewed reveal how the scholars explain such conflicts at the core of bureaucratic organisations from different perspectives; not just what factors may influence policy outcomes but also the relevance of understanding bureaucracies in order to know what happens in the implementation in the process in generating policy outputs.

Bureaucracy is defined as the starting point for this research. The traditional connotation of bureaucracy comes from political science, where bureaucracy means a government by bureaus; this is a government by departments of the state staffed by appointed, not elected, functionaries, organised hierarchically and dependent on the legitimate authority (Crozier, 1964: 3). The term *bureaucracy* has acquired alternative connotations, mainly from sociology and political science, as a consequence of several particularities observed in the day-to-day performance of such public organisations. Slowness, routinisation, complexity and frustration were – and still are – some of the adjectives linked to the term and refer to inefficiencies in public organisations.

In the context of this research, bureaucracy is understood as the network of actors embodied in an organisational system and legally bound to the implementation of a development policy or program. In other words, a bureaucracy comprises all actors, bound by formal or informal rules, who have to perform specific actions in order to achieve the will of the policy-maker. The actors in the bureaucratic network can be individuals linked to public or private entities. Note that this definition of bureaucracy transcends the traditional view of *government by bureaus* as

well as the view that bureaucratic organisations are related to public sector organisations. In the proposed definition there is room for all individuals and organisations, whether public or private – e.g. NGOs and civil associations – that are entitled to perform actions addressing the accomplishment of the policy mandate, which in the end all these actions take place in the public sphere. This definition of bureaucracy is determined by the type of formal aims it pursues; that is, public policy aims.

Debates in the area of organisational studies about the nature of bureaucratic organisations and how they work can be divided into three streams: a rational-mechanic view, a humanistic view and power relations view. The latter two are alternative views of the rational-mechanic view of the bureaucratic phenomenon, and some of its conceptual foundations are complementary to each other to explain different factors that can affect bureaucratic practice. Each of these streams is reviewed in the following subsections.

The origin: Bureaucracy as machine

The belief that implementation is the easy part of the policy process has been strongly influenced by the views of Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson on the nature and role of bureaucracies in the policy process. Wilson (1887) maintains that bureaucracy is a neutral actor in the implementation process that simply carries out the will of the policy-maker. He considers policy-making and politics exclusive domains of the elected authorities, so the domain of bureaucracies lies exclusively in the execution of the will of those political bodies (ibid).

The dichotomy between politics and administration in the public arena is reinforced by the work of Max Weber (1947) and his construction of the ideal type of bureaucracy. Weber considers bureaucratic

organisation the most efficient type of organisation. He conceptualises an ideal type based on the following features: an organisation of official functions bounded by rules with a specified sphere of competence for every office (administrative unit) that is part of the organisation; an organisation of offices that follows the principle of hierarchy, each lower office under the control and supervision of a higher one; the rules that regulate the conduct of an office may be technical rules or norms; the application of rules is to be fully rational –in technical terms; and there is a complete absence of appropriation of his official position by the incumbent; that is, there is no patrimonialism (Weber, 1947, pp. 330-332).

According to Weber, the superiority of bureaucracy over other types of organisation lies first in the command of technical knowledge – bureaucracies know how to implement public policies – and second, in the impersonality of its nature. That is to say it relies on rules rather than on individuals, and on hierarchies of offices rather than a network of personal relationships. In theory, the problems such as corruption, nepotism and personal favour observed in other forms of administration are not present in bureaucracies. The more formal and impersonal the bureaucratic organisation, says Weber, the more efficient it will be.

Weber conceptualises bureaucracy as the perfect means to achieving policy ends. His view of bureaucracy is of a rational combination of human and material resources with well-settled organisational procedures. An organisation with such a level of technical rationality has no room for failure in the implementation of public policy, and thus undesirable outcomes should not be imputed to the bureaucracy but to the person who controls it. Then, Weber (1947: 338) says, the important question in analysing the outcomes of public policies is: Who controls the existing bureaucratic machinery?

Another important aspect of Weber's theory of bureaucracy is the role of specialised knowledge in a bureaucratic setting. According to Weber, special knowledge of facts and access to special documentary material allows bureaucracies to hold official secrets, just as technical knowledge does in relation to commercial secrets. Bureaucratic organisations, or the holders of power as knowledge who make use of this power, have the tendency to increase their power still further as their knowledge grows up as they get more experience in the public service (Weber, 1947: 339). Even though Weber explicitly mentions the source of power of bureaucratic organisations, he does not consider this power a threat to achieving the policy mandates enacted by elected authorities; on the contrary, he sees it as a natural consequence of the technical authority of bureaucracies to provide professional advice to the legislature and elected officials. He argues that bureaucratic administration fundamentally means the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge – a feature that makes bureaucracies 'rational machines'.

The response: Bureaucracies are human organisations

From a positivistic approach, sociologists and political scientists do not find bureaucratic organisations as perfect as Weber suggests. This stream focuses on the observed dysfunctions that affect their performance. Alvin Gouldner (1952) questions the efficacy of bureaucratic organisations, arguing that there are certain elements of organisations that cannot be predictable by its rules; e.g. interest groups created at the core of workers' unions. Gouldner observes that not all members of a bureaucracy can be seen with the same degree of impersonality and that impersonal behaviour tends to be stronger between status levels and minimal between equals.

Robert Merton (1952) observes that however rational and calculable the conception of bureaucracy might be, it may show several dysfunctions in

practice. The first dysfunction Merton identifies is what he calls 'trained incapacity', a 'state of affairs in which one's abilities function as inadequacies or blind spots. Actions based upon training and skills which have been successfully applied in the past may result in inappropriate responses under changed conditions [...] their training may become an incapacity' (Merton, 1952: 364). A second dysfunction is associated with the idea of routinisation; that is, the preferences, antipathies, discrimination and emphases that the people working in a bureaucracy can develop as a consequence of day-to-day routines. According to Merton, both dysfunctions may embody Weber's concerns about the precision, reliability, efficiency and impersonalisation of bureaucratic organisations. Finally, a third dysfunction is related to the deflection of organisational goals due to strong sentiments that entail devotion to one's duties. Adherence to the rules, originally conceived as a mean to make organisation efficient, is transformed into an end itself: 'an instrumental value becomes a terminal value' (Merton, 1952: 367). An extreme representation of this process of displacement of goals, says Merton, is the bureaucratic virtuoso who never forgets a single rule binding his action and hence is unable to assist many of his clients. 'Rules in time become symbolic in cast, rather than strictly utilitarian' (ibid).

Merton explains the dysfunctions of bureaucracies through the concept of over-conformity. He argues that in bureaucratic contexts officials are tacitly expected to adapt their thoughts, feelings, and actions to the prospect of their career; this increases the probability of conformity, which induces timidity, conservatism and technicism. He observes the existence of *esprit de corps*, a feeling of pride and mutual loyalty shared by the members of a group, that leads personnel to defend their group interests rather than assists their clients or elected higher officials. This is how vested interests arise to create bureaucrats' resistance to achieving some objectives, which may affect their power position as part of the administrative structure of the organisation. What seems to be an

impersonal organisational structure is actually an organisation influenced by personal and very particular interests.

Another key work, by Philip Selznick (1949), compares bureaucratic organisations with systems that maintain their equilibrium and survive through their formal and informal components. Unlike Gouldner and Merton, Selznick considers that unexpected outcomes are not necessary dysfunctions but a response of the organisation, as a system, to its environment. He sees organisations as developing informal structures that reflect individuals' and subgroups' spontaneous efforts to control the conditions of their existence. Hence individuals develop informal lines of communication and control. Observable bureaucratic behaviour, he says, is explained when it might be interpreted as a response to specific needs. Selznick identifies self-defensive mechanisms that produce structural transformations of the bureaucratic organisation:

The needs in question are organisational, not individual, and include: the security of the organisation as a whole in relation to social forces in its environment; the stability of the lines of authority and communication; the stability of informal relations within the organisation; the continuity of policy and the sources of its determination; a homogeneity of outlook with respect to the meaning and role of the organisation. (Selznick, 1949: 252)

The notion of unanticipated consequences is a key analytical tool in Selznick's theoretical framework; he asserts that 'where unintended effects occur, there is a presumption, though no assurance, that sociologically identifiable forces are at work' (Selznick, 1949: 254). The attention is on the central status of constraints, tensions, and dilemmas that members of the organisation have to face in making decisions as a whole. For Selznick, social action has always to be seen in relation to human structures, which generate new centres of need and power and interpose themselves between the actor and his goal.

For Selznick, commitments are a sociologically-significant source of

unanticipated consequences. He identifies commitments in five social spheres or dimensions: organisational, human relations, institutional, cultural and power relations. Commitments enforced by organisational imperatives refers to such aspects of the order, discipline and unity of the organisational setting that help to adapt organisational arrangements to unforeseen situations.

Commitments enforced by the social character of the personnel refers to the collective image of the organisation in terms of levels of aspiration and training, social ideals and class interest that mould the character of the personnel. These kind of commitments, says Selznick, makes staff members resistant to demands that are inconsistent with their accustomed views and habits; the employer's freedom of choice is restricted and he will find it necessary to conform to their received views and habits to some degree.

In third place are commitments enforced by institutionalisation, which refers to commitments linked to established social patterns in the organisation, again restricting choice and enforcing special lines of conduct in the personnel. Fourth are commitments enforced by the social and cultural environments, which are similar to the ones linked to organisational institutions, but in this case the social and cultural context responds to a broader scope, even beyond the organisation's boundaries. Finally, commitments enforced by centres of interest generated in the course of action are created in subordinate and allied groupings where the leadership has a stake in the organisational status quo. Here, says Selznick, the discretionary behaviour of a section of the bureaucratic apparatus find a way to justify some decisions in the name of the good for the organisation as a whole; it might be committed to a policy or course of action not anticipated by the programme's prescription. In other words, lack of effective control over the tangential informal goals of individuals and subgroups within an organisation tends to divert it

from its initial path (Selznick, 1949, pp. 256-258).

From Selznick's viewpoint these types of commitments create persistent problems of decision and control, and the author focuses in identifying the key points at which organisational control breaks down. Operationally, the generation of observable unanticipated consequences can bring about a breakdown of control. This, says Selznick, suggests that significant possibilities inherent in the situation have not been taken into account. 'The problems indicated here are perennial because they reflect the interplay of more or less irreconcilable commitments to the goals and needs of the organisation and at the same time to the special demands of the tools or means at hand' (Selznick, 1949: 258). Selznick's structural-functionalist approach stresses the relevance of macro elements of the social system that influence the behaviour of an organisation's personnel. However, he opens a window on the study of bureaucratic organisations at the micro-level, suggesting that day-to-day decision processes may be more relevant than they might appear.

Selznick observes that it is in the decision-making process that the creation of precedents, alliances, symbols and personal loyalties takes place that transforms the organisation from a profane, manipulable instrument into something of sacred status and resistant to treatment simply as means to some external goal (Selznick, 1949: 258). This is why he thinks that organisations are often cast aside when new goals are sought. He considers that the analysis of commitment is an effective tool for making explicit the structural factors relevant to decision in organised action, so attention should be directed towards the process of choice, selecting those factors in the decision environment that limit the alternatives and enforce uniformity of bureaucratic behaviour.

The analysis of bureaucracies using Selznick's theoretical framework is driven by the question: To what are the members of the bureaucracy

committed? Answering this question will reveal the logic of actions in contrast to the logic of contractual obligations commonly assumed in official documents:

So long as goals are given, and this impulse to act persists, there will be a series of enforced lines of action demanded by the nature of the tools at hand. These commitments may lead to unanticipated consequences resulting in a diversion of original goals. (Selznick, 1949: 259)

Thus Selznick considers it important to know the logic of actions as a means to discovering the social structure that determines the individuals' choices; that is, how the social system of a bureaucracy is set up. Selznick's ontological position rests on a macro-structural image of how society produces its outputs.

The three works reviewed in this section have long been considered key contributions to understanding bureaucratic organisations. All challenge the classic administrative paradigm imposed by Weber regarding how bureaucracies behave to achieve their organisational administrative or policy objectives. All seek to explain why bureaucracies do not – or cannot – perform as Weber proposes. Selznick says that unanticipated consequences are the result of different kinds of commitment to the organisation; Merton says that bureaucracies present dysfunctions produced by the nature of the structure of bureaucratic organisations; Gouldner stresses that there is 'something' about bureaucratic organisations that makes the personalisation of procedures and their routinisation hard to avoid. All three suggest that the calculability and technical rationale of the Weberian model is not possible due to inner forces that deflect bureaucratic organisations from their original goals, and all three have in common an ontological position in which individuals respond only to the formal and informal components of the social system.

The bureaucratic phenomenon: A power-relations approach

In response to structural-functionalist views of bureaucracy, Michel Crozier (1964) proposes an alternative theory of bureaucracy. Contrary to his predecessors, Gouldner, Merton and Selznick, he takes as the starting point the inadequacies, failures, slowness, routinisation, complexity and maladaptations as factors that define bureaucratic organisations. Crozier considers that Gouldner, Merton and Selznick have wrongly specified the research problem, as they seek to understand bureaucracies but neglect the relationship between rationality and efficiency that is central to any kind of organisation (Crozier, 1964: 183).

The main difference in Crozier's approach is the scope of his analysis of bureaucracies. His analytical framework is not located in structural-functionalism or the macro-sociological sphere. He considers that the sociology of organisations should seek to ground its framework scientifically in order to understand the 'social game' and the narrow limits restricting the individuals' choices and therefore, the restriction of individual's actions (Crozier, 1964). He proposes moving from a sociology of institutions to a sociology of actions – a micro-sociology approach – to understand the rationale of bureaucratic organisations. Crozier's ontological position is closer to a constructionist than to a structural-deterministic perspective on the social world.

Crozier's view is partly influenced by the work of James March and Herbert Simon (1958), who argue that to understand a bureaucratic organisation one must accept that its members are not governed solely by formal regulations, as Weber proposes, nor by affective organisations, as the human relations model claims, but rather operate as autonomous actors, each with their own personal strategy – in other words, with their own rationale. Simon explains that previously the focus has been on processes and methods for insuring incisive action in organisations, neglecting choice, which prefaces all action. He considers that a theory

explaining administrative should be concerned with processes of decision making as well as those of action (Simon, 1997: 1).

Simon sees several constraints in the decision-making sphere that might hinder bureaucratic organisations' efficiency in the Weberian sense. To understand certain decisions within an organisation one must know all the factors that might influence the individuals in it, such as their skills, personal objectives and values, knowledge and information. All these factors, says Simon, affect whether individuals will perform in the expected way. Simon uses the term *rational behaviour* for behaviour that is evaluated in terms of the individuals' actions and its congruence with the objectives of the larger organisation. Disparity between individuals' aims and those of the organisation is one element of non-rationality that the theory of organisations must deal with (Simon, 1997, pp. 45-47).

Crozier challenges Simon's thinking, asking if one must consider individuals' decisions that diverge from the rationale of the bureaucratic organisation's efficient decisions as 'non-rational'. He points out that a human being has not only hand – by which he means mechanical choices – and heart – referring to emotional choices – but also head; that is to say, the individual freedom to decide on and play his own game. This, says Crozier, is what almost all proponents of human relations theories, as well as their early rationalists opponents, tend to forget. Crozier's calls us to consider alternative schools of thought such as neo-rationalist and strategic analysis methods of studying decision-making processes in organisations, particularly when exploring not only the managerial sphere but also that of subordinates.

Crozier's theoretical framework encourages a transition from structuralism to constructivism; from the sociology of social structures to the sociology of actions; from a macro- to a micro-sociology approach, and from tangential forces to individual choices. It is only through

scrutinising the means that one may hope to view the mechanisms of social control and processes of change that play such an important part in the development of social systems (Crozier, 1964: 7). Crozier's social constructionism does not deny the influence of social structures in social outcomes but he recognises that they can be overestimated, as everyday decisions may produce different realities in apparently similar social contexts.

Rationality and predictability are the terms that Crozier uses to address his main concern: explaining how bureaucracies make use of their power resources to perform and produce organisation's outcomes. It is precisely around the concept of power that Crozier develops his theory of bureaucracy. In his ontological stance, individuals can interpret and manipulate the components of the social system to achieve their particular interests. The more uncertainty the more spaces they have to bargain their interests:

In our modern world, the progress of standardisation, of predictability, and of rationality in general paradoxically seems to be accompanied by an increasing dependence on the indispensable human means, who maintain their autonomy in regard to the goals of the organisation much more easily than heretofore. (Crozier, 1964: 6)

For Crozier, individuals and groups use the power they hold rationally to fulfil their diverse interests and conflicting goals. The institutionalised way that individuals and groups in a bureaucracy solve their conflicts shape predictable patterns of behaviour. Crozier thus views conflict as a source of stability rather than a dysfunction of the organisational system of bureaucracies. Individuals try to understand or codify uncertainties (knowledge, information, symbols, etc.) in their organisational environment to control certain spaces in the organisation (functions, concessions, effective work time, etc.). The distribution of power among members of an organisation, based on the control of uncertain areas, is a source of stability for the organisation. Understanding how members of

an organisation have codified such uncertainties can provide insight into organisational behaviour when a new policy arises in a specific organisational context.

Crozier reserves an important place for what he calls the cultural analysis of bureaucratic organisations. This analysis relies on the interpretation of bureaucratic practices in terms of their relationship with the social and cultural system in which the organisation is inscribed. Considering the cultural sphere helps to set a framework in which can be generated holistic explanations of how bureaucratic structures and patterns of action differ in different countries or regions where semantic or discourse specificities might be relevant in explaining specific practices that would otherwise not be possible. In Crozier's theoretical framework, the relevance of the links between action and structural entities, where the actors' interpretation of the social and cultural structure is a key analytical element, is explicit.

Conclusion: Bureaucracies in Development Studies

To understand the outcomes of development policy, one must accept that planned development rests not only on ideas and paradigms of development but also on the sphere of implementation in which a network of actors interacts to carry out the actions prescribed in the policy design. Planned interventions are highly dependent on the actors involved in them, whether formulating policy instruments or carrying out specific actions. This approach requires a view of bureaucracies as key actors in the entire development policy arena. The ambiguity in the meaning of the term *development* combined with the complexity of bureaucratic organisations creates a specific research arena in the development studies field.

Bureaucracies have been widely studied by sociologists seeking to

understand how they function. Organisational studies focusing on the bureaucracies of private and public organisations have been widely developed. Theoretical and practical approaches to bureaucratic behaviour have set the conceptual bases of what is known as theories of bureaucracy. However, these conceptual bases are not commonly used in the field of development studies, so the integration of this analytical framework into the discipline of development studies might provide useful conceptual tools for understanding the rationale behind the decisions of actors involved in development policy.

This chapter has reviewed theoretical frameworks for studying bureaucratic organisations based on decision-making models that share the ontological position with actor-oriented research approaches used in this work to study bureaucratic practices. Chapter 4 presents the foundations of actor-oriented research approaches and the methodology proposed for studying development bureaucracies. Here, it was reviewed different ways that bureaucratic practice is explained by different theories of bureaucracy. I have shown that in the Weberian perspective the rationalisation of decisions based on the policy prescriptions is the key feature to explain how an organisation achieve its goals beyond individuals' rationality or choice. In the human relations model there is no space for the individual members of organisations to make decisions; they can only react to specific circumstances according to the social, cultural and/or organisational setting. In Crozier's approach, what is technically rational for an organisation may not be rational from the personal perspective of an individual with her or his own needs. Crozier acknowledges that social, cultural and organisational structures matter, but it is individuals who produce social outcomes by making everyday decisions based on their interpretation of their environment. Sometimes such decisions can be very predictable, but where uncertainty surrounds the decision, unexpected outcomes can be produced.

Alternative decision-making theories are continually being developed – e.g. March and Shapira (1992). However, the purpose of this thesis is not to present an exhaustive review of all theories related to the study of bureaucracies. Those reviewed so far represent a complete and simplified set of the key approaches, concepts and theories in the specific field of bureaucratic studies. They offer a solid conceptual and analytical background from which to study the role of development bureaucracies in producing the outcomes of development policy. The challenge is to find out an effective way of linking such explicative frameworks to the broad and sometimes ambiguous field of development studies. The next chapter presents the proposed research approach to link the different analytical spheres in theories of bureaucracy to development practice.

Chapter 4. The actor-oriented perspective in the analysis of development policies: a methodological approach to understand development practice

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research approach used in this work to understand the social world in the context of the main topic of this research. Like any research approach, it has its own epistemological and ontological stance from which to analyse and explain social phenomena. It explains the relevance of actor-oriented perspectives in studying development policies, particularly from the perspective of the actors involved in it. First, it explores Norman Long's actor-oriented approach – also known as the sociology of development – in which the questions are not restricted to answering what and how actors produce development practice but go beyond this, seeking to understand why actors' make decisions in the way they do. This is particularly useful in situations where actors' decisions may look as 'non-sense' regarding to the prescriptions of a specific policy design.

Next I explore actor network theory (ANT): its ontological foundations, instrumental principles and potential for understanding the outcomes of development policies from a macro-analytical perspective. I show that ANT can be a powerful theoretical approach to learning how development practice as a whole is produced as consequence of a broad chain of interpretations made by the actors taking part in the process of a particular development policy.

The above actor-oriented approaches are presented in this chapter as alternatives to the so-called managerial approaches to understanding development practice. This proposed research approach is situated in

the sociology and anthropology of development fields and is represented by the works of Norman Long (2001; 1992), Oliver de Sardan (2005), David Lewis and David Mosse (Lewis and Mosse, 2006), Bruno Latour (2005) and John Law (1997), among many others. In terms of methodology, these works share a common methodological approach by which researchers are able to produce new interpretations close to the field, building a corpus of concrete analyses on the nature of different social rationales (Bierschenck et al. 2002; Lewis and Mosse, 2006).

The third section describes the methodology used to answer the research questions from the actor-oriented perspective, and the methods and fieldwork techniques used to build a case study of the Mexico's Sustainable Rural Development Act policy process. It explains the analytical structures from which the case study was built in relation to the positions of bureaucratic actors at different levels of government. A reflection on ethical issues in the research is included in this section.

4.1 Long's actor-oriented approach to understanding development practice

Norman Long (2001) poses the research problem of development sociology as understanding how development actors deconstruct planned interventions. As presented in Chapter 3, demythologising planned interventions is a core element of Long's approach and a key aspect of setting up the present research methodology. This notion of deconstructing the planned intervention refers to the process of a development policy in which '...external factors become "internalized" and come to mean different things to different interests groups or to different individual actors involved, whether they be implementers, clients or bystanders' (Long, 2001: 31).

Long developed his analytical framework based on an actor-oriented perspective through which he seeks to 'explain how the meanings, purposes and powers associated with differential modes of human agency converge to shape the outcomes of emergent social forms' (Long, 2001: 4). This approach allows the study of development practice in the light of the diverse cross-cutting discourses, institutional constraints and processes of objectification occurring in the implementation arena. To understand the processes by which development policies are interpreted and implemented by individuals, Long uses the concepts of social fields, social domains and social arenas to contextualise the spaces in which actors' decisions are made.

Social fields

For Long, the notion of the social field refers to a social landscape composed of elements and relationships that characterise the phenomenon of study. These elements can be the 'product of human or non-human interventions, both local and global, as well as result of both cooperative and competitive processes' (Long, 2001: 58). The social field in which this research takes place is the field of bureaucratic organisations in the context of the implementation of development policies; here official regulations, public resources, buildings, public and private organisations, informal practices, beneficiaries, government functionaries, political parties, unions and so on converge.

Social domains and institutional settings

Long uses the term *social domains* to identify 'areas of social life that are organised with reference to a central core of values which, even if they are not perceived in exactly the same way by all involved, are nevertheless recognised as a locus of certain rules, norms, and values implying a degree of social commitment' (Long, 2001: 59). I link Long's concept of the social domain to the concept *institutions*, defined by

authors such as Ostrom (2005) and North (1990) as the set of formal or informal rules that constrain the decisions of individuals in a specific context or domain. Elinor Ostrom (2005:1) defines institutions as 'prescriptions that humans use to organise all forms of repetitive structured interactions including those within families, neighbourhoods, markets, firms, sports, leagues, churches, private associations, and governments at all scales'. In this thesis the term *institution* is used interchangeably with the term *social domain*.

Examples of social domains or institutions in the context of this research can be expressed in terms of the formal and informal rules that particular groups refer to when making decisions about rural development policy processes in Mexico. The institutions that the research identifies are associated with federal, state and local bureaucracy, specific secretaries of state, program beneficiaries, directors and program managers, operative workers and congressmen, and are located in diverse institutional settings– or, as Long calls them, arenas – associated with specific contexts such as Mexico's democracy, specific governmental programmes, the policy-making process, the economic system and so on.

Social arenas

By social arenas, Long refers to the social and spatial locations in which actors confront each other, mobilise social relations and deploy discursive and other cultural means for the attainment of specific ends, including simply seeking to remain in a particular social game. Together with the notion of the arena, domains provide an analytical handle on the types of constraints and enabling elements that shape actors' choices and room for manoeuvre (Long, 2001: 59).

This notion of the arena is particularly important for Long in the analysis

of development projects and programmes, as he considers that intervention processes comprise a complex set of interlocking arenas of struggle, each characterised by specific constraints and possibilities for manoeuvre. Long points out that the concept of the arena is useful for identifying the actors and mapping out the issues, resources and discourses entailed in particular situations of disagreement or dispute. The notions of field, domain and arena are important in this research too, as they help to delimit the spaces and spheres of analysis; however, alone, they do not provide methodological insights from which to analyse and interpret actors' actions. To discover the rationale behind actors' decisions, Long proposes using discourse and interface analysis as two ways of exploring the logic of action in particular social contexts.

Interface analysis

The notion of interface analysis is oriented towards situations in which different and often conflicting lifeworlds or social fields converge; or, more concretely, in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive standpoints (Long, 2001: 65). Interface analysis focuses on points of confrontation and social difference among actors. According to Long, this kind of analysis requires a methodology that counterpoints the voices, experiences and practices of all the social actors involved, including the experiential learning curves of policy practitioners and researchers. Long says that interface analysis used in the particular field of development policies can make a useful contribution to understanding how planned intervention processes enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop:

Thus, so-called 'external' factors become 'internalised' and come to mean quite different things to different interests groups or to the different

individual actors, whether they be implementers, clients or bystanders. In this way interface analysis helps to deconstruct the concept of planned intervention so that it is seen for what it is – namely, an on-going, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with expected outcomes. It also shows that policy implementation is not simply a top-down process, as is often implied, since initiatives may come as much from below as from above. (Long, 2001: 72)

Thus, according to Long, the use of interface analysis in development policies requires concentration on analysing the critical junctures or arenas involving differences in normative values and social interests. At the same time it entails not only understanding the struggles and power differentials taking place between the parties involved but also an attempt to reveal the dynamics of cultural accommodation that make it possible for the various worldviews to interact (Long, 2001: 66).

Norman Long sets the basis of what today is called the sociology of development. He has provided a constructivist perspective from which to understand development practice, avoiding mechanical-managerial analysis based on the prescriptions of the policy models. His analytical framework represents a strong foundation for understanding each actor's decisions, contextualised in the different lifeworlds s/he takes as reference for interaction with other actors in different organisational contexts. The following section explores actor-network theory (ANT), an analytical stream that shares the same ontological position in terms of considering the actor as the main referent of analysis; however the actor is not just considered individually but as part of an actor network in which individual actors' decisions and network outcomes cannot be understood without analysing the interconnection between all the participants in the policy process.

4.2 Understanding development practice through actor-network theory

ANT began to be used in the field of development studies in the early

2000s as a ground-breaking approach to the analysis of the social world. The ANT approach accounts for the connections between actors in a network and how they interact with one another to produce social outcomes. ANT's theoretical framework redefines the notion of 'social' as Bruno Latour (1999; 2005), one of its most prominent advocates, challenges the way in which traditional sociology explains the social world. Whether through objectivism, constructivism or a combination of the several ontological positions in between, traditional sociology looks for patterns of collective behaviour or social structures that explain social actions and their outcomes. ANT does not deny the existence of such social structures and institutions as customs, tradition, history, norms, etc., but sees them simply as elements or actors in a complex network which, as a whole, produces social outcomes. ANT does not look for hidden patterns that determine the action or patterns created by individuals but seeks to understand how actors are interconnected, and how they interact to produce social outcomes in a particular time and space frame.

Looking through ANT's lens, outcomes in the social world are the result of a series of interpretations made by a complex network of actors in relation to a particular social phenomenon. One of the key features of this approach is that the actors are not necessarily human; material objects and even intangible entities in a social setting can be also analysed as actors in the network. Ontologically, ANT responds to a view of the world that is based on a type of social constructionism in which social outcomes are the product of the agency of the actors that compose a network. This agency allows each actor to interpret, in their own way, other individuals, norms, customs, actors' interests, technologies, climates, organisational cultures, governmental programmes, etc. – elements that ANT sees as potential actors taking part in a particular social phenomena. Unlike analytical approaches based on symbolic interactionism, in ANT's view actors' interpretations in relation to other

actors and elements of the network do not necessarily describe a pattern. Each actor may interpret each component of the actors' network the same element in a different way; hence a social phenomenon can be understood by knowing how the actors in a network are interlocked to produce social outcomes.

One of ANT's most controversial features -and the main tension with Long's approach - is the idea that non-human actors can have agency. How is this possible? ANT's argument rests on the several meanings and uses that a human actor can give to an object, and how objects may undergo transformations that are beyond the will of a particular human actor. Thus the transformation of an object can be the result of a human actor's particular interpretation of it: consciously or unconsciously, a human actor influences the nature of other objects through the way s/he and it interact. In this way the object's original purpose is transformed as a result of a chain of interactions that gradually modify the relationship between both actors and the outputs they collectively produce. In a social network where several actors interact, an objects' original role in the network may change as a consequence of the series of interpretations that take place in a particular context; these interpretations do not necessarily have to go in the same direction for each actor.

ANT's ontological position has provided scholars with new ways of studying complex social phenomena. Its focus is on actors' practices and outcomes rather than their nature, or hidden nature, and it seeks to determine what social outcomes are produced and how are they produced according to the interactions between the actors in a network. ANT is concerned not with *why* actors interact as they do but *how* they interact and the result of their interactions. It offers the analogy of a black box to explain how some non-human actors that have worked for some human actors in a useful manner, or in a certain way, acquire a

robust and straightforward meaning for the rest of the actors; at some point the actors' network stops looking at the nature and complexity of a specific object and begins to consider it as a given, at which point the object is 'black-boxed.' In Latour's words, when a machine runs efficiently, when a matter of fact is settled, one needs only to focus on its inputs and outputs and not on its internal complexity. Thus, paradoxically, the more technology succeeds, the more opaque and obscure it becomes (Latour, 1999).

This idea of black boxing can be better understood through an example. Consider the case of an actors' network related to the production of carrots. The actors that compose the network are farmers, land, water, buyers, tractors, seeds and fertiliser. In the production process all of these actors are linked by a chain of interactions to perform activities that produce carrots. Through the lens of ANT, some of these actors are complex machines, such as the tractors, or represent a complex technology, such as chemical fertilisers. A farmer does not need to know the physics behind the tractor's design or the chemical reactions to the fertiliser; all s/he needs to know is the basics of how to operate the tractor to prepare the land or harvest the carrots and the correct proportions and techniques with which to apply the chemicals. Although a tractor is a multipurpose machine – it can be used for ploughing, tilling, disking, harrowing or planting and for pulling or pushing other agricultural machinery or trailers – in some particular places tractors have been black-boxed: they have been conceptualised in terms of traditional uses, neglecting the alternative or new uses that a tractor can provide. In some Mexican communities, besides the productive use of a tractor it is also used to demonstrate social status: the bigger and newer the tractor, the higher the social status it represents. It does not matter if it is underused for farming activities – what matters in this context is that people in the community realise that the farmer owns a new and powerful tractor.

Fertilisers can be black-boxed actors when their use and effectiveness is socially accepted by the carrot producers. Producers can create strong links with types or brands of fertiliser that have provided them with good results, creating strong barriers to the acceptance of new technological developments in the fertilising industry or new techniques replacing the use of fertilisers. In Mexico some fertiliser companies have had to continue to offer a particular product for 20 years because the product has created a special meaning, such as that it brings good luck, for producers. Independently of the substances or active elements in the fertiliser, this product – or actor – plays that specific role in the actors' network of carrot production. The fertiliser – a specific technology – has been black-boxed by the human actors in the network for a specific purpose – and is seen as not exchangeable with a similar item.⁵

The above example illustrates how material objects produce meanings that can influence or affect human actors' decisions. These meanings create relationships between human and non-human actors that can define the interactions between them to create a particular network. When actors are black-boxed their choices are predictable to other actors in relation to the outcomes that particular type interactions might produce. However, not all the actors in a network perform as black boxes; some may have different meanings for different actors. Bruno Latour differentiates between whether the means of producing the social are seen as intermediaries, as a black box may be, or as mediators. An intermediary, he says, transports meaning without transformation; defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs (Latour, 2005: 39). On the other hand, a mediator's input is never a good predictor of its output; its contextual stance has to be taken into account every time:

⁵These examples are based on data shared by the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Project of FAO in Mexico (www.fao-evaluacion.org.mx)

Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry. No matter how complicated an intermediary is, it may, for all practical purposes, count for just one – or even for nothing at all because it can be easily forgotten. No matter how apparently simple a mediator may look, it may become complex; it may lead in multiple directions which will modify all the contradictory accounts attributed to its role. (Latour, 2005:39)

The distinction between mediators and interpreters is a key element of ANT's framework; it helps to identify the intimate nature of actors. As many interpreters take part in the network, the steadier the social outcomes are the more certainty they provide, while on the contrary, mediators can be the source of multiple interpretations of meaning, producing different meanings for individual actors and making the network uncertain and unstable. What matters in analysis using ANT is the role of each actor in the network and how the series of interactions they engage in produces social outcomes.

ANT acknowledges that the social world is not as stable as traditional sociology suggests it is through its explanation of social structures:

To sum up the contrast in a rudimentary way, the sociologists of the social believe in one type of social aggregates, few mediators, and many intermediaries; for ANT, there is no preferable type of social aggregate, there exist an endless number of mediators, and when these are transformed into faithful intermediaries it is not the rule, but a rare exception that has to be accounted for by some extra work – usually by the mobilization of even more mediators! No two viewpoints of the same object could be more different. (Latour, 2005:40)

Understanding the difference between these two roles that an actor can play in a network makes it possible to map the many contradictory ways in which social aggregates are evoked, erased, distributed and reallocated in the network: it allows interpretation of the world in the several ways in which it is expressed. This requires abandoning the idea that all languages are translatable in the already-established idiom of the 'social' (Latour, 2005: 42). In practice there is no one way of applying

this approach to studying social phenomena. Besides the basics of how actors in a network interact to generate the overall outcomes of the network, it is equally important to explore the basic features of an actor network as a theoretical body. However, conceptualising ANT as a unique or specific theoretical body is a task that could contravene ANT's own nature. As John Law (1997) points out, even scholars make different interpretations of ANT in their research, so there is no unique or standard definition of it is. Rather than looking for its precepts, its theoretical framework can be described as a grounded theory system that is continually being determined by the ways in which it has been used and understood in applied research. Law (1997) provides some insights, which are product of the reflection on four research cases based on the ANT approach. Below are his main conclusions.

First, an actor network is much like a structure, except for one crucial difference: there is no assumption that specific links or nodes in the network are given; that is to say a specific order of things is not implicit; instead both links and nodes have to be uncovered by the analyst. In the earlier example of carrot production one can see that there is no pattern to the elements that compose the production chain. In some cases the tractor can play a central role, in others its participation in the production process is limited or specific, even though theoretically it should have general use for all users. Similarly, some people can avoid the use of chemicals in production or can decide to use specific techniques. Objects can represent different things to different people; their use can be different so that the social outcome.

Second, networks are materially heterogeneous; they are composed of human and non-human actors such as people, objects and intangible entities, all of which have equal status in the network. In the carrot production example the actor network is composed of machines, chemicals, persons, land, beliefs and so on, and not only of human actors.

Third, to know about a particular aspect of the network it may be necessary to decentralise the analysis from the object of study. In Law's terms:

Decentring may be crucial to centring. And, conversely, that accomplished centring may lead to motivated decentring. The strain, then, is not necessarily towards drawing things together. Or if it is, then it is about how drawing things together is intimately related to a contrary process of taking them apart' (Law, 2006: 57)

In the context of our example, this means that understanding the influence of chemicals on the production process requires focusing beyond just the relation between the farmer and the fertiliser to also consider all the interpretations and meanings that are being produced throughout the network, including the interactions of other actors involved as chemicals providers, neighbour producers or even particular beliefs. In other words, to focus on a specific issue one must decentre the analysis to gather a holistic understanding of the outcomes.

Fourth, there are no temporal constraints to analysing an actor network, as ANT assumes that actor networks are dynamic, so different outcomes from an actor network at two different moments do not necessarily represent inconsistency as traditional sociology would view it: 'There is no need to draw things together, except for a moment – and that moment will pass, pass into oscillation, movement, alternative patterning. At some other moment things will be ordered differently' (Law, 1997: 58). Law borrows the term 'ontological choreography' from Charis Cussins (1998) to explain how he sees ANT's ontological position. He likes the notion of understanding the social world as a dance rather than a given design. In the carrot production case this would mean that it could be possible to observe different uses of a tractor – with different outcomes – from one year to another, with no apparent logical explanation; however, the reconfiguration of the actors' network should be able to

account for the shift and the new directions of the outcomes with perfect sense, according to the internal logic by which this particular actor network operates.

For many researchers, ANT represents a window through which it is possible to study social phenomena that seem to be plagued by inconsistencies; it is also a window through which try to understand complex phenomena where material objects seems to be alive as they evolve and transform human relations. Applied studies based on ANT have traditionally been in the fields of medicine, information technology and ecology. Such studies generally seek to show how particular medical practices, uses of mobile phones or computer software or specific conservation practices create links between and different arrangements of actors and hence create specific actor-network dynamics. All of them have in common that there are no assumptions about a wrong or right path; they only explain how actors interact and interpret each other to produce the network's outcomes. What if, as Law suggests, there is no overall pattern?

Perhaps, then, it is not simply that we cannot describe a single and coherent pattern [...] Perhaps there is no single and coherent pattern. Perhaps there is nothing except practices. Perhaps there is nothing other than stories performing themselves and seeking to make connections, practical and local connections, specific links. (Law, 2006:65)

David Mosse (2004) raises the same question in the field of development studies. Mosse reflects on the enormous energy that governments and international organisations devote to generating the 'right' development policy models and the contrasting results that such policy models have produced. He stresses the lack of attention paid to the relationship between the models and the practices and outcomes that they are expected to generate in particular contexts. At best, he says the relationship between policy and practice has been understood in terms of an unintended gap between theory and practice, which can be reduced

by better policy more effectively implemented (Mosse, 2004: 640). It seems that for Mosse and many other scholars these explanations are not enough to account for the outcomes of development policies. Mosse asks:

What if development practice is not driven by policy? What if the things that make for good policy are quite different from those that make it implementable? What if the practices of development are in fact concealed rather than produced by policy? What if, instead of policy producing practice, practices produce policy, in the sense that actors in development devote their energies to maintaining coherent representations regardless of events? (Mosse, 2004: 640)

These questions that Mosse raises account for some of the new concerns in development policy studies that challenge the traditional way of posing research questions about policy analysis, and at the same time see ANT as a way to get answers in new directions.

David Lewis and David Mosse (2006) see in ANT a research approach that makes it possible to understand development practice through deeper analysis of the ways in which actors interpret and produce meanings, social networks and development 'success' at every level, within donor policymaking circles and consultancy teams and among project staff as well as among the consumers of development (Lewis and Mosse, 2006:15). Both authors see ANT as a potential analytical framework for what they call 'an ethnography of aid and agencies', a particular ethnography for the study of development policies. However, from a methodological perspective this ethnography of development differs from the traditional ethnography of classic anthropology, which is based on the researcher's deeper and longer involvement with the object of study. ANT's analytical framework is used in the present research as an alternative approach to the managerial or organisational approaches traditionally used for studying development policy process.

Managerial and organisational approaches have been used to focus on

studying operational and administrative procedures in programmes and projects. Studies based on that approach commonly seek to identify the 'wrongs' and 'rights' in program/project design or how specific processes are performed at the implementation stage. The result of such analysis commonly ends in recommendations for modifications to the design or to specific operational/administrative procedures. Chapter 3 presented a theoretical review of key works in the fields of public administration and policy analysis to explain why some policies do not produce the expected results as a consequence of unexpected practices on the part of bureaucratic bodies.

All of the works reviewed were framed by the question: What went wrong in the design or implementation stage? They are constrained because the answers necessarily have a prescriptive nature. For example, under the traditional approaches two different interpretations of the same object by the actors involved are commonly seen as a diversion. In ANT this is not a diversion; it is just how it is, how the network is working in relation to the association of two actors with one object. The object becomes an actor when it has the capacity to influence the other actors' decisions. This influence does not necessarily have to be a deliberate action; it can also be a reaction produced by the nature of the object – the role of the actor, the understanding of the actor's role, power resources, its features, etc.

ANT represents an opportunity for understanding development practice differently from explanations based on managerial and organisational approaches. Conceptually, ANT's approach avoids thinking in terms of 'wrong' and 'right.' This means that rather than analysing what elements of the policy were 'rightly' or 'wrongly' performed, one must focus on how actors' networks are interlocked to produce the policy outputs. The plans or normative documents are not the main referents for analysing a policy. A normative document in ANT can be considered only as another

non-human actors with a part in the network that produces particular meanings and creates certain links with other actors. In ANT, the question in the context of a development policy is how the actors' network is composed, how the actors interact and interpret one another to produce practice and to deliver 'development'.

As stated, this research investigates how development bureaucracies influence development policies. Clearly, the central actor in the analysis is the bureaucracy; however, bureaucracy as an organisational entity is composed of several actors with different natures that work in different positions and different locations and have different responsibilities at different levels. Similarly, bureaucrats have to deal with other human actors such as citizens, social organisations, external consultants, politicians, and so on; all have to perform their activities in diverse physical settings, whether buildings, the field, the street, etc. Equally important is the consideration that a policy is commonly composed by several governmental programmes or projects, implying the existence of different normative regulations and tools that establish specific responsibilities for the bureaucratic actors. From the ANT perspective, most of these elements, human and not, set a network of actors around the development policy that are interlocked in a broad chain of interpretations. A particular place, a particular program, a particular norm or a certain social group produces a particular meaning for a specific human actor which shapes the actor's decisions and, therefore, influences the output of its action in a certain way.

In applying ANT's approach to the methodology of this research to centre the analysis on one actor, the bureaucracy, it will be necessary to decentre the analysis from it to describe the chain of interactions and interpretations between all the participants in the actors' network to deliver development. The influence of bureaucracy on development outcomes cannot be understood without knowing its links with the other

network's actors. This will require the identification of the actors that play a role in the development policy, and of how actors interact to produce development practice. The research question about identifying the actors and their interactions in relation to a specific policy is: Which actors take part in the development policy process? How do they interact to produce development outcomes?

Identifying the actors' network around a development policy requires knowing which human and non-human elements influence the decisions of a specific actor or group of actors, and what objects or humans are capable of providing scripts to others about how they can influence the network's output (Lewis and Mosse, 2006: 13). But scripts must not be seen as the embedded rules of a social structure. In ANT, a script means that one single actor can generate different meanings for different actors in the network which the latter can interpret in several and diverse ways. The complexity of ANT's interpretative framework increases when one realises that there is no a steady configuration of the network in time or space. An actors' network is a dynamic entity that can constantly change how actors interact according to particular moments or locations. Decoding or interpreting the actors' network for a development policy requires identifying the moment and space in which it is analysed. The researcher must be cautious to express generalisations about the findings, but at the same time must also be prepared to explain the variations in actors' interpretations when the time and space variables change.

In summary, ANT argues that explaining the social world goes beyond debating the traditional dichotomy between agency and structure. ANT's ontological view also transcends the dichotomy between objectivism and constructivism. Its epistemological stance is difficult to identify, as the researcher becomes a network builder, an interpreter not only of the relations between the several actors in a network but also of ANT's

theoretical principles. The case study developed in Chapters 5 and 6 is precisely an interpretation of the researcher using ANT principles in the case of Mexico's rural development policy, but at the same time these chapters describe the chain of interpretations in which actors in the network are interlocked to produce development practice.

4.3 Methodology

The methodology of this research is based on the development of a case study of Mexico's rural development policy that explores how Mexican bureaucracy produces development practice in the context of the 2001 Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. The main unit of analysis is the Mexican bureaucracy, which is divided into subunits of analysis according to the different types of government and different operational levels.

Mexico's rural development policy has been selected a case study as research design because the effectiveness it has shown to understand organisational realms. This work is wholly qualitative research based on the methodological approach fostered by sociologists and anthropologists in the field of development studies such as Norman Long (2001; 1992), Oliver de Sardan (2005), David Lewis and David Mosse (Lewis and Mosse, 2006), Bruno Latour (2005) and John Law (1997). This research stream basically rest on the construction of a case study and ethnography as research methods. In the present research, it has been selected to build a case study as research design, to generate a description of way the Mexican development bureaucracy is implementing the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable.

As explained in detail in the following section, Chapter 5 builds the case of the processes involved in the decentralisation of the operation of the federal programme called PAAP. The empirical evidence is presented in

the form of interface encounters at three different levels of bureaucracy: upper, middle and lower. The same structure is used in Chapter 6, which addresses the way the notion of community participation is implemented in the operation of the Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos (Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets, henceforth PAAP). Both chapters continuously refer to the two geographical locations selected for the study; the purpose of this is to show how different administrative, political and social settings present similar outputs in terms of bureaucratic practices.

Because of the qualitative nature of this research, semi-structured interviewing and participatory observation were selected as research methods to explore the repertoires from which actors translate development policies into development practice. Documentary research was used as a complementary method to discover that the formal referents used by bureaucrats in implementing Mexico's rural development policy are the LDRS, PAAP's operational rules, formal agreements between state and federal governments and the informative flyers that each government uses to promote PAAP.

One of the most powerful reasons for considering the use of semi-structured interviews is the possibility of registering, through this method, information unconsciously provided by the interviewee such as their perceptions, reactions, opinions, gossip and body language in relation to a specific topic. In particular, the conversational mode of semi-structured interviews allows interviewees to express themselves openly. All interviews were carried out in each location from January to April 2010. Appendix 1 contains a list of the interviewees and Appendix 2, the questions used to guide the interview.

Participant observation was used to obtain specific information that would otherwise be very difficult to get. I was given permission by the

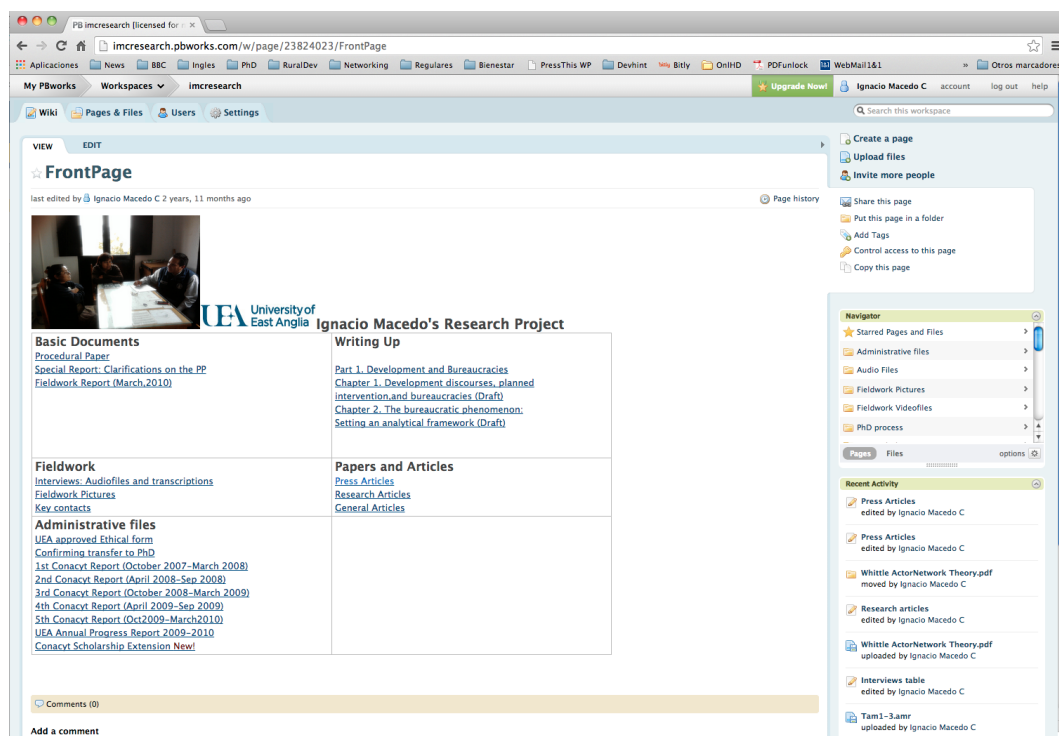
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), through its Technical Assistance Project based in Mexico, to participate as observer in the working sessions that they held with officials of Mexico's Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, henceforth SAGARPA), where I was introduced as a postgraduate researcher. In the introduction it was explained the purpose of the research and the use of the information that I would gather by observation. I was also invited to observe FAO's fieldwork activities, which they carried out for two months in the states of Jalisco and Oaxaca to gather information with which to evaluate SAGARPA's programmes.

FAO provided me with their fieldwork agenda and a list of the people they were going to interview. They gave me the chance to select which actors could be relevant for my research, so I chose those and some others who were not on their agenda but were in same administrative unit that FAO was to visit. The invitation letter to potential interviewees specified the purpose of the FAO fieldwork and the presence of a researcher from the University of East Anglia. At the beginning of each interview, informed consent was explicitly requested with an explanation of the proposed use of the information and the risks of participating in this research.

The interviews usually started with the FAO consultant introducing the aims of the fieldwork and asking a question. FAO's questions sought to identify structural problems faced in the rural sector that prevented greater productivity or the satisfaction of poor peasants' basic needs. However, a trend during most interviews was that the interviewee did not see the problems of the rural sector in terms of structural causalities – for example the producers' low level of education or difficulties in accessing new markets – and focused instead on the role of government

in the allocation of public resources. When this happened I had the chance to introduce the questions that I had prepared. When the interview developed as planned I had 30 minutes at the end to ask the questions on my research script.

I recorded 80% of the interviews on electronic audio files, with the consent of the interviewees. Sixty per cent of these recorded interviews were transcribed for easy analysis. All the fieldwork data were kept on the Internet on a private wiki site in order to provide access only to my supervisors to show them the quality of the information I had gathered and to make searching for and retrieving the data for analytical purposes easier. Picture 4.1 shows the main page of the wiki site.



Picture 4.1. Wiki page used to storage fieldwork data

The analysis of the fieldwork data to build the case study was carried out through discourse analysis. In the context of the analytical framework of this research, discourse is understood as the set of meanings embodied in statements, metaphors, representations, images and narratives that

shape a particular view of the reality of objects, persons and events and the relations between them (Long, 2001: 51-52). In this sense, the definition of discourse is strictly linked to Long's notion:

By 'discourse' is meant a set of meanings embodied in metaphors, representations, images, narratives and statements that advance a particular version of 'the truth' about objects, persons, events and relations between them. Discourses produce texts – written and spoken – and even non-verbal 'texts' such as the meanings embedded in architectural styles or fashions.

Discourses frame our understanding of life experiences by providing representations of 'reality' (often taken for granted), and shape or constitute what we consider to be the significant or essential objects, persons and events of our world. It is of course possible to have different or conflicting versions of the same discourse or incompatible discourses relating to the same phenomena. (Long, 2001: 52)

Unlike discourse analysis, which focuses on how social inequalities are reflected or reproduced in linguistic features of discourse, the approach used focuses on how the ideas behind discourses account for actors' decisions; that is to say, on the rationale behind certain actors' decisions, which can be identified in their discourse. Hence in this research the use of discourse analysis focuses on understanding how different informants express their interpretations of actors and objects related to the implementation of Mexico's rural development policy; for example, how different actors understand the directives of the Sustainable Rural Development Act and see homologous positions at different levels of government in different locations; and how programme beneficiaries interpret the programmes and their view of the programme operators. Analysing how actors behave and react to specific topics provides insights into how actors in different domains and arenas interpret the same objects in different ways, sometimes strategically and sometimes unconsciously.

At this point it is important to explain the positionality of the researcher in the analysis of the fieldwork data. Positionality must be understood in

this research as the individual backgrounds of different characteristics of the researcher such as race, gender, age, nationality, social and economic status, scholarship, among many other characteristics, which directly and indirectly influence experience, values, preconceptions, ideology, and interpretations in relation to research (Sumner and Tribe, 2008).

My positionality as the researcher in this work is mainly affected by my professional background. In 2004 I had my first contact with the implementation of the LDRS when participating in a research project at a Research Centre in Mexico that had the aim of visiting five municipalities to observe how they were implementing the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable in relation to the new attributions of local governments. Later on, in 2005, I was hired as a national consultant by FAO to perform process evaluations of the components of the SAGARPA programme 'Alianza para el Campo' (*the Farming Alliance*). I performed this activity for the two years until I started my PhD studies in 2007.

The aims and methodology of all the works I developed from 2004 to 2007 were basically oriented towards contrasting the operational rules with administrative procedures in field. They focused on what the implementers did and looked for 'failures' in the policy design in order to make recommendations for more efficient implementation. However, on several occasions the fieldwork material offered information about explanations that were not even considered in the methodological instruments, so much of this information was neglected because it did not match any of the research categories of information, or had been obtained off the record.

In these three years of professional activity I had the chance to hold formal and informal meetings with actors involved in the planning and implementation of the SAGARPA programmes, members of the Mexican Congress, leaders of producer organisations and peasants. These

meetings took place in restaurants, in vehicles during fieldwork trips, in the lobbies of public buildings, in seminars and in peasant houses. All these interactions with public servants linked to rural development gave me a particular perspective on the language and the jargon used by people linked to Mexico's rural sector, the reasons that government functionaries give for some administrative decisions on the implementation of programmes and the logic behind some peasants' actions in relation to the public programmes.

During that professional spell at FAO I understood that sometimes the information you are looking for as researcher is obtained just after the interview finishes, when the interviewee feels relaxed because they do not feel the pressure of being examined in a formal interview. I realised that at that specific moment one can be a participant observer engaging in a meal or informal chat, with access to information that otherwise would not be available.

In this research my professional background influenced not just the way I interpreted the fieldwork data but also how I posed the research questions right from the beginning. I posed questions in a way that could produce answers not commonly obtained from process evaluations or research based on managerial approaches. I found in David Mosse and Norman Long's research frameworks plenty of room to explore development bureaucracies in the way I wanted to. To understand the rationale behind certain of the development bureaucracies' implementation decisions I used an ontological approach associated with social constructionism to observe how, situationally, individuals produce social outcomes. This, says Long, requires throwing the net high and wide:

We must encompass not only everyday social practice and language games, but also large scale institutional frameworks, resource fields, networks of communication and support, collective ideologies, socio-political arenas of

struggle, and the beliefs and cosmologies that may shape actors' improvisation, coping behaviours and planned social actions. (Long, 2001: 4)

Long's actor-oriented approach is used in this research to generate the description of the encounters between the different actors involved in the implementation of the PAAP in a micro-analysis of the social world behind Mexico's development bureaucracy in the specific case analysed. The analysis seeks to identify the factors that influence actors' decisions and the rationale they use as part of their strategic behaviour. As de Vaus (2001:237) explains, case-study designs do not strive to make generalisations with the external validity of statistical methods, so instead of asking what a study can tell us about a general population, the case study design asks what this case tells us about some theoretical propositions.

Actor-network theory is used in this research to generate a macro-analysis that ignores the micro-encounters observed in Chapters 5 and 6 and focuses on identifying the big picture. I focus on the actors' network of representative elements that produced the development practice associated with the implementation of the LDRS. These elements are called actors in this approach, as even non-human actors can produce meaning and influence human actors' decisions. From the case study developed in Chapters 5 and 6 it was possible to identify the following human and non-human elements of the actors' network in the implementation of the LDRS: Congresspersons, LDRS, PAAP, Mexican history, clientelism, *compadrazgo* and the upper, lower, federal and state bureaucracies.

Thus the proposed case study design is characterised as *explanatory* because it seeks the causalities of the way development practice is produced into particular processes. It comprises *multiple cases*: decentralisation and community participation. It is a *retrospective* study

because it analyses different bureaucratic settings and rationales from the beginning of the decentralisation process in 2001 up to now. Finally, its design is *sequential*; that is to say the generation of each case follows the last.

Structure of the case study

The case study looks at two development arenas that show how development ideas expressed in the LDRS are transformed into development practice by the Mexican bureaucracy; first the notion of decentralisation, and second, application of the notion of community participation. Both ideas were used to structure in two chapters the case study on the federal programme called Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos (Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets, henceforth PAAP).

As explained in detail in Chapter 2, PAAP was created in 2008 to foster the acquisition of productive assets by people living in rural areas. The programme assumes that physical capital is fundamental to make profitable and sustainable productive activities in rural settings, so this programme provides subsidies to the beneficiaries of 25-70 per cent of the total cost of the productive asset. Today PAAP is one of few programmes whose design complies with the directives of the LDRS, although its 2004 predecessors were also precisely designed as a response to these directives. PAAP is not a new programme but an integration of its predecessors with the main target of increasing physical capital in rural areas. It is analysed in light of the original programmes created to implement the LDRS.

Like its predecessors, PAAP can operate under a decentralised mode involving three levels of government. It also provides participatory spaces where members of the civil society and local producers can

influence decisions about the allocation of its resources. Cases are built here for both of these aspects in two different geographical settings where PAAP was implemented.

Two states with different social, economic, political and administrative characteristics were selected to illustrate how a national policy is interpreted in different settings. The State of Oaxaca in Southwestern Mexico has a population of 3,506,821, of which 37 per cent are indigenous and 41 per cent are working. Almost a third (464,100 people) of the working population work in the primary industry.⁶ In Oaxaca 64 per cent of the rural working population have no earned income; 25 per cent earn no more than US\$3.8 a day and 11 per cent, US\$3.8-19 a day (INEGI, 2012).

At the time that the fieldwork was conducted the State of Oaxaca was governed by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), the main opposition party to that of the Mexican President, Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). The State of Oaxaca has a very complex political system at municipal level because it is divided into 570 municipalities, 70 per cent of which are governed under a special legal system called the 'customs and traditions system'⁷ while the remaining 30 per cent are governed according to common law. Fifty per cent of the municipalities ruled under common law are governed by the PRI.

⁶ 'Primary industries' in the context of this research comprise agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and mineral extraction.

⁷ The Mexican Constitution states that communities of mainly indigenous people are to be governed by their indigenous customs and traditions.



Figure 4.1: Geographical division of Mexican territories

The State of Jalisco in West Mexico has a population of 6,752,113 of which 0.7 per cent are indigenous and 43 per cent are working. Only 8 per cent (242,000 people) of the working population work in the primary industry; 13 per cent of the rural working population of Jalisco do not earn an income, 27 per cent earn no more than US\$3.8 a day, and 34 per cent earn between US\$3.8 and \$19 a day.

The State of Jalisco is governed by PAN, which also governs 50 per cent of the 125 municipalities, all of which are ruled by common law.

There are important differences in the two states' public administration structures. While the State of Jalisco has very modern buildings, highly professionalised human resources and standardised organisational procedures, the State of Oaxaca has a very precarious administrative system at state level, expressed in its non-professionalised personnel and the poor condition of its public buildings.

These two locations present two different rural, social and

administrative settings to analyse development practice. In this research an implementation network is understood as the set of human actors involved in the implementation of rural policy at federal, state and local levels.

At the local level, two municipalities were selected in each state. Like the analysis at state level, the purpose of this is to illustrate bureaucratic practice in places with different institutional settings. The selected municipalities in Jalisco are Chapala and Jamay (Figure 1.2); and in Oaxaca are San Miguel Suchixtepec and San Miguel Coatlán (Figure 1.3).

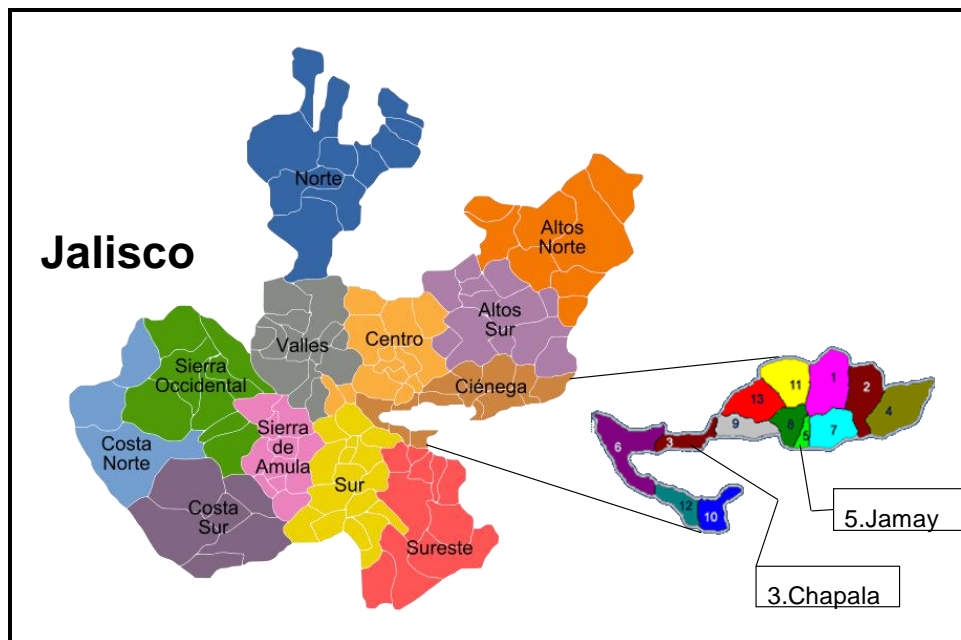


Figure 4.2: Geographical division of the state of Jalisco and the municipalities selected

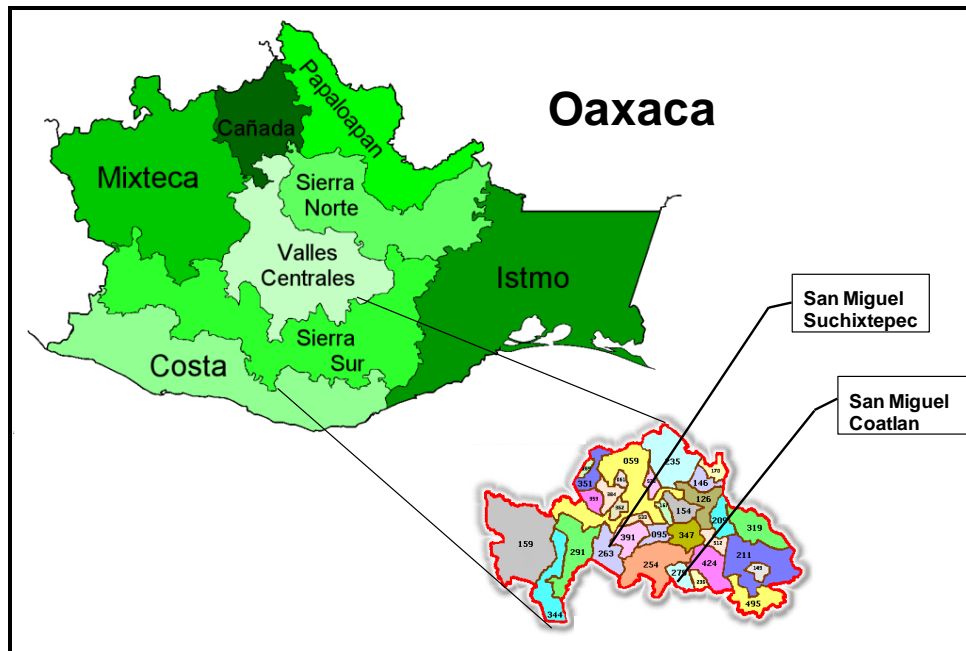


Figure 4.3: Geographical division of the state of Oaxaca and the municipalities selected

These locations were selected in order to obtain a holistic picture of the decentralisation of rural programmes in Mexico at two levels of analysis. One (Figure 4.1) illustrates the process at federal to state level, with the federal government the same for both states; the second (Figures 4.2 and 4.3), shows decentralisation at the municipal level. Figure 3.4 illustrates the three levels of government on which the case is based and the seven case study locations.

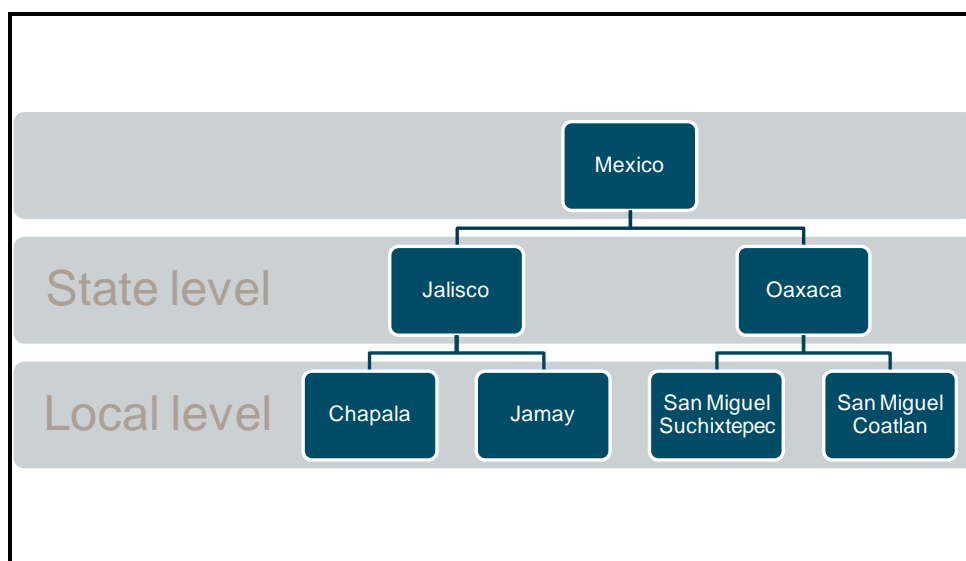


Figure 3.4: Case study locations from which to build the case study by level of government

To examine how bureaucratic structures implement the notion of community participation as development practice, the case study is based on the local sustainable rural development councils that the LDRS sees as the participatory spaces where members of civil society can participate actively in the implementation of PAAP. Seven rural development councils were studied for this research: the sustainable rural development council at the national level, two sustainable rural development councils at state level (Jalisco and Oaxaca), and four at municipal level (Chapala and Jamay in Jalisco and San Miguel Suchixtepec and San Miguel Coatlán in Oaxaca).

Research ethics

The University of East Anglia's International Research Ethics Committee approved the proposed research's ethical approach for this research. All the participants interviewed were first informed about the objectives of the research, how the information would be used in the research and the potential risks involved in participating in it; thus all interviews were carried out with the informed consent of the participants.

Even when personal data was not requested in the fieldwork, the nature of the research sought participants' opinions of informal organisational practices, which carried a professional risk if some of the contents of the interviews were revealed to third parties. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants both at the collection stage and in all written research reports. No participant is named unless they have given explicit permission for this. The names of all the participants were masked, both on the datasheets and in the electronic devices where they were stored. Information registered during participatory observation was strictly used to corroborate practices identified in the early stages of

the research; again, the participants' real names are not used in any circumstance.

In the development of the research, ethical issues arose that I had to manage carefully as researcher to avoid putting my informants into a vulnerable position. This applied when I interacted with them personally, such having lunch or travelling to specific locations with them. In such situations they spoke to me more openly than during their formal interviews. During these informal chats I returned to topics discussed in their interview and the informants, provided additional insights into the implementation of Mexico's rural development policy. Aware that information revealed under these circumstances was not covered by the informed consent given previously, I had to ask permission to use these informal talks to inform my research with the specific guarantee that I would not refer to them by name in my report.

This information had the quality of off-the-record statements and it was evident that it was very sensitive, as most of the participants who spoke with me informally only agreed to let me use the information they gave if I guaranteed their anonymity. This way of collecting information was outside the original plan, but it was necessary because the quality of the information corroborated data about some of the influential bureaucratic practices based on the directives of informal institutions in Mexico's rural sector.

I tried to avoid manipulating information when selecting quotes from the interviews for inclusion in this document. My criterion was to use specific parts of conversations held with informants that clearly illustrated the situations described or the findings reported. The generalisations made in this work rest not only on these quotations but also on systematic analysis of all the information collected.

Another ethical challenge occurred when FAO staff and government staff granted me permission to take part, as a participant observer, in the interviews that FAO was conducting in order to make a national diagnosis of the problems of Mexico's rural sector. I tried to observe how the FAO consultants carried out these interviews, but the role of bureaucrats in the implementation process and the factors that influence their decisions was continually brought up during the interviews. It was not the main topic of the FAO interviews, but naturally the interviewees shifted the interview to that arena. When this happened I participated, asking questions to investigate some topics more deeply, and on some occasions I took control of the whole interview because the informant was reluctant to speak about other topics and was more interested in the topics in my own interview guide. The methodological problem here was that in some interviews I suddenly became the interviewer rather than the observer with eventual participation.

Fortunately the FAO staff understood perfectly that the interviewees produced shifts from the interviews' topics spontaneously and that I was not responsible for it. Some information that should be registered as observations was suddenly converted into interview material. This did not represent any risk to the quality of the information, as the informants were aware of the additional use of the information they provided in my academic research.

Another ethical element was the way in which some rural individuals participated in the interviews. Because it is very easy in rural Mexico to identify people who are not from the rural sector by how they dress and speak, some rural informants saw me as a public servant or somebody from the federal government in Mexico City with access to the authorities. Even after clarifying many times that I was a researcher from the University of East Anglia, they did not understand what I meant and continued to assume that I came from Mexico City and had access to

channels by which I could transmit their messages to the Mexican governmental authorities. Some asked me to pass a message to the authorities in Mexico City about the social and economic needs of the population of the region. When this happened I had to explain again that I was unable to transmit their message because I was an academic researcher, and recommended that they gave their message to the local representative of the federal government. They usually behaved as if I did not want to transmit the message, not believing that I had no connection to the government.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the potential of actor-oriented approaches for understanding development practice. Long's perspective is used to understand actors' decisions in the context of their perspectives. It is necessary to explore the planned intervention considering the lifeworlds of the actors involved in the implementation of Mexico's Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. The methodological approach also uses Long's conceptual framework, including identification of the social fields, arenas and domains in the implementation arena.

Like Long's analytical framework, actor-network theory offers great potential for discovering how actors in a particular development policy process produce development practice as a consequence of the broad chain of interpretations by the actors that take part. ANT's nature leads us to ask who produces development practice, which actors influence it, how actors interpret each other to make decisions, what those decisions are and how they produce development practice. ANT is a powerful analytical tool which helps to answer all of these questions in the present research.

The complementarity in the use of these two research approaches rests on ANT's difficulty in explaining the rationale behind actors' decisions. ANT does not question the nature of the decision or whether a specific interaction between two actors is appropriate to deliver the expected outcome of a policy. It only describes how actors relate to each other in the network and how they interact to produce the network's outcomes. To some extent, ANT provides a macro-representation of the actors' network involved in the implementation of the Mexico's Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. According to the advocates of this approach, avoiding going deeply into explanations of the decision-making and focusing on the interactions and their outcomes has built ANT's strength as an analytical framework. Some have asserted that ANT has a 'flat' ontology' that makes it possible to study the complexity of the social world (see Faik, Thompson, and Walsham, 2011). Nevertheless, what some see as strength, others may see as weakness in understanding the social world, particularly in relation to understanding the rationale behind certain actors' decisions that influence development practice.

As shown in this chapter, ANT's approach sees some actors as 'black boxes', as it is easier to focus on the interactions between actors than on the causes of the interactions, the purpose is to get the big picture of how development are produced by the implementation network composed by bureaucratic actors. For this reason Long's (2001) analytical framework is employed to carry out microanalysis of actors' lifeworlds and to contextualise their decisions to open the black box to understand development practice; that is to say, to understand individual choices in the context of the implementation of the PAPP. In doing this, participatory-observation, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis are the key research tools to produce information to get a holistic view of Mexico's development bureaucracy.

Actor-oriented approaches, like any other research approach, are the lenses used by the researcher to identify the variables, specificities and aspects of interest about a specific social phenomenon. It would be wrong to think in terms of 'good' or 'bad' research approaches; the selection of a research approach should rest on the nature of the social phenomenon studied and the specific aspects that the researcher is interested in understanding (Gilbert, 2008; de Vaus, 2001). In development studies there is a wide menu of research approaches and methodologies because it is an interdisciplinary field. They range from Marxism and historical institutionalism approaches at one end of the spectrum to those ones shaped by symbolic interactionism and grounded theory at the other. In the middle are agency-structure frameworks, Foucauldian analysis, systems theories, new institutional economics and actor-oriented approaches, among many others.

The research approaches proposed by Long (2001) and ANT are chosen because the analytical frameworks they offer make possible to identify the rationale of actors' decisions and how actors link with each other in the implementation of a development policy to generate insightful information and a holistic understanding of development practice. This research approach allows identification of the diversity of interpretations made by the different actors involved in the implementation of Mexico's Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable to allow insights to the particular ways in which some actors make decisions, some of decisions strategically contravene the spirit of the rural development policy under study.

The ontological approach in this research is based on constructivism, but is not based on a purely grounded-theory approach, particularly as Long provides a set of conceptual tools with which to set the contexts in which actors make decisions. It has no intention of testing any theory, which are used only as a referent to the different explanations that can be

identified in the field, and it is open to identifying new explanations from the empirical work. In terms of the analysis, the strength and the weakness of this approach is that it rests on the view of the researcher, his knowledge of the local context, local meanings, history, jargon and local symbols and his understanding of local institutions (the rules of the formal and informal games played by members of a society in different locations and situations). So it relies heavily on the researcher as the interpreter of the phenomena and on how he codes and systematically analyses the information.

Similar to works on the anthropology and sociology of development that are based on the actor-oriented approach, this research develops a case study as the main method of systematising fieldwork data, analysing causal relations and presenting the main findings. The case study accounts for how different levels of bureaucracy in different places produce development practice from the directives of the Mexico's rural development policy.

Part 2. Mexico's Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable: A case study of Mexican development bureaucracies on the notions of decentralisation and community participation

Chapter 5. Case study of Mexico's development bureaucracy on the notion of decentralisation

Introduction

This chapter presents the case of Mexico's bureaucracy in the context of the decentralisation of the country's rural development policy. The implementation of the rural development programme known as *Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (PAAP, Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets) illustrates how bureaucrats at different levels and in various institutional settings in rural Mexico produce development practice according to a shared normative framework based on the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. Making use of the actor-oriented approach presented in Chapter 4, the case study shows how these actors' decisions on policy implementation respond to multiple realities and expose the different rationales of bureaucracies at every level to interpret and implement the notion of decentralisation.

The case study reveals that the decentralisation of Mexico's rural development policy has taken a different route to that expected by its policymakers. A first and general conclusion is that rural development programmes play a very important role in Mexico's political system due to the historical background of the rural sector since the Mexican Revolution. The peasantry has been the object of paternalistic and clientelistic practices by different governments throughout the post-revolutionary years. Bureaucratic actors and programme applicants have used clientelism strategically in the execution of new rural development policy to produce development practice.

The second general conclusion is that bureaucratic actors play a key role in delivering development. The case study has shown that a

development initiative such as decentralising rural development programmes can produce results that diametrically oppose what is expected, if bureaucratic actors behave strategically to avoid losing their power over the allocation of public resources. In the case studies presented, while these actors did not contravene any of the LDRS' directives they did create a way to simulate the decentralised implementation of a rural development programme while maintaining their discretionary power to influence decisions about the allocation of public resources.

The third and last general conclusion is that bureaucracies respond not only to political and economic incentives but also to the personal sentiments and commitments that shape their decisions, which may be just as important, and we must understand these if we are to explain development practice.

5.1 The PAAP: the decentralisation of rural development policy in practice

The PAAP was one of eight federal programmes managed by Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) to foster rural development in México between 2008 and 2012. Although it was created in December 2008, it is in fact a new version of a programme created in 1996 under the name *Alianza para el Campo* (the Farming Alliance) which included a component to help rural producers and peasants expand their productive assets, whether for agriculture, livestock or fishing. Another important characteristic of *Alianza para el Campo* that was transferred to the PAAP was the decentralisation of its implementation. This decentralisation took the form of delegation, 'a situation in which the central government transfers responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions to municipal governments or semiautonomous organizations

that are not wholly controlled by central government but are ultimately accountable to it' (Litvack, 1998: 6). Alianza para el Campo transferred the responsibility for deciding who was eligible to receive help from the programme to state government.

In other words the federal government, represented by SAGARPA, provided resources to state governments to support the activities of rural producers. I had the opportunity to speak with 'Pedro', who was Secretary for Rural Development in the State of Oaxaca in 2004-2010 and had been personal assistant to the Secretary of SAGARPA in 1996. According to Pedro, in 1996 the President of the Republic wanted to increase state governments' administrative capacity with the aim of gradually delegating more responsibility for rural development strategy to them. He said that the Secretary had told him: 'Pedro, Alianza para el Campo was created to be operated by the states, so please send a signal to our local branches not to interfere with state government decisions'.

Pedro's testimony corresponds with the move towards decentralisation expressed in the political discourse on 'new federalism' of President Zedillo's government (1994-2000). As explained in Chapter 2, since 1929 Mexico's political regime had been highly dependent on the president's power, which had created a centralised political regime and administration system. Programmes such as Alianza para el Campo sought to create new relations between federal and state governments to strengthen the country's federal system (Rodriguez, 1999: 271).

As also explained in Chapter 2, President Zedillo saw the democratisation of the political regime as necessary if a deep political and economic crisis was to be avoided. In consequence, the opposition began to win local elections and the PRI suffered several electoral setbacks from 1995 onwards. The political map changed and in 2000 the PRI lost the presidential elections; the new government decided to retain

the Alianza para el Campo programme to foster rural development as part of SAGARPA's offer of programmes.

In 2003, Alianza para el Campo was reformulated to accommodate the directives of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable (Sustainable Rural Development Act, LDRS). The new design had four objectives: 1) to foster the formal organisation of peasants for productive purposes; 2) to foster producers' rural investment, mainly via projects to increase the productivity and profitability of their activities; c) to strengthen the organisation of *Unidades de Producción Rural* (UPR, Rural Productive Units) and; 4) to strengthen the levels of health and innocuousness of agricultural products (Diario Oficial, 2003: 20).

Alianza para el Campo was regrouped to form four separate programmes: the *Programa de Fomento Agrícola* (Agriculture Development Programme); the *Programa de Fomento Ganadero* (Livestock Development Programme); the *Programa de Acuacultura y Pesca* (Fishery Development Programme) and the *Programa de Desarrollo Rural* (Rural Development Programme), making Alianza para el Campo – now called *Alianza Contigo* (henceforth Alianza) – a strategy composed of a set of programmes rather than one single programme. Each programme had subprogrammes or components linked to one of Alianza's four objectives; i.e. the capitalisation component was created to help producers to increase their productive assets; other components provided them with organisational and legal assistance to organise themselves as economic units; and another provided technical assistance with production techniques and with the health and innocuousness of agricultural products.

The new SAGARPA administration's operational rules for Alianza para el Campo in 2003 created further important changes to the programme, which can be summarised as follows: 1) if a state government wants to

receive resources from Alianza it must sign an agreement with SAGARPA wherein both guarantee to allocate a fixed amount of resources from their respective budget to the programme; 2) Alianza resources should be used to support productive projects, with all applicants presenting an application form specifying the technical and economic feasibility of a proposed productive project; 3) to receive funding from the programme, beneficiaries must also invest in their project; 4) a state technical operative unit, *Unidad Técnica Operativa Estatal* (UTOE) must assess the technical and economic feasibility of each application; 5) a trust composed of functionaries of federal and state governments must approve UTOE's assessments and resolutions concerning each application and release the programme's resources to the beneficiaries.

To understand the development approach of this new version of Alianza para el Campo and the technical justification for the changes to the implementation strategy, I talked with two actors who had been closely involved in its reformulation in 2003. As the available official data does not provide enough information about this, part of my fieldwork for this research addressed the technical and the non-technical arguments behind the formulation and instrumentation of the LDRS through Alianza in 2003.

I interviewed 'Anastacio', a former SAGARPA functionary, and 'Hector', still a SAGARPA functionary, both of whom had participated in the reformulation of Alianza para el Campo in 2003. At the time both were general directors of the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development, so were part of SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy. As general directors they had access to planning meetings with the Secretary and Sub-secretaries about SAGARPA's new strategy to foster rural development.

The interview with Anastacio was carried out in his office at the University of Chapingo, the most influential university in agricultural

matters in Mexico, where he currently works as a professor-researcher. At the beginning of the interview he probed me to find out if I knew about the Mexican agricultural sector, asking me about the places where I have worked and studied; after that he expressed implicit approval at being interviewed by me, as he considered that I had enough knowledge to talk to him. His implicit approval was apparent in his change of attitude towards me, treating me more familiarly, as equals. He decided to briefly introduce himself with a brief summary of his professional career, highlighting his academic background at the University of Chapingo, his spell at FAO as a national consultant and his recent involvement as a public functionary as General Director of SAGARPA. Although he assumed a very open attitude in answering my questions, Anastacio was careful not to give the names of any of his former SAGARPA colleagues. He was self-reflective and critical about his spell at the organisation, particularly in relation to the attempt to decentralise the operation of Alianza. He was emphatic in saying that the main idea behind the changes to Alianza's operational rules was to avoid state governments making discretionary use of this public resource:

Previous [PRI] governments allowed governors to assign Alianza's resources at public events, official visits by governors to communities, so the events worked as forums to show how the government supported communities; however, allocating Alianza resources at such events did not address the [people] with the most needs: the allocation was not based on a technical decision, it was more discretionary and sometimes circumstantial. For example, at such an event the governor could decide to give a hundred tractors to a specific producers organisation for free, or to commit resources to a specific person who reached the governor during the event asking for support. Thus with the new operational rules we tried to stop this discretionary way of allocating public resources.

The last line of this quote is very revealing, and other interviews with actors in the upper bureaucracy⁸ confirmed that SAGARPA's top functionaries see Alianza as a federal programme, so as federal

⁸ This idea was revealed in interviews and meetings with the Oaxaca and Jalisco delegados (heads of SAGARPA's local branches); the official mayor of SAGARPA, and SAGARPA's general directors.

functionaries they must oversee how the resources are used by state government even though the decentralisation has removed this from their remit. Anastacio explicitly said that state governments use non-technical criteria to allocate public resources for rural development, and in so doing are failing to manage these resources efficiently. His implicit assumption was that, in contrast, SAGARPA functionaries do know how to manage development resources efficiently. Although he did not specifically refer to state governments' political use of public resources, when I raised the point in the interview he agreed that the risk of political abuse of Alianza was the issue.

Thus two key ideas emerged from this interview. The first is that the technical rationale for decentralising Alianza effectively sought the empowerment of state governments in local development and a reduction in federal red tape. The second idea rests on the upper federal bureaucracy's awareness of the implications of delegating decisions to state government; that is to say, the weakening of federal government in relation to state governments' ability to make decisions about public resources. There is an feeling among the federal bureaucracy that it is unfair for state functionaries to be able to decide about federal resources.

When I was leaving the University of Chapingo I could not avoid observing how many symbols are embedded in the setting of this university in relation to Mexico's rural sector. There are murals by Diego Rivera describing the Mexican Revolution in which peasants have the central role, and the university's coat of arms with the legend: 'Teaching the exploitation of the land, not of the man' (*Enseñando la explotacion de la tierra, no la del hombre*). These symbols reinforce one of the main ideas developed in Chapter 2 about the historical legacy that the Mexican Revolution leaves to the peasantry.

The feeling of the upper federal bureaucracy about the incursion of state government into decision-making about federal resources is clearly expressed in Hector's interview. Hector is a general director who was working for SAGARPA when the interview took place. He had a very cautious attitude at the beginning of the interview and asked for anonymity regarding the use of his comments. The interview took place in Hector's office at SAGARPA's headquarters in Mexico City. Like Anastacio, Hector conceded that the decentralisation is an instruction from above – referring to the office of the President – which was not received well by most of SAGARPA's administration. He said:

Since it was a presidential instruction, the head of SAGARPA had to implement it and SAGARPA's Secretary decided that the Sub-secretary of Rural Development must be the person to lead the decentralisation of SAGARPA programmes, starting with Alianza. The Sub-secretary of Rural Development had a fresh approach to SAGARPA. In theory, the other two Sub-secretaries [of livestock and agriculture] must follow the suggestions of the Sub-secretary of Rural Development to adequate the components of Alianza that they manage to operate according to the spirit of the LDRS. This situation created permanent tension between the Sub-secretariat of Rural Development and the other Sub-secretariats. The general comment was that this strategy would never work in SAGARPA because there is a particular way of managing the politics of the rural sector through the allocation of public resources.

Hector was acknowledging that rural-sector politics influences decisions about the allocation of public resources, specifically in relation to rural producer organisations' power to create political problems at the national level if their demands are not met, as I describe later in this chapter. This is why Hector pointed out that most of SAGARPA's directive board members did not like the idea of decentralising the programme's operation, as they were sure that state governments would use its budget for political and electoral gain.

From Anastacio and Hector's perspective, SAGARPA had to work out a way to decentralise the operation of Alianza that eliminated the possibility of what they called 'political manipulation'. SAGARPA created

operational rules for the programme that included barriers to indirectly retaining control of its funding. The first barrier obliged applicants to justify their request with details of the viability of the productive project they were putting forward, and sought to enforce the allocation of Alianza funding based on economic and productive criteria. The second barrier was a rule stating that the allocation of Alianza resources must be managed by trust funds (FOFAE) in each state composed of state government and SAGARPA personnel, with all approved applications authorised by both. When an application is evaluated and approved by state government, a SAGARPA functionary makes the administrative decision to release funding to the beneficiary.

When I asked Anastacio whether these barriers contravened the spirit of decentralisation he answered in the negative: 'In the end, those Alianza resources were ours [SAGARPA's resources], so they [state governments] had to be accountable to us'. He said this as if it would have been unfair of the LDRS to propose giving federal resources to states with no requirement to report back to federal government. Hector confirmed this feeling at SAGARPA's headquarters arguing that 'it was the first non-PRI federal administration in 70 years, so the new administration did not trust the governors from the PRI'.

Anastacio and Hector confirmed what I had understood from interviews with other upper-bureaucracy actors: that SAGARPA's Sub-secretary for Rural Development had been in charge of redefining SAGARPA's development approach in 2000-2006. He was appointed by the Secretary of SAGARPA in 2000 and became his right hand to create a new rural development approach based on the principles of the *Nueva Ruralidad*, a rural development approach based on the particularities of specific territories rather than on the economic potential of particular agricultural economic processes and which sees rural development as a process that goes beyond agricultural activities and stresses the creation

of links between non-agricultural activities and rural environments (Mundial, 2003; Kay, 2001). The combination of this development approach with the decentralisation of rural development policy resulted in new operational rules for Alianza in 2003.

In addition to the barriers embedded in Alianza's regulations, SAGARPA decided to set up two modes of operation, the first delegating the administration implementation of the programmes to state governments, with SAGARPA performing as a supervisory body (*ejecución federalizada*), and the second leaving the implementation of the programme exclusively to SAGARPA's administration (*ejecución nacional*). Thus the implementation of Alianza was not decentralised as a whole as SAGARPA retained the allocation of some of its resources without the intervention of state or municipal governments.

According to Anastacio, the original idea was to decentralise Alianza para el Campo as a whole:

...that was the intention of the Sub-secretary for Rural Development when he was instructed to design SAGARPA's new rural development programmes; however, he also received pressure from the Sub-secretaries for Agriculture and Livestock Development, so they negotiated a space in the rules to keep the operation of a fraction of the programme exclusively under SAGARPA's control.

The above is the *ejecución nacional* mode of operation. The justification I heard from the Sub-secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock Development was that SAGARPA is responsible for directing the resources of its programmes to national rural development priorities, and decentralising the decision-making process would not guarantee that state governments would address such national priorities.

As mentioned, this case study focuses on how development practice is produced by the network of actors involved in implementing the LDRS

and in particular Alianza, the instrument designed by the federal government to carry out the new rural development policy directives. The analysis of how the policy is put into practice focuses on the component of Alianza that addresses increasing rural producers' physical productive assets (*capitalización*). This chapter focuses on the decentralisation of the programme at state level; the next chapter discusses its local implementation, specifically regarding the involvement of civil society.

I take the operational principles behind the *capitalización* component of Alianza as a reference for the analysis. Encounters between the various actors involved in the implementation of Alianza provide the basis on which to build a case study based on their different lifeworlds. In Long's words, all 'forms of external intervention necessarily enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus, as it were, come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop' (Long, 2001). Long uses the term 'lifeworld' as Schutz does (1962) to describe the contexts in which actors make decisions. The purpose of describing actors' lifeworlds is to depict the 'lived-in' and 'taken-for-granted' world of the social actor; methodologically, this requires an understanding of practical action shaped by a background of the actor's intentionality and values (Long, 2001:54).

Everyday life is experienced as some kind of ordered reality, shared with others (i.e. it is inter-subjective). This 'order' appears both in the ways in which people manage their social relationships and in how they problematise their situations. Even a brief conversation with an individual quickly reveals some aspects of his/her effective or meaningful network of social relations and at the same time a glimpse of the personal constructs with which the person categorises, codes, processes and imputes meaning to his or her experiences (past and present) (ibid).

Thus an actor's lifeworld in this research means the particular set of factors attached to the actor's way of life that shapes his/her interpretation of his/her environment to make decisions. These 'things'

could be values, beliefs or cultural objects that are part of his/her everyday life. Actors of different natures have encounters during the implementation of the LDRS, some of which represent a clash of different lifeworlds, different interpretations of the same object that are all perfectly valid if one considers each lifeworld as the background to such interpretations. Long emphasises the relevance of these encounters to understanding the social world in the following terms:

Inter-individual action encompasses both face-to-face and more 'distanced' relationships. The types of social relationships range from interpersonal links based upon dyadic ties (such as patron-client relations and involvement in various types of transactions – buyer-seller, producer-money lender, and client-ritual specialist, farmer-extensionist, etc.) to social and exchange networks, to more formally constituted groups and organisations (such as farmers' organisations, cooperatives, village councils, churches, etc.) where legal prescriptions, bureaucratic legitimacy and authority and defined membership criteria assume greater significance. (ibid)

Thus at the different stages of the case-study programme there are different encounters between different actors. The analysis of these interface encounters and identification of the different lifeworlds embedded in such encounters are the key elements on which an explanation about how development practice is produced can be built.

In 2003 the *capitalización* component was present in each of Alianza's programmes. In 2008, Alianza was again restructured, following recommendations by the FAO, that each of SAGARPA's programmes should address one type of support offered rather than, as previously, three separate programmes, for agriculture, livestock and rural development. Under the new structure there were eight programmes: the *Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets), *Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo* (PROCAMPO) (Programme for Direct Farm Support), *Programa de Inducción y Desarrollo del Financiamiento al Medio Rural* (PIDEFIMER, Programme for Rural Sector Induction and Development of Financing),

Programa de Uso Sustentable de la Producción Primaria (Programme for the Sustainable Use of Primary Sector Production), *Programa de Atención a Problemas Estructurales* (Programme to Address Structural Problems), *Programa de Soporte* (Support Programme), *Programa de Atención a Contingencias Climatológicas* (Climate Contingency Programme) and *Programa de Fortalecimiento a la Organización Rural* (Programme to Strengthen Rural Organisations) (see SAGARPA, 2009 for details of each programme).

In the words of a senior FAO consultant who advised SAGARPA on this restructuring:

The advice we provided to SAGARPA basically focused on helping them to put order into their actions because the evolution of their programmes in the last 20 years responded to specific situations and administrative matters, rather than to the roots of problems identified in a formal diagnosis. For example, we offered to restructure all the SAGARPA programmes based on the rural sector's current problems, but this would imply the elimination of some of the current programmes or components as there would be no technical justification to keep them. The answer we received from SAGARPA to our suggestion was a straight 'NO!' The argument was that several internal administrative areas might complain when they realised that the programmes they operated would not be available any more. So the only option they accepted was our help to group the components of each programme according to the type of services or goods that it provides.

The interview with this senior FAO consultant reveals some aspects of the bureaucratic thinking of top SAGARPA functionaries. As it shows, these functionaries prefer not to make decisions that will optimise the impact of their programmes because they would cause internal struggles between SAGARPA's different bureaucratic areas: instead they choose the second-best option of simply regrouping their current programmes in relation to the nature of the components that compose them, a decision that to some extent maintained the *status quo* in SAGARPA's administrative structure; that is, nobody in the administration structure would feel their jobs threatened by the changes .

Due to these changes to the operational regulations of SAGARPA's programmes in 2009, I cover both the *capitalización* component of Alianza, which operated from 2003 to 2008, and the PAAP from 2009 afterwards to identify and analyse development practice. Both are basically the same SAGARPA policy instrument under different names. The general objective of the PAAP is the same as the *capitalización* component of Alianza: to help rural producers and peasants to increase the physical capital they use productive activities in agriculture, livestock or fishing, for example in shovels, hammers, ovens, irrigation systems, containers, feeders, boats, fishing nets, tractors and so on. In 2003 this support was extended to the acquisition of productive assets for non-agricultural activities in rural areas, such as machinery and tools for local bakeries, small restaurants, Internet shops, handcraft studios, coffee shops, etc. For practical purposes in this research it would be used indistinctly the terms 'PAAP' and 'component of *capitalización* of Alianza' to refer to SAGARPA programme that is used in this work to illustrate the implementation process of the LDRS.

The PAAP only partially subsidises the cost of productive assets; the beneficiary must provide 20-50 per cent of their value. To apply for the PAAP subsidy applicants fill out an application form on which they must demonstrate that the aid requested is part of a sustainable productive project; as mentioned earlier, this requirement was introduced in 2003. From the PAAP application to the allocation of resources there is a series of interface encounters between different actors involved in its implementation process.

As explained in Chapter 4, interface analysis is used to understand the responses of local actors to the implementation of the PAAP. For this it is necessary to identify the encounters that occur at points where 'different, and often conflicting, lifeworlds or social fields converge, or

more concretely, in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive standpoints' (Long, 2001: 65). I show that there are social arenas in the PAAP process in which peasants engage differ from those where high-profile farmers develop their activities. Similarly, the upper and lower bureaucracies have their own rules, social and organisational settings in which they produce development practice. Hence each encounter accounts for the particularities of the interactions between several actors in the different PAAP processes.

5.2 Encounters at the interface: Bureaucratic actors in the implementation of the PAAP

The first encounter for analysis takes place at the intersection of the lifeworlds of potential PAAP beneficiaries and staff at the programme's front desks (*ventanillas de atención*), where applicants can get information about and apply to governmental rural development programmes for resources. Before 2003, SAGARPA only received applications at *ventanillas de atención* at its local Rural Development Support Centres (CADER). With PAAP's decentralisation in 2003, *ventanillas de atención* were operated by both state and municipal governments. This encounter is characterised by applicants' interaction with the civil servants in charge of receiving applications for PAAP resources.

Once the applicant submits an application form it is reviewed and accepted by a *ventanilla de atención* programme officer and sent to a technical unit for assessment of its financial and technical viability. In some cases an application must be approved by two technical units, one internal and one external – the latter is usually the UTOE. If these consider the application acceptable the final approval rests with a small

committee of government officers. This second interface encounter, also analysed here, takes place in the council of the FOFAE, the trust managing the PAAP's resources. Here a superior technical commission decides which applications deserve to be supported according to the state's rural development priorities. At the core of this council there is a clash between SAGARPA's middle bureaucracy and the State Secretariat of Rural Development (SEDER), a governmental organisation.

The decisions made in the FOFAE are the main indication of the decentralisation of rural development policy, for it is here that local government decides which applications to prioritise for PAAP subsidies. This involves the coordination of federal, state and municipal government administrative structures not only in receiving and analysing the applications but also in defining the criteria for resource allocation.

The FOFAE is an intergovernmental body composed of ten government officers – five from federal government and five from the state government concerned. The PAAP rules that the president must be the state governor and the vice-president, the local SAGARPA representative. The key role is given to state government, with SAGARPA in a supervisory role. The most influential decisions about resource allocation are reserved for functionaries of the federal and subnational governments; municipal government is not included in this committee.

After the FOFAE decides to approve, modify or reject the technical units' assessments of the applications, the next step is to inform the applicants of the results. The staff at the *ventanillas de atención* that originally received the application notifies the applicants that they have been accepted or rejected. This is the third interface encounter for analysis and takes place between the actors analysed in the first, the *ventanillas de atención* staff and the applicant, at a later point in the PAAP process.

A beneficiary whose application has been approved must make the promised investment in productive assets and prove, with purchase receipts and *in situ*, that s/he has done as stated in the application. This involves two encounters between different actors: the supplier of the productive asset and the *ventanillas de atención* staff, who check that the investment has been made. After this the beneficiary receives a cheque refunding part of their investment.

All of these encounters take place on the ground and involve beneficiaries and lower bureaucracy dealing with the directives of the LDRS through the PAAP. At this level other non-bureaucratic actors such as the private technicians and suppliers of productive assets also play an important role in producing development practice. As mentioned above, discourse analysis is used to build the case study, with the focus on understanding how different actors in the implementation network translate the idea of decentralisation into development practice, as described in the following subsections. The case study seeks to identify some of the factors that account for certain actors' decisions in the PAAP implementation process; in other words, it seeks to discover the rationale behind actors' decisions in the local context.

Interface encounters at ground level: *ventanillas de atención* staff: the public face of the *Programa de Activos Productivos*

Since 2003, Alianza's operational rules have stated that applicants' contact point with the programme for information or to applying to a programme should be the authorised *ventanillas de atención* agreed between SAGARPA and the state government. To understand the role of bureaucracy at this level in the context of the rural development policy it is necessary to briefly review the development of the governmental administrative structures.

Before Alianza para el Campo appeared in 1996, SAGARPA had a wider network of administrative offices distributed across the country to administer its programmes. The basic administrative unit of this federal structure was the CADER. Each CADER was strategically located in a rural area to provide popular access to SAGARPA services. CADERs report to their local Rural Development District (DDR), an administrative unit that coordinates their work. SAGARPA has divided the national territory into 192 DDRs and 713 CADERs to manage its rural development programmes.

When Alianza para el Campo was launched, a downsizing of SAGARPA's administrative structures began to reduce the number of personnel at its own local branches and CADERs and DDRs in response to the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s. The purpose of decentralising rural development programmes was to reduce the fiscal load on federal government by delegating their implementation to state governments, hence also fostering municipal governments' capacity-building as they created their own administrative contact points for the rural population.

According to Anastacio and Hector, who worked or had worked at SAGARPA's headquarters, the downsizing of SAGARPA's administrative personnel was intended to be compensated by the development of state and municipal governments' own administrative structures. Before 2003 SAGARPA only received applications for its programmes at its local CADER and DDR *ventanillas de atención*. After 2003, the decentralisation of the PAAP's operations included *ventanillas de atención* operated by state and municipal governments. The first encounter that I analyse, below, is that between staff at *ventanillas de atención* and applicants at both the federal and state level.

A CADER operator's perspective

I begin with Alonso, the Chief of a CADER located in Oaxaca's Sierra Sur. He has worked for SAGARPA for 20 years and is responsible for the administration of SAGARPA programmes across 45 municipalities. When I approached him I explained that I was interested in what had changed with the decentralisation of the PAAP and the inclusion of state and municipal governments in its administration. Although I made it clear that my activity was strictly academic and that I would respect his anonymity, at the beginning of the interview Alonso was defensive, providing short answers and stating that everything was going well with the decentralised operation of the PAAP. However, as the interview continued and empathy grew between us, he became more open in his responses and admitted that there have been some unexpected outcomes that are shaping the implementation of Mexico's rural development policy. The first aspect he highlighted was how, with the introduction of the decentralised mode of operation, managing the PAAP has become a complex task for CADER's operators:

The changes to the operational rules about the *capitalización* component of the [PAAP] produced extra work for us, because in the past we only had to inform the people which productive assets SAGARPA would subsidise for the current convocatoria [invitation to apply], then they [applicants] write a letter requesting specific productive assets. Generally the allocation of programme resources used to be made by SAGARPA on a first-come-first-served basis until the resources ran out [...] Today, with the new PAAP rules, it is very difficult for applicants to understand the requirements for formulating a productive project to justify their request for a specific asset. [...] You know, here the peasants have very low level of education; many are illiterate, so many require help even to write a plain letter. So formulating a productive project is a complex task for them – it's almost impossible, I'd say. As we, the ventanillas staff, don't have time to help them formulate their projects they have to resort to freelancers that know how to [do it]. In the end, these new rules make it more difficult and more expensive for peasants to apply to the programme, and the worst of it is that they have no guarantee that after spending money on formulating the project they will receive a PAAP subsidy.

Alonso seemed to be complaining about his increased workload with the new programme design. The common working environment of a CADER

member of staff is an old-fashioned office of about 40²m with shelves embedded in all the walls and overloaded with files. This type of office is the remains of a super-administrative structure that operated in the mid-1970s and 1980s but now, since the downsizing of the federal bureaucracy, they look old and abandoned as there are no resources for their maintenance and just a few personnel working there, usually the CADER head and one or two assistants. Alonso did not appear convinced that asking programme applicants to put forward a productive project was a more effective way of allocating rural sector resources. From his perspective it only generated problems for the applicants and for themselves as programme operators; for the applicants, this was the cost of hiring a professional to produce a suitable project, while for the CADER operators it was a complex procedure since it required to verify that applications are correctly presented and they have uncertainty about the application assessment process, as it is their job to notify applicants about whether or not they have been successful. This final notification is problematic for CADER operators:

Now, with the decentralised operation, peasants have other places to submit their applications such as state government *ventanillas*. This has caused problems for [SAGARPA] *ventanillas* because some applicants whose projects are rejected complain that they know that other people who submitted their applications to the state government *ventanillas* have been accepted [...] They see this as a personal issue, as if we don't want to grant them a subsidy, and of course this is untrue because the decisions are made by the technical commissions.

According to the PAAP's operational rules, applications for a subsidy must be handled in the same way, independently of the *ventanilla de operación* to which it has been submitted. However, in practice some applications submitted to SAGARPA *ventanillas de operación* are treated differently from those submitted to state government *ventanillas de operación*. The reason for this variation is based on local SAGARPA and state government SEDER branch agreements to run the technical commissions that assess the applications. Speaking with CADER chiefs at

the *Istmo of Tehuantepec* and the Oaxaca Centre, I understood that these are informal agreements between SAGARPA and SEDER and that *ventanilla* and SEDER operators have created a political clientele for their programmes. This is where politics arises in the implementation of the PAAP. Alonso expressed his frustration at the political use of the PAAP:

Sometimes our bosses say: 'Well, what I am doing here if all I do as a *ventanilla* is disappoint [people]? I only authorise 5-10% [of applications] and our counterparts [state *ventanillas*] authorise 100 per cent of the applications they receive'.

By 'authorising', Alonso meant ensuring that each application fulfils the PAAP's regulations prior to sending it to the technical unit for assessment. Alonso's complaint was about the unfairness he sees in the decentralised mode of operation for SAGARPA's administrative structure. He pointed out that as the state government of Oaxaca represents the interests of the PRI, the federal government has to fight the political clientelism⁹ that the state government fosters. From his perspective, fighting the state government's clientelistic practices is very difficult because the state government knows how to put pressure on the federal government. When asked why SAGARPA allows administrative units operated by the state government to ignore some of the PAAP's directives such as the technical assessment of the applications, Alonso was clear:

For me it's fear, isn't it? Fear of those who take part in the [technical commission meetings], I guess; maybe I'm wrong; many of us [SAGARPA personnel] look after our jobs, don't we? And maybe if they [SAGARPA's members of the technical commission] don't accept the position of SEDER [state government] functionaries there will be complaints, won't there? And maybe they think they [SAGARPA's members of the technical commission] might get fired, and in the future they won't find a job, not even with the state government.

⁹ Note the clientelism as an informal institution that works as a system of exchange between politicians and citizens, as explained in Chapter 2.

Alonso suggested that mid-level federal bureaucrats in the technical commissions do not have the full support of their upper-bureaucracy bosses in strictly applying the PAAP regulations in the spirit of the LDRS. As a result they have to be careful to maintain good relations with their counterparts at SEDER to avoid any conflict that could become political and may lead to them being punished by their own bosses. The nature of the concern rests on public complaints that state government can make about how SAGARPA manages PAAP resources. Since the programme is meant to be operated in the spirit of decentralisation, the public image of SAGARPA could be jeopardised by political action by the peasantry. So Alonso's main complaint is that he has to contend with state-level political dynamics, as a member of the federal lower bureaucracy he is not allowed to get involved in politics but must strictly apply the operational regulations.

As I explain later, this inconsistency in the assessment of applications is the result of informal arrangements between upper bureaucrats at SAGARPA's local branches and SEDER that split the decisions in the technical commissions and avoid clashing over their views of the 'right' way to allocate PAAP funding. *Ventanillas de operación* staff are not privy to the details of these informal agreements and do not know how the technical commissions reach their decisions. For Alonso, the way technical commissions work puts the *ventanillas de operación* in a very vulnerable position towards the local population because as federal government functionaries, they apply the PAAP's regulations to the letter while SEDER's operators do not because as state functionaries they are beyond federal law.

CADER's operators explained that the state government method of allocating PAAP resources is to split the budget that it manages into very small amounts in order to reach as many people as possible, because it is

subsidising cheap productive assets. This was how the PAAP worked under Alianza para el Campo before the productive project approach was incorporated in its operational rules, and people are accustomed to this approach. 'That's how we used to work in the past', as Alonso said.

On the other hand, SAGARPA distributes PAAP resources through CADER and DDR offices that try to respect the PAAP's development approach; that is, they support viable productive projects. However, as most of the rural population are unable to formulate a productive project correctly many of the applications are rejected by CADERs because they are not properly presented. This is turning people in the community against SAGARPA staff who appear to them not to want to help them: Alonso says: 'Many [applicants] think we only accept and support applications from friends or people that give us some kind of bribe, which is not true.'

CADER's functionaries spend much of their time explaining to applicants about the federal government's priorities, the right way to present a productive project and that decisions about their application are made at a higher level where they have very little influence. However, when the assessment results are released by the technical commission, in some cases CADER's personnel cannot explain why some have been rejected and often stand accused of corruption.

With this inconsistency in the application results, CADER's operators see the PAAP as no different from the 1996 version with, as Alonso said, 'more paperwork to do, but with the same results, uncertain decisions from the top [...] that's why we haven't changed anything about how we run the programme: we've just adapted the new regulations to our traditional operations'.

Applicants do not know which programme they are requesting resources from. It is difficult for them to understand how public programmes work

and their administrative requirements because the majority of the rural population has little education; illiteracy is very common in rural Mexico. Hence most applicants have to trust the person in charge of the CADER's front desk. There is a long-established relationship between CADER officials and the community, as most have run SAGARPA programmes in the community for several years – similarly as the middle bureaucracy the lower bureaucracy of SAGARPA are also hired on permanent basis¹⁰. Their interaction with the rural population is exemplified by the experience of the CADER official in Oaxaca:

People do not read the invitations that we paste on the walls of the office; they always come to me personally to ask me when they will be able to apply for public funding. They don't identify the different SAGARPA' programmes, they only want to know when they can apply. Some people try to give me money or gifts with their application so they can feel that I will put effort into processing it. If I reject them they think I'll bin their application. I have to convince them that it's not up to me but to the technical commissions that work in the capital city [...] When the result of an application is not favourable to the applicant and they see that their neighbour has been granted resources from an application submitted to a SEDERS office they shout at me and tell me that they won't trust us any more and will go to the state government.

The hunt for beneficiaries: interface encounters at ground level

SEDER's functionaries compete with SAGARPA's offices to prove that state government can satisfy the demands of the rural population more effectively. In Oaxaca, SEDER's lower and middle bureaucracy functions and work conditions are similar. They have temporary contracts, which makes it easy for their superiors to control them. Their unofficial main task is to become political activists for the state government, creating and consolidating their superiors' political capital. When elections are due, PAAP beneficiaries are reminded about the support they have received from the state and specifically the 'help' provided by some functionaries to apply successfully for PAAP resources.

¹⁰ This view was shared by all the CADER and DDR personnel interviewed in Oaxaca and Jalisco.

In Jalisco, the lower state bureaucracy works differently to that in Oaxaca. Jalisco has developed a network of municipal advisors to facilitate the application process of PAAP to potential beneficiaries in the municipal governments' front desk. Theoretically, all municipal advisors must be accountable to all three levels of government and are the most important actors fostering the decentralised operations of the PAAP. Their main responsibility is to act as a link between the Municipal Councils for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS) and federal and state programmes for rural development such as the PAAP. However, in practice municipal advisors are more accountable to state government, and CMDRS resolutions are commonly neglected by SEDER and SAGARPA¹¹.

In Jalisco some municipal advisors (*asesores municipales*) are committed to working as freelancers to facilitate the rural population's access to PAAP resources, their main drivers being work values and a vocation for public service; however, others see their position as a means of increasing their own political capital by using their political connections with members of the upper bureaucracy to influence the assessment of applications that they personally support. Local news travels fast, so when a municipal advisor is very effective in bringing resources to a community s/he will immediately find many people around her/him requesting support from the programme in exchange for votes when required. Just in Jalisco, nearly eleven municipal advisors ran for municipal government seats in the 2009 municipal elections.

In general, municipal advisors are in the role of development broker in the sense that Mosse (2006) uses the term; they operate as facilitations as for the rural population as the upper and middle bureaucracy. They are not formally part of the governmental bureaucracy as they are

¹¹ In Chapter 6 this topic is developed and the main causes for the indifference of state and federal governments to CMDRSs are identified.

contracted as free agents, paid to achieve specific aims and on a temporary basis. In Oaxaca the municipal advisors are little involved with the implementation of the, working more as CMDRS and municipal government facilitators to manage the municipality's relationship with federal and state government, as analysed in the next chapter.

Interface encounters at the upper federal bureaucracy: redesigning rural development programmes under a decentralised approach

At another level of the chain of interpretations of the implementation process of the LDRS, there are those in charge of leading the decentralisation of federal rural development programmes. This is the responsibility of the heads of SAGARPA, including the Secretary and Sub-secretaries of Agriculture, of Livestock and of Rural Development. These functionaries belong to the upper federal bureaucracy and are the decision-makers who lead the changes in SAGARPA's operational structure to comply with the LDRS. However, as I will show, complying with the LDRS directives about decentralising rural development policy means very different things to different bureaucratic actors at this level.

When the LDRS was enacted the Secretary of SAGARPA was instructed by the President of the Mexican Republic to implement it at the national level. At that time he saw in the LDRS an opportunity to reverse the over-centralisation of rural development policies. In particular, the 2000-2006 federal administration was interested in demonstrating a different style of government from that of previous administrations as it was the first government led by a party other than PRI for 70 years.

Two years after the LDRS was enacted the Secretary of SAGARPA decided to implement the LDRS through the reformulation of the rural some of the development programmes managed by SAGARPA,

specifically the sub-programmes that composed the one called Alianza para el Campo. He chose the Sub-secretary for Rural Development, to lead the integration of the principles of the LDRS into Alianza para el Campo. In that year the operational rules of all of SAGARPA's programmes were modified to incorporate the principles of the LDRS to create a decentralised mode of operation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the main characteristic of this operational mode is FOFAE, a trust comprising state government functionaries who make decisions together with federal functionaries about the allocation of SAGARPA programme resources. The other key characteristic of this operational mode was the inclusion of state administrative units to process applications for resources.

Although the notion of decentralisation expressed in the LDRS calls for the delegation of decision-making about federal programme resources to subnational and municipal governments, this is not an operational rule. The Sub-secretary for Rural Development received pressure from different actors to avoid affecting their interests. What interests were they protecting? First, SAGARPA's headquarters middle bureaucrats, mainly represented by administrative units directors, subdirectors and managing directors, demanded a guarantee from the Secretary of SAGARPA that the programmes they had managed for years would have a place in SAGARPA's restructuring. These white-collar workers could not see themselves performing a different role in the organisation and were afraid that their operative unit might disappear.

Second, SAGARPA's Sub-secretaries of Agriculture and of Livestock informed me SAGARPA had previously committed to delivering resources from SAGARPA programmes to specific producers' organisations. The full decentralisation of the programmes could not guarantee the allocation of public resources to these organisations as subnational government now had the power to prevent it.

These two underpinning aspects were enough to constrain the redesign of SAGARPA's programmes. In the end, SAGARPA's Sub-secretary for Rural Development could not create new operational rules that fully complied with the spirit of the LDRS so he had to produce an intermediate solution. There was pressure from other subsecretaries to allow them to retain control of the allocation of at least a certain percentage of SAGARPA's programme resources. The answer to this from the Sub-secretary of Rural Development was the incorporation of the FOFAE trust in SAGARPA's decentralised programmes. The only way that FOFAE can release resources to beneficiaries is with both federal and the state approval. The operational rules make it mandatory for all allocation letters to have the signatures of both the head of the local branch of SAGARPA and the head of the respective SEDER for each state.

Besides the decentralised mode of operation, an alternative was also contemplated in SAGARPA's operational rules based on centralised management similar to the model that SAGARPA had been running previously. Both of these measures, the use of a trust and centralised management, were 'safety' measures that SAGARPA took to avoid losing control over decisions about programme resource allocation.

If the purpose of the LDRS' decentralisation was to delegate decision-making responsibilities it is unclear why senior SAGARPA officers were reluctant to relinquish control over final decisions about allocating resources from its programmes. According to a senior SAGARPA officer, the Secretary of SAGARPA was explicitly instructed by the President of the Republic 'not to make waves' (*no hacer olas*) nationally, by which he meant keeping the social peace in the rural sector. Retaining control of programme resources gives SAGARPA the chance of containing potential social outbursts in the rural sector. When peasants or rural producer organisations face problems they customarily organise demonstrations

to express their problems in the national arena through road blockages or by taking over public buildings. The federal government's usual method of disarming such demonstrations is to negotiate directly with the leaders and committing resources from SAGARPA's programmes to resolve the protesters' problems, or at least to reduce their effects. So usually protesters receive money from SAGARPA's programmes in this situations.

A more effective method that SAGARPA has used to deal with rural organisations' national demonstrations over the years is though a yearly commitment to the latters' leaders to assure to their organisation public resources from SAGARPA's programmes. Thus the allocation of resources from its programmes has not been tied to efficiency criteria but to social and political dynamics in Mexico's rural sector. The Sub-secretaries of Agriculture and of Livestock saw did not see decentralisation as alleviating rural development problems on the ground but rather as hindering their ability to resolve them.

Interface encounters between federal bureaucracy and state bureaucracies: the fight to control the PAAP budget

The State of Oaxaca presents a particular political and social context that requires special analysis. In the first place there is political antagonism between the two levels of government – federal and state – as Oaxaca's government is led by the PRI, the strongest opposition party. Second, Oaxaca is well known for having one of the most politically active societies in the country. It is common for citizens to organise themselves in social or political groups to protest against a public decision that might affect them. Oaxaca society is so combative that most protests do not end until the protesters get what they want or the government represses them via the police. Citizens often put pressure on the government by blocking public buildings or roads.

Since the LDRS now delegates decisions about allocating federal resources for rural development, in Oaxaca the federal government sees its administrative and political power threatened by the political antagonism that exists between federal and state governments over the notion of decentralisation. Below, the head of SAGARPA's Oaxaca branch, – called the *delegado* if is a man or *delegada* if a woman – interprets the notion of decentralisation in the implementation of the PAAP:

The state government is only thinking politically and electorally; they aren't thinking about the real development of rural society. If we give them the chance to manage federal resources for rural development it's certain that they'll break it up into small sums in order to reach as much of the rural population as they can because they're looking for votes – you know what I mean, right? They don't care whether public investment fosters sustainable livelihoods; they only want to distribute goods that look like gifts from the state [government] to the population. That's why we have to stop them doing that; we have to guide them, regulate them, punish them when necessary [...] That's why SAGARPA has got the design of the PAAP's operational rules right; with the current rules the [state government] needs my signature to allocate PAAP resources. Without my signature they can't spend one penny from the programme. So even when they can decide which applications to support, all of them will require my consent. I think it's fair, because the resources are federal so they have to be in line with our view of development.

These lines reveal the rationale that SAGARPA functionary uses to justify blocking the state government regarding the PAAP's decentralisation. He also mentioned during the interview that he had received instructions from his superior at SAGARPA headquarters to protect the position of his office in Oaxaca by blocking any attempt by state government to use the PAAP's resources to promote their image or create any electoral clientele. However, his argument does not make clear what state authority activities SAGARPA sees as attempts to promote their political image. This leaves room for the head of SAGARPA's Oaxaca branch to boycott the decentralised operation of the PAAP at his discretion.

Theoretically, the PAAP's policy design considered the use of an entity

through the federal and state governments set common rural development objectives and define the PAAP's role in achieving them. This entity is called the *Consejo Estatal para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (State Council for Sustainable Rural Development). As the LDRS recommends, the chairperson of the council is the Governor of the State of Oaxaca, who usually delegates the Secretariat for Rural Development of the State of Oaxaca (SEDER) to represent him, and the vice-chairman is the head of SAGARPA's local branch. The LDRS also consider the participation of rural producers and civil society in this council. However, in all my conversations with upper bureaucracy functionaries the council was never mentioned as a relevant space for collective decision-making by the two levels of government because in practice, decision-making spaces like this, created as a result of the LDRS, are not accepted by the actors concerned.

The reason that bureaucrats at both levels of government do not accept this space, which is of such relevance to their coordination and cooperation, is that making this council work as intended would reduce the discretionary spaces they hold around decisions about the allocation of PAAP resources. Making use of the council as stated in the PAAP's operational rules would mean that both bureaucracies must be transparent about the criteria they apply to potential beneficiaries applications –such as local priorities, preferred social strata, type of productive projects, etc. – to decide whether they are eligible for support from the programme. As it stands, both avoid using the council and the allocation of public resources has become a negotiation process between the two levels of government with neither revealing their criteria. Arguing in this council in general terms allows functionaries to justify awarding subsidies to particular individuals, families or groups of producers. Therefore the council sessions are only held to give the impression of fulfilling the LDRS' normative requirements, as this is not where decisions about PAAP funding are made.

The political-electoral use that state governments might do of PAAP resources is the main argument used by the federal bureaucracy to justify its active intervention in the decentralised mode of operation of PAAP. The federal bureaucracy assumes a paternalistic attitude towards lower levels of government, arguing that they themselves have the necessary knowledge, experience and ethics to allocate the public resources efficiently and justly. They try to give the public the message that their intervention is protecting them from the factious behaviour of lower levels of government. In the federal bureaucracy's view most state and municipal governments do not understand the technical rationale behind the allocation of public resources because they lack capacity or are politically biased. This paternalistic discourse is strategically used to justify intervention in the decentralised operation of the PAAP at different stages of its implementation.

The fact that all decisions about the PAAP made by state or municipal governments must be approved by a SAGARPA functionary gives the federal bureaucracy a great power to control the allocation of public resources. So federal government uses this power to negotiate with subnational governments the way PAAP resources should be allocated, usually rejecting some of the applications already approved by state governments. However, state governments know well that the Mexican Congress has set a deadline for the allocation of all federal programme resources; they also know that SAGARPA is responsible for allocating these resources on time. Knowing this, state functionaries boycott FOFAE, delaying decisions on applications for PAAP funding. This mechanism of pressure of state governments makes federal bureaucracy to accept some of the applications previously rejected using SAGARPA's criteria. SAGARPA is sensitive to this pressure because they need to receive the support of SEDER functionaries to allocate PAAP resources on time or to support particular applications that SAGARPA is really

interested in funding with PAAP resources. It is an exchange of favours: one level of government is interested in supporting particular applications and the other also has its favourites.

Another way that the State of Oaxaca's upper bureaucracy puts pressure on the federal government is by sending contingents of peasants to Mexico City, where SAGARPA's headquarters are located, to demonstrate against SAGARPA's programme allocation policy with the aim of compelling the federal government to allocate SAGARPA programme resources to peasants or producers living in specific places or in particular social conditions, or engaged in particular productive activities. Federal government has shown that it is very sensitive to social protests from the rural sector, which has the sympathy of civil society due to its historical economic and social vulnerability and the peasants' combative role in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (see Chapter 2).

Peaceful or violent demonstrations are generally used to block the main streets around SAGARPA's offices, or to symbolically close the offices. Sometimes the demonstrators bring the entire harvest of a crop that has been damaged by economic or climate causes into the main entrance of SAGARPA's building. It is common for the federal government to negotiate with protesters through a SAGARPA officer to guarantee the allocation of public resources from SAGARPA programmes to their cause. Usually all travel expenses for getting the peasants to Mexico City are covered by the state government through informal channels, leading the public to think that the peasants are demonstrating independently as a social right to express themselves.

Although the government of Oaxaca can use these two mechanisms against the federal government, they only do so when negotiating is difficult. Informal codes of communication between the federal and state

bureaucracies have been developed, to facilitate implementation of the PAAP's decentralised operations. The interview with the Secretary of Oaxaca's SEDER reveals his lifeworld and illustrates how these informal practices work and the political interests hidden behind them.

I carried out the interview at his office in conjunction with a FAO consultant. The *Secretario* arrived late for the appointment: we had to wait more than 30 minutes in the lobby and when he finally arrived we were taken to his office, a luxurious room equipped with very expensive furniture including a big desk of fine wood. Photographs of the *Secretario* and state political authorities in rural locations of Oaxaca hung on all the walls. When he arrived in the office he justified his delay by stating how busy he was, without any apology. The person who had arranged the interview with him was a functionary accountable to SAGARPA and SEDER; he introduced us to him, using very careful language and tone of voice, showing a lot of respect to the Secretary – it was a clearly submissive attitude. The Secretary barely paid attention to the functionary's introduction and when he left the office he asked us again what the specific purpose of the interview was. He had been misinformed by his assistant about the purpose of the meeting and thought we would be applying a structured questionnaire. When he realised the scope and topics of the interview, of which the focus was to understand the interaction between federal and municipal governments in implementing the PAAP, he requested the support of three members of his staff.

The staff members that responded to his call were the Head of the Rural Development Programme, the management chief and the management assistant. The three men remained standing by the Secretary's desk, waiting for him to start to talk. At that moment I observed their great respect for the figure of the Secretary, I realised that the presence of his staff at the meeting responded not to his need for information but was a

ritual to show who was 'boss' in the room. The Secretary sat behind his big luxurious desk; his leather chair was also big and luxurious and he continuously swivelled on it, looking us in the eye. It was clear that he wanted to let us know that we were on his territory, with his people, and should follow the rules of his office, whatever they were, which I did not know.

This environment made me feel uncomfortable, so I decided to move on with the interview and asked him directly what was happening with the decentralisation of SAGARPA's programs. As background to the question I mentioned that the technical rationale for decentralising SAGARPA's programs was apparently to create spaces of convergence for different levels of government to address the rural development problems based on the local perspective. I pointed out that I had observed a struggle between the federal and state governments to allocate the resources of SAGARPA programs under the decentralised mode. The Secretary interrupted me before I finished my question and started to answer. He accepted that there was a struggle going on between the federal and state governments and explained the issue in the following terms:

The struggle [between the federal and state governments] is to address politics; there it is! [...] Clientelism, yes, people must see that 'I [the federal government] give to you [state government]; you come [for money] and I rule [how the money has to be spent]. So this pushes you, as Secretary of a free and sovereign state, to go to [Mexico City, the Federal District] all the time, right? You heard a few minutes ago [in a phone conversation] that I am [promoting some greenhouse projects], so I have to go to talk to the director of a federal programme and say: 'Mi directorazo [My great director (informal)], how are you, man? What happened with the money for the projects?' [Secretary's staff laugh] Right? That's stupid! You know what I mean?

Implicitly, SEDER's Secretary is saying that he has to behave in a certain way to receive federal programme resources. He must behave almost as if he is asking for a special personal favour, when in fact he is only requesting federal programme resources to solve a local issue. He must

begin the request with his homologous at federal government, and if that functionary does not answer positively the SEDER Secretary goes to the next-highest-ranking functionary until he gets the answer he wants. If the issue is very important he calls the Secretary of SAGARPA directly. In this part of the conversation he was referring to FIRCO (*Fideicomiso de Riesgo Compartido*), a federal government trust managed by a SAGARPA technical agent.

According to the SAGARPA programme regulations there is no space for any state functionary lobbying about a project; however, in practice there is a lot of lobbying about the allocation of public resources. In this case the *Secretario* had been approached by some producers for help in making their applications to SAGARPA programs successful. Even though the state government does not play a formal role in the allocation of resources managed by FIRCO, the producers know that the *Secretario* can influence SAGARPA decisions. This is possible because the Secretary of SEDER has informal spaces of power that maintain the social stability of the state and even the country. In this particular situation the Secretary of SEDER had to approach the Director of FIRCO in a very friendly and respectful manner. After this informal protocol, the Director of FIRCO gave instructions for the support of applications patronised by the *Secretario*. In exchange the *Secretario* offered public recognition to FIRCOS's Director and social peace –at least for a period of time. Although FIRCO programs were not meant to operate in a decentralised mode, this example provides important evidence about the informal practices that are frequently seen in the operation of most federal programs.

In the specific case of PAAP, the Secretary of SEDER expressed his view about the risk to SAGARPA of decentralising the rural development programmes, as he explained in the following terms:

[By decentralising its programmes, SAGARPA] loses power to control and manipulate public resources [...] this is because they [federal government] think they control the public resources with this scheme, so every year you have to renew your agreement [with the federal government], every year you have to review how much is going to be budgeted, how much they are going to give your state, and then the issue of discussing the *operational rules*, every year they change the programmes [...] the thing is that it is a bloody scheme of chaos... for the producers – ha! Because maybe we, as bureaucrats, assimilate [changes to the regulations] faster, but not a producer – even this [chaos] drives you to an underallocation of program resources [...] Today we have a joint-execution scheme [with the federal government], it is not clear you [federal government] are the norm and I [state government] am the executive, because we are so similar in all [the implementation process], even producing a pay check: in order to be cashable it needs the signature of the *Head* of SAGARPA's local branch and my signature.

In this part of the conversation the Secretary of SEDER revealed what the decentralisation of rural development programs meant to him. He posed his view in terms of political power: he thought that having control of the allocation of public resources gave one the opportunity to control and manipulate people for electoral purposes. That is why he suggested that federal government was just simulating the decentralisation of the rural development programs; he thought the current formal institutional arrangement did not delegate the allocation of resources to the states, as SAGARPA was co-participating in the execution of the programs. He saw several constraints in PAAP's operational rules that restricted the action of state government's allocation of the resources of programs executed under the decentralised mode of operation. The SEDER Secretary participated directly in the design of the precursor programme to PAAP in 1995, so he knew and was easily able to identify very well the differences in the programmes' design. His knowledge and experience gave him powerful argumentative tools that he used against federal functionaries to negotiate the terms of the implementation of PAAP in his state.

SEDER and SAGARPA have arrived at an informal arrangement that reduces the struggle between these levels of government and gives each

the power to allocate PAAP resources. They both pretend that they decide together how PAAP's resources should be allocated based on technical criteria. However, in fact they have agreed that each will be responsible for assigning a percentage of the PAAP's resources. Commonly, SEDER has 60 per cent of the resources and SAGARPA has the remaining 40 per cent, and both sides are satisfied. The federal bureaucracy can allocate 40 per cent of the resources of a programme that, with a decentralised approach, is meant to be operated wholly by state government.

The 40 per cent agreed allows the local SAGARPA office to fulfil the federal government's political commitment to certain groups of producers, which are mainly producers' associations. It is equally important is that they use their resources to maintain visibility locally by making it clear that it is federal government that provides the resources for rural development.

The main benefit for state governments is that they can decide on the use of federal resources. Although in most circumstances they must contribute with state resources if they want to participate in the PAAP, the federal resources are at least double the formers' contribution. Thus subnational governments have important funding with which to satisfy their commitments to producer groups and peasants, whether these are of a personal or a political nature. Under this informal arrangement SAGARPA does not question SEDER's choices and, reciprocally, SEDER does not attack or question SAGARPA's application selections. Everybody seems to be happy, at least in the upper bureaucracy.

After two hours of interview, the Secretary of SEDER was completely comfortable talking to us and started to use colloquialisms and swearing to express himself. He implicitly pointed out that peasant and producer organisations are loyal to the state government, so the federal

government had to use a strategy against the state government based on the creation of new organisations to balance the social and political power that traditional organisations represent in the country.

This interview with the Secretary of SEDER confirmed what other sources have also said:¹² that the state government uses peasant organisations as a means of forcing federal government to allocate SAGARPA programme resources to peasants or producers in specific places or social conditions or those engaged in specific activities. One way they do this is by sending a contingent of peasants to protest in front of the SAGARPA headquarters in Mexico City, blocking the main streets around the building or symbolically shutting down the SAGARPA offices. Another way the protesters pressurise SAGARPA is by dumping the complete harvest of crop that has been damaged by economic or climatic causes in the main entrance of the SAGARPA headquarters. Travel expenses for carrying people to Mexico City are usually covered by the state government through informal channels.

As described in Chapter 2, the federal government has been very sensitive to social protests that come from the rural sector. Politically the rural sector has the sympathy of all social sectors due to its historical economic and social vulnerability and peasants' combative role in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Therefore it is common for federal government – through a SAGARPA officer – to negotiate with protesters to guarantee the allocation of public resources from SAGARPA programs for their cause.

The Secretary of SEDER knew how this worked and explained that SAGARPA had tried to limit the influence of SEDER on the allocation of

12 The CNC National Secretary, the Head of SAGARPA's Oaxaca branch, State Coordinator of the Sustainable Rural Development Councils at Jalisco, SAGARPA's Planning and Rural Development Manager at Oaxaca's local branch and SAGARPA's Fisheries Office Manager at Oaxaca local branch.

SAGARPA programs resources by enforcing the PAAP's operational rules; however, he asserted that SAGARPA's attempts have not reduced his influence over the allocation of public resources. He confidently ridiculed SAGARPA's functionaries, calling them 'a bunch of idiots' who did not know how the normative framework of public administration works, as he does. So SAGARPA's use of their regulations toward state governments is not a threat for him as it could be for Secretaries of SEDER in other states. The following quote from the Secretary of SEDER's interview represents not just the political nature of the struggle between the two levels of government but also the means and rationale used to fulfil their expectations.

The Panistas [members of the PAN party] think they lost the [previous state election], then Usabiaga [a former head of SAGARPA] tries to find out how to bring new votes back in favor of PAN. To do so he tried to foster several parallel organisations [of peasants and producers] to the existing ones [...] I think he tried to balance the [social and political] power of the CNC [Peasants National Confederation]. On the other hand he tried to appoint *delegados* who do not play in favour of state governments and whose main function would be to ensure the right application of programme regulations in the operative sphere. As consequence, a lot of *delegados* and *sub-delegados* of SAGARPA suddenly appeared saying: 'I interpret the norm buddy, so fuck you.' [...] So when they want to fuck me I fuck them. Why it will not be approved?' [the Secretario imitates a federal functionary] '*Because I [federal functionary] interpret the norm; that is to say, I am the law [Secretario and others laugh] – I have to say that they do not fuck with me, I have always fucked them!* But imagine how many Secretaries of SEDER [in other states] know their local administrative structure [well] and how many of them know how [headquarters] works.

This case in Oaxaca shows how two different political parties converge in the implementation of PAAP and openly struggle to control the allocation of public resources for rural development. However, in Jalisco, where the same political party –PAN – governs the state and the federation, the situation is the same but with a more subtle struggle that it is just possible to observe when talking to middle and lower bureaucrats. Jalisco's upper bureaucrats said that coordination to implement the PAAP in Jalisco has always been strictly linked to the programme's operational rules and that relations between the two levels of

government is respectful and cooperative. As I show in Chapter 6, cooperation between the two levels of government in Jalisco is also influenced by the different political groups of the PAN at state level and commitments to persons and groups that support the political projects of various PAN leaders in the state.

Managing PAAP resources involving personal sentiments: the case of SAGARPA's head of finance department

SAGARPA's head of finance department manages SAGARPA budget and is based at SAGARPA headquarters. He is responsible for authorising the allocation of resources to each of SAGARPA's administrative units, whether at headquarters or a local branch. The head of SAGARPA's finance department is able to freeze or extend the budget for the several programmes that SAGARPA manages nationally. Although his position is little different to the same office in any organisation, in Mexico's public administration this is a position with power over the staff of SAGARPA's administrative units, who all confirmed that they had to maintain a good relationship with him as this makes things easier for everybody. Having a good relationship with the head of SAGARPA's finance department means being provided with resources for the operation of programmes on time.

Understanding the position of the head of SAGARPA's finance department is relevant if we want to understand Mexico's development bureaucracy because it illustrates the important role of personal and political relations in the production of development practice. While I was carrying out my fieldwork the Secretary of SAGARPA appointed a new head for the finance department, a man with whom he had a good relationship. Both SAGARPA's Secretary and the head of its finance department were born in the State of Jalisco and developed a close personal relationship over many years, as the Secretary of SAGARPA was

the Governor of Jalisco. According to state functionaries interviewed in Jalisco, the Secretary of SAGARPA totally trusts the head of SAGARPA's finance department and allows him to make decisions without consulting him.

According to programme directors at SAGARPA's headquarters, one day in 2008 the head of SAGARPA's finance department called a meeting of SAGARPA programmes' heads at headquarters where he expressed concern about the poor social and economic conditions he had found in his hometown on a recent visit. Nostalgically he described how beautiful this rural area had been fifty years ago and told the programme heads that he wanted a plan drawn up to recover his home town and foster rural development using SAGARPA's programme resources.

The programme managers could not refuse his request as they knew how close he was to the Secretary of SAGARPA, so they could receive a reprimand if they did not respond to his demands. In the words of a programme director:

You cannot say 'no' to the Head of Finance because it would imply loads of administrative delays to my requests to that office to make my programme work properly by delivering resources to the different SAGARPA branches, and you know the most important menace for us as public functionaries is not complying with the regulations because administrative sanctions we can get. In addition, this particular Head of Finance has a very close personal relationship with the Secretary of SAGARPA – I think that even they are *compadres*, so you don't want to upset the boss, right?

The Head of Finance's request had several administrative implications for functionaries in the middle bureaucracy, who had to find a way to justify the use of SAGARPA's money in the finance head's home town. They had to create records that made it look as if citizens from the town had applied to specific SAGARPA programmes and the technical commissions and Jalisco's FOFAE had approved the applications. During a visit to the site I observed the investment that had been made in the

head of the finance departments home town.

This example illustrates how programme managers, knowing full well that the allocation of PAAP resources must be the result of technical deliberations by the Council for Sustainable Rural Development and state committees, had to ignore this formal mechanism to fulfil the personal demands of SAGARPA's head of finance department. The latter had explicitly asked for a way to be devised to allocate SAGARPA's programme resources to his hometown and implicitly asked them to pretend that this was a collective decision by state and municipal government with the support of SAGARPA. This example shows how decentralisation of the operation of rural development programmes can be hindered by the personal interests of a top bureaucrat who thinks that his wish for the development of a rural part of the State of Jalisco should be seen as technically rational. However, I show later on in this chapter that SAGARPA's middle bureaucracy sees this as no more than the whim of a top bureaucrat who manages SAGARPA according to his own personal and political commitments. Programme directors interviewed at SAGARPA's headquarters explained that they were tired of attending to the desires of top bureaucrats who often asked them to improvise in order to fulfil their wishes, which required them to falsify the records to show that resources had been allocated by the rules and after technical analysis.

In Jalisco there is no extreme antagonism between federal and state government like that described in Oaxaca. This makes it easier for top SAGARPA functionaries to influence the decisions of local technical committees. As functionaries from the State of Jalisco have become SAGARPA's functionaries there are strong links with the state administration; both governments are in the same political party, although different internal groups have their own political interests. In Jalisco many of the unexpected results of the decentralisation of rural

development programmes are produced by egocentric styles of management combined with strong personal links between certain members of the upper bureaucracy.

The middle bureaucracy: dilemmas in the implementation of the PAAP

Part of the PAAP's implementation network involves programme managers, directors and subdirectors of administrative units related to the PAAP at both the federal level – at headquarters and in local branches of SAGARPA – and subnationally in SEDER. In this research, I call middle bureaucracy to the administrative body that is not directly in contact with programme beneficiaries, and does not have the power to make decisions about the criteria used to allocate resources, middle bureaucracy. The decentralisation of PAAP was a challenge for middle bureaucrats, who had to arrange and coordinate many issues with their counterparts at other level of government. Public functionaries at this bureaucratic level take part in the technical commissions that evaluate the technical feasibility of PAAP applications; thus their greatest responsibility is to achieve consensus on application approvals.

At this level there are remarkable differences between the federal and state bureaucracies. The middle bureaucracy at the federal level call themselves *arrastra lapices*, which can be translated as 'scribes', referring to those who do the hard work. They see themselves as maintaining SAGARPA's proper functioning. They believe that they know how to ensure successful programme implementation and perceive themselves as a neutral machine that knows how to deal with all the political struggles of the upper bureaucracy without jeopardising the proper operation of the programmes. However, their view of successful implementation is limited to allocating programme resources as laid out in the operation manuals and the timescales set in them. They are not interested in the outcomes of the programmes. Their self-confidence is

based on having worked as public servants in the organisation for a number of years. They have survived several changes of government, the most important in 2000 when the PRI lost the presidential election. Most SAGARPA personnel at this level are part of the civil service, so they have some degree of stability in their position.

At the subnational level, the middle bureaucracy is very vulnerable to changes in the subnational upper bureaucracy. Most functionaries secured their jobs through personal invitation or recommendation. This hiring tradition means that middle bureaucrats owe their positions to their superiors and hence their commitment is to the person who helped them to get their job, with the organisation's objectives and even its normative framework coming second. The middle bureaucracy at state level is the coordinating body of a politics machine – the operational body being the lower bureaucracy, as I explain later – as they carry out the strategy and administration of resource allocation in rural development programmes. Their aim is to show the people that the state government is supporting the rural population through the PAAP and to make sure that beneficiaries remain aware of the political party that is supporting them. Payback time comes when elections are held.

The clash between these different dynamics driving middle bureaucracies at the federal and state levels makes the coordination of rural development policy almost impossible. In the State of Oaxaca this clash is very clear, as the political origins and views of federal and state governments is so divergent. The PAAP manager of the Fisheries Division at SAGARPA's Oaxaca branch expressed the frustration of the federal middle bureaucracy:

Unfortunately, I have seen how municipal government only sees [the PAAP] as a bag of money that helps them to promote themselves politically [...] This morning I was telling some state functionaries that is not possible to allocate PAAP resources like confetti, only considering small projects that

are not economically feasible by their nature – projects that will be abandoned by the end of the year! I said that allocating PAAP resources for two fish-tank projects is not efficient; it would be cheaper [for the applicants] to buy the fish at the supermarket than to produce them. With that kind of allocation policy we will not overcome rural Oaxaca's economic backwardness. Actually, we already have plenty of fish tanks that have not been installed, and people are selling them off in parts. [... state government] does this deliberately with the aim of reaching as many people as they can, ignoring the expected impact that those resources should produce...

This PAAP manager provides insights into the rationale behind his counterparts' practices at the subnational level. The state's middle bureaucracy seeks to maintain and extend the network of political support for the state government by asking for the loyalty of inhabitants of rural areas when elections are due; a way to ask for a payback to programme' beneficiaries in electoral times. This implies diluting PAAP resources in order to reach as many people as possible, regardless of the possibility of success resulting from public investment. The state government of Oaxaca prioritises the rural population due to the rural nature of the territory, while SAGARPA's middle bureaucracy seeks to approve PAAP applications based on the size of productive projects that has been identified at the national level as potentially economically feasible. Thus while the official federal position invests PAAP money in clearly profitable projects, SEDER supports any kind of project, even those based on consumption goods.

In the intergovernmental technical commissions, SEDER officials' justification for their strategy is that in Oaxaca most of the rural population do not have the physical capital or capability to carry out large productive projects. To some extent this is accurate: most rural productive units in Oaxaca are small family allotments. SAGARPA's view is mainly based on relations with large farmers' organisations to the members of which it has traditionally allocated public resources. The difference between these two views has resulted in the informal arrangement to divide the PAAP budget and allow each side control of its

own resources, as discussed above.

The rationale for such informal agreements rests on the fast administrative output that middle bureaucrats have to produce for their superiors. At this level SAGARPA employees understand the potential benefits of fostering the decentralisation of rural development programmes, but most are not interested in whether it is successful in practice because they are focused on the operational results expected of them in the short term: allocation of the programme's resources according to the programme normative. Their understanding of a successful programme is limited to the allocation of all the resources for each programme according to its operational rules. To justify their importance they constantly refer to subnational bureaucracies' political bias.

SEDER's middle bureaucrats, however, do not to operate the PAAP with full awareness of its design. Perhaps this is because in the administrative and political agenda of the state government, being completely informed about the design of SAGARPA's programme is not relevant as it does not influence the practices of state middle bureaucrats, who see it as just one more federal programme whose administrative procedures they must follow in order to access its resources. As explained earlier, bureaucracy at this level works to build and strengthen a social base that they hope will support upper bureaucrats in their political aspirations. However, one must be cautious about typifying their rationale in political terms. The aspiration of middle bureaucrats at the state level is to have a source of income to satisfy their day-to-day needs. They seek merely to retain their jobs by satisfying their superiors' requirements. As long as their bosses hold their own positions they too will keep their jobs; and their bosses' position in the upper bureaucracy depends on their political progress. I observed this behaviour in both Oaxaca and Jalisco, although in Oaxaca the antagonism between the two levels of government is more

explicit than in Jalisco.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the case of the policy process behind the *capitalización* component of the programme Alianza para el Campo, also known as *Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (PAAP: Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets). The programme was redesigned in 2003 by the Mexican federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to fulfil the directives of the new Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable (LDRS). This chapter has described how bureaucratic actors have put the notion of decentralisation into practice as part of the rural development policy's implementation strategy. The case study was developed retrospectively and considers the different hierarchical levels of the bureaucratic structures involved in implementing the programme in two states, Oaxaca and Jalisco, in 2010.

I have shown that the decentralisation of Mexico's rural development policy has taken a different route to that expected by its policymakers. Decentralisation was considered as a development strategy in the design of the LDRS in 2010 as a way of allocating public resources for rural development efficiently through municipal governments which, in theory, have a better understanding of local problems and locations and the people affected by such problems as well as have the closeness to the citizens to make governments more accountable. However, after seven years of its implementation the expected results have not been produced in the case-study locations.

A first and general conclusion is that rural development programmes play a very important role in Mexico's political system due to the historical background of the rural sector since the Mexican Revolution, when the peasantry had a symbolic place in the political realm. This

sector is therefore very influential in the allocation of public resources for rural development. After the revolution the federal government assumed a paternalistic stance towards the peasantry, which became a relationship of clientelism in the 1990s. Before 2000 the federal government allocated public resources via rural development programmes to support specific groups in the rural sector in exchange for their votes at elections. This clientelism became an informal institution in Mexico's political system.

Bureaucratic actors and applicants have used clientelism strategically in the execution of new rural development policy to produce development practice. In decentralising rural development programmes it was not possible to make work, in the way it was meant, the collective bodies in which converged federal and state governments to produce technical decisions about the allocation of the resources of the PAAP.

It became clear in the case study that the political interests of upper state and federal bureaucrats shape their decisions about implementation of the PAAP. Upper federal bureaucrats are fighting the delegation of all such decisions to lower levels of government, arguing that the latter are not responsible enough to allocate public resources with an apolitical approach. They fear losing control of the allocation of SAGARPA's programme resources, which would also mean losing the political visibility that they enjoy when operating federal programmes through the federal administrative structure. Meanwhile, upper state bureaucrats are fighting to secure discretionary power to use federal rural development programme resources to fulfil their development agenda, which in most cases is associated with creating or maintaining their political-electoral clientele in the rural sector.

This struggle between the state and federal upper bureaucracies to control the allocation of the PAAP's resources has generated a space for

negotiation in which each has found a way to fulfil their political interests. They divide the programme's budget into two parts, and each controls one part. Both give the public impression that they are making collective decisions about the whole of the programme's budget. In practice, each side makes its own discretionary decisions about the allocation of their agreed percentage of funds. This institutional arrangement sets up a structure that leads to federal and state functionaries competing with each other to satisfy the needs of the local population and thus secure their political support, but this results in inefficient allocation as their decisions are not made via the proper channels. This practice directly contradicts the efficiency objectives of decentralisation.

On the other hand the lower bureaucracy, the front line of federal and state governments, show that the operation of rural development policy is not only based on political-electoral criteria. This bureaucratic stratum reacts to incentives other than political ones in its implementation of rural development programmes. The lower federal bureaucrats see the new policy as the whims of the upper bureaucrats which gives them extra work, so rather than generating new practices to address fulfilling the requirements of the decentralised mode they adapt the new requirements to the old ones, operating the new programmes almost as before. Federal lower bureaucrats are more concerned about the personal pressure on themselves when dealing with applicants for programme resources and avoid speculation about their role in allocation decisions. They are not concerned with political cycles, as most have permanent posts and have worked in the same position for different national governments and political parties for years.

The job security of lower state bureaucrats is usually linked to the political cycle. Most of these functionaries were appointed on the basis of strong personal links known as *compadrazgos*, which are represented by

loyalty to their superiors based on friendship. The rationale behind this bureaucratic stratum is based on the direct instructions of superiors that are often outside the spirit of Mexico's rural development policy. Usually at this level such decisions are based on the state government's need to expand its new political-electoral clientele during its term in office, which is usually six years. The aim is to bring as many people as possible, including those supported by federal programmes such as the PAAP, onto their side using state government resources. These bureaucrats are aware that their jobs depend on their superior's position, which in turn depends upon the position of the governor.

Thus the second general conclusion is that bureaucratic actors play a key role in delivering development. The case study has shown that a development initiative such as decentralising rural development programmes can produce results that diametrically oppose what is expected if bureaucratic actors behave strategically to avoid losing their power over the allocation of public resources. In the case studies presented, while these actors did not contravene any of the LDRS' directives they did create a way to simulate the decentralised implementation of a rural development programme, in the practice of maintaining their discretionary power to influence decisions about the allocation of public resources.

The third and last general conclusion is that bureaucracies not only respond to political or economic incentives but also to the personal sentiments and commitments that shape their decisions, which may be as important as political or economic incentives, and we must understand these if we are to explain development practice.

Chapter 6. Case study of Mexico's development bureaucracy on the notion of community participation

Introduction

Like Chapter 5, this chapter presents the case of Mexico's development bureaucracy in the context of the implementation of the Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos (Programme for the Acquisition of Productive Assets, PAAP), in this case focusing on the notion of community participation. It is shown that the result of a chain of interpretations on the notion of community participation reveals the abandonment of community participation as a strategy for rural development in Mexico. Eleven years after the introduction of the LDRS and eight years since its implementation, today community participation through municipal councils is just a fiction.

It is described encounters between the different levels of bureaucracy. The first section presents a review of how this notion of community participation was incorporated into the design of the LDRS, particularly in the PAAP's operational rules. Section 6.1 reviews some of the conceptual foundations of community participation in development. Section 6.2 describes the interface encounters between actors that participate in the implementation process of PAAP, which account for how community participation is implemented in rural Mexico. There is a description of the different lifeworlds of the actors in the PAAP's implementation network and the social arenas in which interactions between bureaucratic actors take place.

6.1 The notion of community participation in the Ley de Desarrollo rural Sustentable

The involvement of civil society in decision-making is still one of the most solid trends in the dominant discourses of development. The United Nations Development Project (UNDP) fosters citizens' engagement in and influence over public processes (UNDP, 2012a); and the World Bank backs projects based on a community-driven development approach; that is, development projects in which members of the community control planning decisions and the investment of resources (WB, 2011). Using the same development approach other international development organisations such as the OECD, USAID, DFID and IMF foster the participation of civil society in the allocation of resources for development projects. Nowadays this notion of directly involving civil society in public decisions is one of the key features of the global development strategy known as participatory governance (WB, 1992; Williams and Young, 1994; Chhotray and Stoker, 2009;).

The relevance of this topic in development studies is justified by the view that community-based development is a way of improving economic and social efficiency in communities, allowing poverty reduction efforts to be taken to scale, making development more inclusive, empowering the poor, building social capital, strengthening governance and complementing market and public sector activities (Mansuri and Rao, 2004: 2). Economic and social efficiency are not the only factors that make this development approach attractive: it can also help to strength weak democracies.

The criterion of efficiency based on community participation draws on the idea that community involvement the allows the incorporation of local knowledge in decision-making, whether in identifying and defining

public problems or choosing potential solutions (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009: 177). Community-based development approaches see poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the search for solutions to development challenges (WB, 2011); and the UNDP (2011) sees civic engagement as a fundamental element of a democratic state and defines it as a process whereby citizens, or their representatives, can engage in and influence public processes in order to achieve civic objectives and goals. This latter notion of community participation is closer to the idea of empowering members of local communities to make their own decisions.

Chhotray and Stoker (2009) frame the many terms, ideas and purposes included in the notion of people's participation in public decisions in a specific category of governance named participatory governance, which:

...stems from different uses of the idea of participation within particular discourses, which in turn influence the construction of individuals as citizens, community members, beneficiaries, clients, users and so on. These postulations are dissimilar, sometimes contradictory, and reflect the wide range of theoretical traditions that endorse participation. [...] The practices of participatory governance essentially reiterate the shift from state-centred activities to a proliferation of civil society organisations. (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, pp. 165-166)

Nowadays it is common to find that development policies framed as participatory governance are mainly influenced by concepts from the discipline of economics, which has been particularly significant in shaping the idea of individuals' participation not as citizens but as beneficiaries, clients or users (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, pp. 169-170).

Critics of community-driven development based on community participation have argued that while incorporating local knowledge can improve the targeting of the intended population, reduce the costs of implementation and improve accountability (Chambers 1993; Ostrom, Lam, and Lee 1994; Uphoff 1986), such advantages are likely to be

realised only when formal or informal institutions can ensure local accountability.

Some argue that such institutions are more likely to emerge in societies that are highly mobile, with a tendency toward homogeneous neighbourhoods [...] Where mobility is low, communities are more likely to reflect social orderings with long histories and deeply entrenched power hierarchies – just where poverty programs are most needed. Consequently, local inequity in relations of power and authority may well allow program benefits to be captured by nontarget groups. In the extreme, the decentralization of poverty programs in such contexts could worsen local inequity and perpetuate local power relations. (WB, 2011)

In Mexico the idea of involving civil society directly in public decisions was embraced by the Congress in 1988 (Cabrero Mendoza, 2003; Bazdrech Parada, 2003) and formally incorporated into national development policy in 2001 through the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable. Just as decentralisation can be seen as one pillar of the policy design of the LDRS, community participation is the other in terms of transforming the delivery of development in rural Mexico. Both are related since some ideas of decentralisation arrive at the consideration of the participation of civil society in public decisions. For analytical purposes, in this work decentralisation is associated with the delegation of decisions about the allocation of public resources to lower governmental levels, that is from federal to state and municipal governments, as described in Chapter 5. On the other hand, the meaning of the term 'community participation' is restricted in this research to the involvement of civil society in some actions or decisions that in the past were exclusively the responsibility of governmental operational structures. This is the focus of the case study in this chapter.

As described in Chapter 2, in its policy design the LDRS uses Sustainable Rural Development Councils as a mechanism for the decentralisation of the planning of rural development programmes in Mexico. These councils were conceived as spaces of convergence for different levels of

government and civil society to make collective decisions. According to article 24 of the LDRS, Sustainable Rural Development Councils are:

participation spaces for producers and other agents of rural society to define regional priorities, plan and distribute the resources that federal government, State Governments and Municipal Governments provide for productive investments and for sustainable rural development in general... (LDRS, 2001: 12)

In the words of SAGARPA's Sub-secretary for Rural Development in 2005, the LDRS 'considers the participation of rural society one of the fundamental engines for the development of rural areas, through local entities such as the Councils...' (Ruiz García, 2006: 26).

The instrument used to include civil society in public decisions is Sustainable Rural Development Councils at four administrative levels at which bureaucratic structures operate the rural development programmes: a national council, 32 state councils – one per state – and up to 2500 local councils for sustainable rural development at municipal, district or regional level according to specific needs or circumstances. The LDRS states that Sustainable Rural Development Councils must incorporate members of civil society, who may represent civil organisations that pursue social or economic aims in the rural sector, for example a national tomato producers' association, a local women's group promoting gender equity, a cooperative managing local fisheries, a regional maize producers' association, a young farmers' association and so on. According to the size of the association and the number of branches it has throughout the national territory they can take part in a national, regional, district or municipal Sustainable Rural Development Council.

Theoretically the councils should work like any other democratic body. One member chairs the council as mayor, a co-chairperson is the

secretary and the rest of the members, composed as mentioned of representatives of government at different levels and representatives of civil society, all have an equal right to vote on propositions posed in the council. As it was conceptualised, this mode of operation seeks to empower civil society in decisions on public issues, in this case about the allocation of governmental resources for rural development. The councils are formal spaces in which citizens can directly participate in the implementation of rural development policy (Ruiz Garcia, 2006).

The case study developed in the following section shows Mexico's experience of incorporating community participation in the implementation of a new rural development policy. In doing so, it seeks to understand development practice where community participation is involved. Are the Sustainable Rural Development Councils real participation spaces where producers and other agents of rural society can define regional priorities and plan and distribute governmental resources for rural development? How is the notion of community participation interpreted by the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable's implementation network? What are the drivers of bureaucratic actors in the incorporation of community participation?

6.2 Community participation in practice: interface encounters in the implementation of community participation in the PAAP

As mentioned in the previous section, the consideration of the involvement of civil society in public decisions is everywhere in political discourses and official documents of Mexico's federal government. The attempt to incorporate civil society in public decisions on rural development has taken a variety of forms which are the product of a chain of interpretations by the actors involved in the process. Section 6.2.1 presents this chain of encounters between different actors involved in the inclusion of community participation as part of a new approach in

Mexico's rural development policy.

6.2.1 Interface encounters at the planning stage: SAGARPA's central bureaucracy

The participation of civil society in the planning of rural development policy in Mexico begins with the definition of national priorities in the rural sector. The official document where all these definitions are stated is known as the Rural and Agricultural Sector Plan (*Plan Sectorial de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural*). According to national planning law the federal government must carry out consultation forums every time there is a new federal administration – that is every six years – at which non-governmental actors linked to the rural sector must be consulted to express their views about the problems and needs that they identify in their local contexts. These non-governmental actors are composed of members of the rural population such as rural producers and peasants as well as rural development scholars and experts.

SAGARPA is the federal government agency with the responsibility for organising such consultation forums for the Rural and Agricultural Sector Plan as it is the Federal agency that addresses rural development issues at national level. SAGARPA's Linkage and Operations Unit (*Coordinación General de Enlace y Operación*) is in charge of organising the consultation forums. It is a small administrative unit composed of the head of the coordination office and four mid-level functionaries.

Cross-referred information from the interviews revealed an interesting story behind the coordinator of the linkage and operations unit, who was appointed in 2003 with no previous experience in the federal public sector. He was appointed directly by the Secretary of SAGARPA, with whom he has a *compadrazgo* relationship based on a Catholic godfathering ceremony. He had experience in the public sector as an

elected authority, as before joining SAGARPA he was mayor of his hometown municipality in the State of Jalisco – the state in which SAGARPA's Secretary was born. Detailing the relationships behind the work environment is relevant here to understand how decisions are made in Mexico's development bureaucracy.

The new coordinator of the linkage and operations unit did not show any interest or initiative regarding his responsibilities as head of the unit; he delegated all the technical work directly to his second-in-command, the unit director, who has three subordinates to carry out all the operational responsibilities of the unit. The director and his crew can be categorised as mid-level bureaucrats as they cannot make major decisions, but can ask lower-level SAGARPA functionaries of other administrative units to carry out their operational requests.

The operational personnel in the unit are part of a stable administrative structure linked to a career system, while upper bureaucracy appointments are associated with the temporary position of the Secretary of SAGARPA; these positions are called *puestos de confianza* (positions of trust). People in such a position can be fired at any time with no reason given, while those employed as part of the career system keep their jobs by adhering to the internal regulations and through evaluations of their performance. Because of the risk of being summarily dismissed, positions of trust are better remunerated than permanent ones.

Differentiating the job conditions of the two levels of bureaucracy also helps to explain Mexico's national planning process in the context of rural development policy. As mentioned, the Linkage and Operations Unit is responsible for organising consultation forums, which should provide information to formulate the national plan for the development of the rural and agricultural sector.

SAGARPA's linkage and operations unit organised about 30 national consultation forums in 2006 across the states that make up the Mexican Republic. Although such forums must be open to all Mexican citizens in the rural sector according to the spirit of the Federal Planning Law, invitations were addressed to the leaders of specific agricultural producers' organisations, academic authorities at local universities and research centres and, as special guests, functionaries of federal and state agencies related to the rural issues. This did not make the forums nationally representative, so the information they provided was not appropriate for planning purposes. The information was biased towards the views of the big producers' organisations which have historically been able to ensure that their needs are included in the development agenda through their access to governmental authorities in the form of SAGARPA.

Despite the biased composition of the forums, none of SAGARPA's functionaries saw the consultation as a failure or a mistake because SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy and middle bureaucracy see the consultation forums simply as another administrative requirement from the of the Presidency Office to formulate the plan of development for the rural sector. In practice, the upper bureaucracy formulates alternative development plans for internal use based on the particular perspective of their specialised areas. For example, Sub-secretariat of Agriculture formulate the part specifically related to the agricultural sector, similarly the Sub-secretariats of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development do the same for their own areas of expertise in order to create the Plan for their Sectors. They think that presenting a plan is just a formality, as they are aware that in practice the allocation of public resources for rural development at the national level is the result of negotiations between the Federal Finance Secretariat of and Mexico's National Congress. The programme director of the Sub-secretariat of Agriculture explained:

There is no room to plan different things *to* the ones we planned in previous year, unless there is a direct instruction from the Secretary of SAGARPA. If there is no instruction we expect to have a very similar budget *to* the one we received last year for our programmes, because the budget comes fixed by the *Finance Secretariat*]

Hence for SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy, when formulating a national plan for the development of the rural sector, considering the opinion of civil society does not represent an important aspect of their bureaucratic activities, nor for their bureaucratic interests.

The middle bureaucracy, specifically the operational unit in charge of organising the consultation forums, are also aware that the information gathered will barely be used to shape the plan for the development of the rural sector. However, being the visible face of SAGARPA at the national level is enough incentive for them to get involved in this activity. They assume that their main focus should be organising 'nice' events for the participants and reducing the risk of confrontations between officials and members of civil society at the forums. They want to show local SAGARPA branches and their peers at headquarters that their administrative unit has the support of SAGARPA's Secretary for developing such responsibilities. The director of the linkage and operations unit expressed this idea in the following terms:

Our task is to carry out the forums without problems [... *such as*] an organisation *holding* a demonstration during the event, blocking the event, or receiving public *criticism* of what SAGARPA do in the rural sector. Fortunately, all the organisations felt *fine* and comfortable *at* the forums and most of them participated very well

For the operations members of the linkage and operations unit, the idea of 'successful' consultation forums is far from creating a plural space to hear the voices of the different actors of the civil society; instead, they focus on the leaders of rural sector organisations with the power to put pressure on Federal government through demonstrations or roads

blockages. They want to make these leaders feel that they play an important role in the definition of the rural development agenda and avoid any attempts to boycott to the forums by any local organisation. Part of the unit's strategy is to provide excellent catering during the event in an effort to gain a good local reputation by making participants feel comfortable and important.

The linkage and operations units evaluate the success of each forum in terms of how peaceful it was, how many 'relevant' actors attended the event, favourable feedback from participants and the lack of complaints from participants towards SAGARPA. The visibility that of forums generates a feeling in the units that everybody recognises their ability to deal with the diversity of participants from the rural sector. They feel that carrying out this kind of activity strengthens their position in the organisation, increasing the chance that changes the upper bureaucracy might be accompanied by their being invited to perform key activities with their new superiors. So times of change should be understood as a new appointment of SAGARPA's Secretary or governmental reorganisation as result of federal elections.

The final product of the consultation forums is a document called 'Memories of the Consultation Forums' which is composed by the summaries of the forum's participations. The information is not presented in a format that can be used to understand the causalities and size of the existing problems of the rural sector in the region; instead it is presented like a conference magazine highlighting who participated and what the participants said in general terms. SAGARPA uses it for publicity to show that they are close to the population, rather than as a planning instrument.

6.2.2 Interface encounters at the Consejo Mexicano para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable

Article 17 of the LDRS states that the *Consejo Mexicano para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* – henceforth the Mexican Council – is a federal consultative body that is inclusive and representative of the interests of producers and agents of rural society (LDRS, 2001). This council must be composed of the heads of state secretariats that might deal with issues related to the rural sector; accredited representatives of national civil society organisations and private organisations of the rural sector; national agroindustry and agribusiness organisations; research centres working on agronomical issues, and non-governmental organisations focusing on rural development issues. In this entity SAGARPA's representative chairs the council.

According to the LDRS the purpose of the Mexican Council is to help the federal government to make decisions about how the national master budget for rural development (PEC)¹³ is executed and evaluated. As explained in the previous chapter, the PEC is a budgetary document that integrates all the federal programmes from the different secretariats of state that deal with the rural sector. Thus in theory the Mexican Council is the most important national body to provide the federal government with information about the opinions and positions of the rural population regarding the allocation of public resources.

The Mexican Council represents another example of a great idea that was overwhelmed by bureaucratic practice. In the words of a top SAGARPA functionary who was in charge of coordinating its activities:

...;this was a council that was difficult to make work because from the perspective of some top SAGARPA functionaries, rural sector *organisations* should not take part in making the regulations that *would* apply to them

13 Programa Especial Concurrente (Special Concurrent Programme).

later as beneficiaries. They think it is nonsense.

SAGARPA functionaries who think that civil society must not take part in public decisions are the ones who formulate the operating rules of the programmes and who have the final word on the allocation of its resources. Historically, these administrative units such as the Sub-secretariat for Agriculture and the Coordination Unit for Livestock Programmes have used their powers to negotiate with national organisations about the type, quantity and conditions to allocate public resources of the programmes such administrative units manage. Apparently they are confident of their ability to allocate public resources to the 'right' organisations that will use them 'efficiently'.

At the same time than the other Sub-secretariats, SAGARPA functionaries of the Sub-secretariat of Rural Development pushed to include the rural civil society in public decisions. As mentioned in previous chapters, this was the sub-secretariat in charge of incorporating the principles of the LDRS into SAGARPA's programmes. These functionaries argued that SAGARPA needs to educate people on how to participate in these public spaces. Roberto, a functionary of the Sub-secretariat of Rural development, said:

*Rural sector organisations must realise that is not financially sustainable to allocate public resources as they have been allocated in previous years. They need to understand that there are *greater* needs in the sector and to see the potential benefits in the long term if they focus on these needs. It is not possible to continue allocating public resources based on political pressures.*

The two positions reveal two different interpretations of the idea of community participation coexisting within the same organisation. One position is based on the bureaucrats' view that rural organisations are always seeking public resources and use all their powers to put pressure on the government. They see these rural organisations as the 'enemy' or as a 'child' that they have to control in order to allocate SAGARPA's

resources efficiently. Thus for them, rural organisations demands need to be bounded to the national priorities of development and SAGARPA has the knowledge, experience and legal power to do it. From this perspective rural organisations do not represent the interests of the rural population but the particular interests of small groups of rural sector producers – the same organisations that have been beneficiaries of federal agricultural development programmes. For these bureaucrats, community participation threatens the efficient allocation of public resources for rural development because these organisations have the political power to capture the spaces for participation.

On the other side, community participation is seen as a way of legitimating public decisions and allocating public resources in a more efficient way. It is based on the view that federal development programmes have not produced positive outcomes because they have historically been operated by SAGARPA bureaucracy, which does not know the real needs of the rural population. This population must have access to spaces where they can add their specific needs to the rural development agenda. There is an implicit self-criticism of the functionaries of the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development of SAGARPA towards to whole SAGARPA. They acknowledge that rural development policy has neglected the needs of the population and the apparent technical decisions of SAGARPA over the allocation of programmes resources have not addressed the right population nor provided the right support in the rural sector.

The clash between these two interpretations of community participation at the core of the Mexican Council explains the budgeting process of federal resources for rural development. The coordination of the Mexican Council, which rests with SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat of Rural Development, presents several challenges regarding bringing the key actors together at the Council's sessions. First, it has to deal with

governmental actors from the inside – SAGARPA's Sub-secretaries, who are not willing to work in the council with new actors from the rural sector and demand to work with the national organisations they have traditionally deal with over the years because they are the ones that have political power to create social conflicts. Second, it is difficult to find national organisations that represent the whole of Mexico's rural population. In the words of the coordinator of the Mexican Council's assistant:

It's true that the organisations we invite to participate in Mexican Council sessions are not representative of the national rural population, but it is difficult to find organisations with such a level of representation. Most of the rural population is not organised, at least not for economic purposes. People from rural communities are split in moments where they can participate in public issues; that is one reason they are in such a vulnerable social and economic position.

SAGARPA's Sub-secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock do not want to deal with new actors from the rural sector because they do not think it relevant to negotiate with others. These functionaries do not look after organisations with a great degree of representation of rural population but for the ones that have the power to compromise politically the public image of SAGARPA creating newspapers headlines through actions such as blocking roads and invading public offices. These bureaucratic units do not consider community participation a priority in the development of the rural sector; in fact they see themselves as far from the objectives stated in the LDRS, identifying more with high-income economic objectives in the agriculture sector with which the LDRS's view of rural development is not compatible.

So the Mexican Council does not work as a council; instead, it works as an informative space where the federal government presents its rural development public expenditure plan. Representatives of each of SAGARPA's Sub-secretariats present the programmes that they will operate in that fiscal year, the kind of productive assets that will be

subsidised, the requirements that applicants must fulfil, on what type of crops or activities the federal budget will focus and some of the basic administrative procedures that the application of such public resources will follow.

According to Alicia, the operational coordinator of Mexican Council meetings, producers' organisations 'do not participate actively, proposing options to invest the public resources of SAGARPA's programmes; they are usually concerned about the amount of money in the budget for them as producers' organisations'. Thus rural sector organisations' participation in council sessions is limited to questions about their own interests. For example, a tomato producers' organisation will ask about the quantity of public resources budgeted to support tomato producers through SAGARPA's programmes, the kind of physical capital that qualifies to be subsidised, what kinds of supplies will be delivered to producers, when their members can apply to SAGARPA for assistance, and when they will receive it. If an answer does not satisfy the organisation's representative, they state the organisation's needs and ask for adjustments to the programme design or implementation strategy. When a situation like this arises, SAGARPA's representatives weighs up the political power of the organisation and, based on this, makes some modifications or maintains the official plan.

Thus organisations called to take part in the Mexican Council far from represent the rural population; instead, their invitations are connected to their political power in the national arena – (see Appendix 3 for listings of social and private organisations that take part in the Mexican Council). These organisations do not see the Mexican Council as a space in which to interact with different actors from the rural community who provide opinions to governmental agencies about the best way of allocating public resources for rural development; they see it as a platform where they can demand the 'historical figure' that each

organisation must receive from federal government. Hence technical arguments and long-term development goals are relegated to second place at the council sessions, which work mostly as informative meetings for both government and organisations about short-term governmental action for rural development. All of this is against the spirit of the LDRS, which set up this space for collective decision making for the good of the sector.

How the actors are interlocked to make the Mexican Council work shows that while the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development tries to implement the notion of community participation as conceptualised in the LDRS; the other SAGARPA sub-secretariats do not see the relevance of this new approach. Opposite Sub-secretariats to the Rural Development one see rural sector organisations as their clients, so the general rural population are not useful for their bureaucratic purposes. The notion of community participation is vested with the participation of traditional organisations of Mexico's rural sector, which demand public resources based on the view that they are the 'sons of the Mexican Revolution' and the Mexican State owes them for the development of Mexico after the revolution. This traditional relationship between the federal government and national organisations generates inequity in relation to peasants who do not belong to any organisation and do not have the same chance to access rural development resources.

6.2.3 Interface encounters at the core of the Consejos Municipales de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable

While the Mexican Council was created as a space to involve civil society in rural development policy at the national level, the *Consejos Municipales para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (Municipal Councils for Sustainable Rural Development, henceforth municipal councils) do the same in the LDRS at the local level. Between these two councils the LDRS

also considers homologous councils at district and state level. However, policy-makers, congresspersons, and governmental actors highlight the municipal councils as the key to boosting rural development in Mexico.

In the words of SAGARPA's head of the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development:

[The LDRS] considers the participation of rural society as one of the fundamental engines for rural development, through local entities, such as the Councils [for sustainable rural development], which are structured from the productive sphere to the transformation, commercialisation and product-market systems spheres. (Ruiz García, 2006: 26)

In this sense, the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development saw the municipal councils as a tool to deal with the traditional clientelism that has characterised rural development policy in Mexico for the last 50 years. He saw the municipalities as the most feasible level at which to demonstrate the potential of a community-driven approach to delivering development in rural Mexico. This is because at the municipal level, perspectives looked different than councils working with national organisations, as municipal governments have not had in the past important influence to negotiate and determine the rural development policy. In other words, the involvement of municipal governments brought new actors to the implementation arena– governmental and civil society actors that in the past have not been involved in rural development policy. Local actors are seen as uncontaminated by old practices for the allocation of public resources for rural development. So theoretically, municipal councils would not have to face the constraints observed in the Consejo Mexicano.

The basic strategy fostered by SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat for Rural Development was to create one council per municipality with the power to decide over the allocation of a fixed amount of governmental resources for rural development. The other SAGARPA Sub-secretariats,

for Agriculture and for Livestock, had no interest in making the municipal councils work because they are mainly involved with national organisations but at the same time were happy for the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development to set them up as long as this would not create any extra work for them. This indifference on their part allowed the Sub-secretary for Rural Development to decide how he wanted to municipalise rural development policy by involving local councils in decisions about the allocation of SAGARPA programme resources in the implementation of the LDRS.

The main challenge to the municipalisation of rural development policy was not only to create representative local councils composed of members of the government and civil society but also to get them to work as a democratic body. Since the governing structure of the municipal councils had to be similar to that of the Mexican Council, the LDRS proposed the *Presidente Municipal* – the mayor of the municipality – as the chairperson of the municipal council, the rest of the council to be composed of representatives from federal and state government and from the social and private sectors.

Despite this LDRS mandate to make use of the councils to allocate the resources of all federal programmes addressing rural development issues, the only programme set up to incorporate the municipal councils in this operation, in 2003, was one of those managed by SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat for Rural Development, the *Subprograma de apoyos a proyectos de inversión rural* (Subprogramme of Support to Rural Investment Projects, PAPIR). Later, in 2008, it was integrated into the new *Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos* (PAAP).

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the objective of PAAP is to help the poorest inhabitants of rural areas to acquire productive assets such as tools, machinery and infrastructure to help them to perform

productive activities proper to the local context. The programme subsidises up to 50% of the total cost of the asset. Applicants to the program must present their application in the form of a proposal for a productive project, specifying the role of the requested asset and showing that the project is economically and technically feasible.

The process of allocating SAGARPA programme resources through municipal councils involves the following steps: 1) the mayor of the municipality brings together the members of the municipal council according to LDRS regulations and 2) installation of a public reception desk in the municipality where applicants can ask for information and leave their application forms; 3) all applications received at the reception desk are analysed collectively at official sessions of the municipal council, focusing on the proposed project's relevance to local rural development and its feasibility; 4) the council decides which requests to accept according to SAGARPA's available municipal resources; 5) the applications approved by the municipal council are sent to an external technical unit which reviews the economic and technical feasibility of the project; 6) if the technical unit is content with the technical and financial feasibility of these projects, resources from SAGARPA's programme are released by the trust that manages them in the state concerned.

To ensure that the municipal councils work according to the spirit of the LDRS, in 2003 SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat for Rural Development signed an agreement with INCA Rural, a decentralised SAGARPA agency specialised in training and capacity-building for rural development. INCA Rural was to train a team of municipal advisors to perform as facilitators and guide the members of the municipal councils about how the council works, mainly in the sense of community participation. The municipal advisor was seen as an independent non-governmental worker paid by the municipal councils to provide professional advice.

Like the decentralisation analysed in Chapter 5, community participation is clearly specified in the PAAP's 2003 design and sufficient resources are allocated to involve civil society in public decisions as well as an administrative structure to its implementation. However, nine years later there has been no real involvement of community members in public decisions; the municipal councils are not representative of the community, council sessions are a sham as the mayor of the municipality generally has the final word, and even when decisions are made by local councils they are not respected by state and federal government, which use their power to block some of them. The following subsections illustrate how in Mexico the policy outcomes of the community-driven development strategy are the result of a chain of interpretations by different actors. Four local settings in two states are presented as case studies to explain the influence of development bureaucracies on policy outcomes.

Local bureaucracies on the notion of community participation

San Miguel Suchixtepec (population 3400) and San Miguel Coatlán (population 2400) are municipalities located in the Sierra Sur – the southern mountains – in the State of Oaxaca. San Miguel Coatlán is ranked 44th and San Miguel Suchixtepec 538th poorest out of the 2440 Mexican states and they are classified as having very high and high levels of marginalisation respectively (CONAPO, 2012).

The municipal governments of these communities are not ruled by the common law as they are mainly composed of indigenous inhabitants. Mexico's Constitution allows such communities to base their local government on their own customs and traditions. As part of these customs, all elected authorities are in honorary appointments; that is to say none receive remuneration as public servants. At public assemblies

every two years the community decides who will take on the governmental responsibilities. All members of the local bureaucracy are part-time public servants, as they also have to support themselves and their families.

When SAGARPA promoted the participation of municipal governments in allocating public resources for the PAAP in 2010 neither of these municipal authorities clearly understood the federal government's strategy. They are used to resolving their problems based on their own customs and traditions, and the incursion of a federal program into their local agenda clashed with the ways that they deal with everyday issues. The Municipal President of San Miguel Suchixtepec expressed this situation in the following terms:

I was appointed as mayor of this municipality without my consent; however, according to our traditions it is an obligation and a great honour to serve our community. There is no chance of refusing this appointment without being disgraced in the community. When I started my term I had no experience and no knowledge about what to do; however, after a year I am getting used to the general requirements of the position [...] When a SAGARPA functionary approached me to tell me that there is an opportunity to get federal funds from a programme whose name I don't remember I asked for these resources, but he told me that I had to follow some steps in order to get them. It was that thing called municipal council...

To understand the reaction of this municipal president I will describe his lifeworld. He as most of the members of the community was born in San Miguel Suchixtepec as member of family of peasants. His family need the workforce of the children to fulfil the family's everyday food needs, so he grown maize, black beans and kept some chickens. He did not attended school as child and when he was teenager he decided to go to the United States of America (USA) to look for a well paid job as gardener, farmer or worker in a factory. He crossed the USA border with his uncle 25 years ago illegally and he lived in the USA for all these time as illegal immigrant. Two years ago he came back to his home town to visit his parents. During his visit a community assembly took place in the *plaza*

pública (main square of the community), the purpose of the meeting was to elect the new representatives of the community –the new local government—for the following two years and according to the traditions the participants of the assembly make proposals and the participants raise their hands to show if the candidate has the approval of the majority. Somebody propose him as candidate to become the major of the community without his consent and the majority voted for him, he said that members of the community told him that he has been absent of the community for many years so it is now time to serve the community. He had to accept because if he refuses he would not be welcome again in the community.

So at the moment he was elected major of the community he barely knew how to read. He knew nothing about public administration and the regulations to rule a municipality. He said that functionaries from other levels of government were visiting him almost everyday to request signatures and documents that they required to operate the federal or state programmes they manage. He accepted that the beginning was frightening and he got confused, he felt understanding nothing. A year later he started to feel more confident because he already knew the functionaries and the basic procedures to receive public resources for his municipality. According to him, the freelancer called *asesor municipal* was a very important support for him to manage the basic administrative needs of the municipality.

The situation in the other municipality, San Miguel Coatlán, is not so different. The municipal authorities had no idea of the LDRS and the municipal council. Like San Miguel Suchixtepec, San Miguel Coatlán is ruled by indigenous customs and traditions and all members of the local government hold honorary appointments. There are no fixed posts in the local administration. To give an idea of how informal these administrative settings are it is enough to mention that when I arrived at

the local government office the mayor of the municipality and others were playing cards even when a day before the appointment was confirmed they were not ready for the interview, they called at that right moment the members of the municipal council using the official communication system via loudspeakers distributed throughout the community. The council members arrived 20 minutes later. This is only mentioned to illustrate the style of local management in such rural settings.

According to the INCA Rural municipal advisors interviewed for this research, every two years there are new municipal authorities whose members all have to learn how to operate in the council. The municipal advisors have become more important in recent years as they ease the learning process for newly-local elected authorities by explaining how SAGARPA's programmes operate through the municipal councils.

This lack of capacity in the municipal authorities to deal with federal programme regulations is an important factor in the attempt to incorporate community participation in the operation of the PAAP. The municipal council members interviewed were not aware of the principles of the LDRS but they understood the usefulness of the council regarding the possibility of receiving 'something' from the government – whether money or other resources. They did not see participation in the council as a guarantee that they would receive what they requested, but were participating 'to see what happens'. So they saw it more like a lottery, and would not complain if state or federal government did not respect the council's deliberations as they saw government support as a gift rather than an entitlement.

Community participation is not an issue for municipalities such as these as they traditionally use public assemblies to make collective decisions. However, when notions of community participation come from outside

as part of the requirements for receiving resources from state or federal government, the mechanics are quite different to what these rural communities are used to. The PAAP's formal administrative and logistic procedures overwhelm the municipal authorities, who barely understand the system stated in the operational rules of the PAAP. The way community participation is state in the operational rules has a more passive connotation than one associated to deliberate action; in the context of PAAP regulations the municipal authorities just follow the instructions of the municipal advisors without understanding the purpose of the council as they already always deliberate public issues collectively.

For example, in San Miguel Suchixtepec the criteria for the composition of the municipal council was based on inviting the better-educated members of the community, this was a criteria decided by the community. So the municipal authorities called a primary school professor, a young girl with a high school certificate and a young peasant who had been successful growing fruit trees. Why them? From the local authority's perspective they have had contact with the external world and so have can communicate with people from outside the community in such a council. Thus both authorities see the municipal council as an extravagance of the federal and state governments.

A thousand kilometres from Oaxaca are the municipalities of Chapala (population 48,839) and Jamay (22,881) in the State of Jalisco. Their political, economic, geographical and social conditions are different to those in Oaxaca discussed above. First, they are ruled by the common law. In general terms this means that municipal authorities are elected every three years via formal electoral institutions and procedures. Second, being an elected authority is a full-time job with monetary compensation. Third, these municipalities are categorised by the National Population Council as having very low and low levels of

marginalisation with rankings of 2306 and 2049 respectively out of the 2440 states (INAFED, 2012).

The local bureaucracies' interpretations of community participation are very different to those observed in Oaxaca. For instance, Chapala's mayor of the municipality is a former municipal advisor who worked as a 'broker' explaining federal programmes to the rural population. When questioned about how he became mayor of the municipality from his previous position as municipal advisor, he openly explained that that as municipal advisor he had helped a lot of people to access federal programme resources, supporting many agricultural projects and small business through his management of the programmes and his negotiation skills. He does not identify the LDRS as a referent of national rural development policy, instead seeing rural development programmes no different to how they were before the LDRS was enacted; the only difference he observes is that now there more requirements in applications for resources such as the presentation of a feasible productive project.

He does not see the municipal council as a space where Chapala's rural society can influence public decisions but as an informative space where authorities and the community get together to talk about general problems and potential solutions. From his experience as a municipal advisor, he is familiar with the way federal and state governments traditionally allocate programme resources based on the political power of the producers and peasants organisations or on *compadrazgo* relationships. This is why he sees the council sessions as no more than spaces for contact with local people. He did not complain about this but expressed his view that it would be good if the municipal council had the power to decide about the allocation of certain resources. He did not complain because he has friends in federal and state government who supported his election as Mayor of Chapala, so from his perspective

complaining would be not polite to them. He preferred to negotiate with them in person to secure SAGARPA programme resources for his municipality.

Chapala and Jamay's rural development offices are responsible for linking rural society with municipal, state and federal governmental programmes. In Chapala the head of this office is a personal friend of Chapala's mayor of the municipality. In his interview he said that he had no experience as a public servant and was not familiar with the LDRS or SAGARPA programme directives because he was only starting to learn about them. He had been in the post for a year. Here is expressed other *compadrazgo* relationship that influences the appointments in local public administration and how this can affect the implementation of a development policy.

In Jamay, the head of the office of rural development was appointed because there is an informal rule in the municipality that all elected majors of the municipalities have to respect, that is, appointing all those who participated as staff in his/her political campaign as part of the municipal cabinet. He said that he would have preferred to be the head the construction office:

I would prefer to be in charge of the construction office because there's a lot of money in *it*. This rural development one is a bit boring for me because *it's* not my field, you know. I'm the owner of a car tyre business here in Jamay, so I am mostly involved with the industry *and* local businesses.

His expression 'there's a lot of money in it' means that it is one of the administrative units that manage large amounts public resources, so managers have the chance to influence the allocation and receive 'commissions' (bribes) from it. This functionary does not find the rural development office attractive because state and federal governments directly decide what the public resources to allocate to Jamay or rural development. He openly expressed that he would like to compete in the

next local elections for the position of mayor, so he is clearly more concerned with his political career than with running the rural development office in his municipality.

As might be expected from this short-term view, neither head of the municipal rural development offices knew the purpose of the LDRS or the real objective of the municipal councils as a democratic and transparent tool for allocating public resources. Both were of the view that they would be in their posts only while the administration lasted; that is, for three years. So they felt that there was no need to put undue effort into learning all the responsibilities of the office and were content with the basics. Hence this post, which in theory should be filled by a person with the appropriate technical profile, is occupied by political or personal commitments of the mayor of the municipality or his or her political group.

The mayor of the municipality of Jamay had a more accurate view of the role of the municipal council in the context of LDRS and particularly of the operational directives of SAGARPA's programmes; however at the same time she was aware that many of the resolutions of the municipal council were being neglected by state and federal authorities, so for her the municipal council represented an opportunity to be involved in local politics and in touch with local leaders to carry out local rural development and other projects. Members of Jamay's municipal council appeared to be very keen to participate in this body despite the fact that its decisions are disconnected from national rural development policy.

The bureaucracy in between: municipal advisors fostering community participation

As mentioned above, the bureaucratic position of municipal advisor is connected to the three levels of government; it was created as part of the

design of Alianza para el Campo in 2003 and continued in 2008 with the change to the PAAP. This post was created to help local councils and municipal authorities to understand how federal programmes addressing rural development projects work administratively. Municipal advisors are freelancers who provide professional consultation services to the municipalities. INCA Rural worked as a kind of NGO to provide training about the basics of the LDRS and how municipal councils should work. The main role of the municipal advisor is to support municipal authorities in the creation of the municipal council and make it work according to the principles of the LDRS and the particular regulations of individual SAGARPA programmes.

As freelancers, municipal advisors receive neither a salary nor social security benefits. Their honorariums are paid on trimestral basis in exchange for specific outputs. These conditions mean that most municipal advisors are single young people with no family responsibilities, as is the case in San Miguel Suchixtepec and San Miguel Coatlán in Oaxaca and Jamay in Jalisco. The three municipal advisors are young professionals with no previous experience of public administration and are strongly committed to helping with the creation of municipal councils.

However, their experiences have been contradictory. While they have all been successful in informing and advising municipal authorities about how to carry out administrative procedures and requirements, the results do not correspond to their efforts. It has been frustrating for them all to find that after persuading local civil society leaders to take part in the municipal council, state and federal governments have not respected the agreements of the council in relation to SAGARPA programme resource allocation. One said:

I am ashamed. I cannot *look members of civil society in the eye* because I

told them that the *municipal council* had the power to determine which projects should be funded by SAGARPA's programmes, but in practice it never happened. The state and federal governments never respected the will of the council [...] In one week we worked very well in the council; we analysed all the *citizens'* applications, we discussed the relevance and merits of each project and collectively decided which should be funded with the money SAGARPA have budgeted *for* our municipality. We sent our deliberations to SAGARPA and SEDER administrative units and when we received the answer, they simply *did* not respect our will. Many of the council *members were* disappointed and never came back.

The consequences of this lack of commitment to respect the spirit of the LDRS on the part of federal and state government disappointed the civil society leaders who had taken part in the municipal councils and they withdrew. The councils lost focus as they became less representative of the general population; suddenly they were no more than a formality. The municipal advisors were disappointed, but they found new motivation to continue working with local government facilitating the everyday administrative responsibilities of the municipal governments as most municipal advisors are professionals with an academic profile related to public administration. Hence there has been a shift from the functions that they were originally meant to perform.

Interface encounters of state bureaucracy at local level

The view of community participation in SAGARPA's strategy to foster rural development is seen by the Oaxaca's State Government as a strategy of the federal government to create their political clientele in Oaxaca's rural sector. Here is again the view of the head of Oaxaca's Secretariat of Rural Development, he expressed this in the following terms:

The federal government knows that we [state government] have all the producers and social organisations *in Oaxaca's* rural sector in on our side; *they* all support our party [*the PRI*] and we *have* always won the elections in this state, so this strategy of *creating* municipal councils is just a desperate attempt to *create* a parallel structure similar to what we have with producers and social organisations.

The upper state bureaucracy see the federal government's aim of community participation as a sham as they consider that federal government wants access to organised rural population to confront the social base keen to the state government. The political party to which the governor of the State of Oaxaca belongs is the main opposition to the party ruling the Mexican Republic. Thus the rationale of the head of the Secretariat of Rural Development for the State of Oaxaca is attached to electoral politics, as explained by the historic role of governmental programmes at electoral times to influence election results (see Chapter 2). So while the state government does not support the federal strategy of forming municipal rural development councils, neither do they boycott it. The state's upper bureaucracy feels that SAGARPA functionaries directly approaching majors of the municipalities is a very aggressive act, as they consider they are overseeing the leadership of the state government in the local realm.

On the other hand, in the State of Jalisco the federal and the state government all belong to the same national political party. From 2000 to 2011 there have been three heads of SAGARPA, the two most recent of whom were born in Jalisco and had experience as top functionaries in the upper state bureaucracy. Jalisco's Secretariat of Rural Development has created a state coordinator of municipal councils for sustainable rural development who is in charge of coordinating the municipal advisors and monitoring the resources allocated to each rural development project in each municipality.

The existence of the coordination office of municipal councils, as bureaucratic structure, would suggest that municipal councils are working well in the state to improve efficacy and transparency in the allocation of public resources, but this is not the case. According to the upper bureaucracy, the mayors of municipalities of political parties other than that which rules the state are irresponsible. In their view,

these majors of the municipalities exclude the true leaders of the communities from taking part in the council and call in their friends or people to whom they have political commitments; that is to say there is a capture from the municipal government of certain municipal councils. For this reason Jalisco's Secretary for Rural Development took the decision to reduce the autonomy of certain municipal councils and give full support to those that respect the spirit of the LDRS. Curiously, all the municipalities supported are governed by mayors of the same political party as the state government, the PAN. New administrative restrictions were created in the operational rules of PAAP to avoid municipal councils having the final say in the allocation of PAAP's resources.

Interpretations of PAAP regulations made by the upper bureaucracy of the State of Jalisco are similar to those of the State of Oaxaca; however, in Jalisco political interests are more difficult to identify as the state and federal governments are in the same party. While this means that there are no political disputes between governments of opposing parties, in Jalisco there are political disputes between internal groups of those who support the state governor versus supporters of the President of the Republic, each with a different development agenda for the state. At the time this fieldwork was carried out, there were two rival groups from the same political party in Jalisco's Secretariat of Rural Development: one supported by SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy and the other by the state governor. They had already started the battle for the election of the next state governor, and control over the allocation of public resources for rural development is a very important electoral asset for creating the traditional electoral clientele.

Conclusion

This chapter has described a chain of bureaucratic actors' interpretations of community participation in the context of rural

development policy in Mexico. It has shown how the policymakers conceived the idea of incorporating community participation in the design of the LDRS, how the upper bureaucracy interpreted this notion to create operational prescriptions such as the integration of the Mexican Council with municipal councils; and how the implementation network at local, state, and federal levels interpreted the programmes' directives to produce development practice.

The result of this chain of interpretations reveals the abandonment of community participation as a strategy for rural development in Mexico. Eleven years after the introduction of the LDRS and eight years since its implementation, today community participation through municipal councils is just a fiction. In the first place the upper bureaucracy created a battle between different factions in SAGARPA headquarters to prove which has the most important ideas about shaping rural policy. SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat of Rural Development pushing on the Secretary of SAGARPA to incorporate a new approach to development based on community participation, a notion compatible with international trends in development such as participative governance. If community participation were successfully implemented SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat of Rural Development would gain an influential position in SAGARPA and its head might become the future Secretary of SAGARPA.

Second, there are factions in SAGARPA headquarters that do not agree about the incorporation of innovative development ideas: the traditional Agriculture and Livestock Sub-secretariats have a more economic approach than their rural development counterpart. To them, SAGARPA should not be addressing the rural poor as there is a federal secretariat to address that in the form of the Secretariat for Social Development. These bureaucrats see SAGARPA's main role as helping large and medium-sized rural producers and looking only after national

organisations with the political power to create problems for SAGARPA, so small rural households are not a priority for them. From this perspective, municipal councils are a waste of time and threaten their control and allocation of public resources which they currently negotiate directly with producers' organisations.

Third, the state secretaries for rural development are not part of the federal bureaucracy but of its counterparts at state level; as explained, in Oaxaca, the state and federal government are in opposing political parties, which generates strong distrust between the bureaucracies at the two levels. For those in state government, supporting the creation of municipal councils would help federal government to create a their own political structure at the municipal level as are SAGARPA programmes the ones that will be operated through such councils. Oaxaca's Secretary for Rural Development openly expressed that state government does not need municipal councils as they manage their rural development agenda with local producers' organisations and civil organisations. He asserted that most majors of the municipalities follow his instructions and 'most of them are ours', by which he was referring to their political affiliation or loyalty. This view distorts the original meaning of community participation as an effective and democratic method of allocating public resources and is interpreted as a threat to sub-national governments' control over certain public decisions.

In the State of Jalisco the federal and state government are both of the same political affiliation, which gives them an advantage over Oaxaca in implementing the creation of councils in each municipality. In fact there is a specific administrative units for coordinating the municipal councils at the state level. Although, there are no political disputes between opposing parties in Jalisco there are disputes between the state governor's people and those of the President of the Mexican Republic, each of which have a different development agenda for the state. This

reproduces what happens at SAGARPA's headquarters: two different views about rural development, one that sees rural development just in terms of producers with potential to generate profit in their activities. Behind this view it is the rationale that seeks strength the political capital of State Government with the local producers –the latter, the ones with economic power to fund electoral campaigns. The other view, fostered by the group of the federal government seeks to strength the rural livelihoods of the vulnerable habitants of rural areas to consolidate a national electoral clientele. These differences about the extent of rural development have disconnected the parties concerned from the head of Jalisco's Secretariat of Rural Development and administrative unit that coordinates the municipal councils in the state.

As it is possible to observe, there is a particular rationale in the behaviour of secretariats of rural development at Federal and State level in relation to the notion of community participation. This idea of including citizens in the public decisions challenges their traditional view of allocating public resources to rural producers organisations to create political commitments in electoral times. In Mexico, is evident that upper bureaucracies are more interested in creating an electoral than a political clientele. I differentiate electoral clientele from political clientele basically in terms of seeking voters in electoral times and the idea of convincing people about specific development ideas or projects. So, electoral clientele is about politics, but not such kind of 'healthy' politics in debating different ideas and projects of government but the one that just look at the short run, when the elections come, they look for their programmes beneficiaries as a clientele that has to pay 'favours' back.

Fourth, it is the lower bureaucrats who are in charge of putting these complex ideas of development into practice. Many of these actors are simply overwhelmed by the operational complexity of creating a

representative council and generating mechanisms of participation but even more difficult for them has been to make SAGARPA and SEDER to respect the decisions made by the municipality councils over the allocation of PAAP resources at municipal level. This level of bureaucracy includes majors of the municipalities, heads of the municipal offices for rural development, municipal advisors and council members. Here electoral politics barely influence the actors' decisions; majors of the municipalities have been unable to see the benefits of empowering the people to make public decisions and most of them do not understand the role of the municipal council in local governance so they use a very limited version of citizens' councils.

The case of the heads of the municipal offices for rural development is very particular, as in theory, these positions must be occupied by people with expertise in and knowledge of the administration of rural development programmes; however, they are allocated as a reward for high-level support as staff at local elections. Hence their decisions address satisfying not the demands of the community but those of the mayor of the municipality, while the majors of the municipalities are more concerned about repaying 'donors' financial support for their election from public resources. One way of doing this is by appointing them to local administrative positions; this is an example of the *compadrazgo* relationship. So the idea of empowering local people to influence the allocation of public resources is not compatible with majors of the municipalities' rationale as much as the councils work just as informative bodies for the community.

The municipal advisors as freelancers are the only actors who are in line with the LDRS's policymakers' intentions since they formally are not part of the bureaucratic structure of the municipality. Most understand the purpose of the councils in the context of the LDRS and know that the councils must have the attributes necessary to be able to decide on the

allocation of federal programme resources, but they do not have the power to make municipal councils work as they were intended. Municipal advisors are just facilitators who make a great effort to create councils and organise their sessions, but they are not able to produce tangible results. Thus they too have adjusted their role in the local public administration. Unlike most municipal functionaries that are appointed as political retribution, municipal advisors have become an important human resource through which majors of the municipalities accomplish their administrative tasks at the local level, many of which have nothing to do with rural development policy.

Civil society plays a key role in the municipal councils. In Oaxaca it was clear that the communities are used to participating in local assemblies, but most found community participation in the format proposed by the LDRS difficult to put into practice. They felt intimidated at being seated around a table with strangers such as government representatives. In such cases the mechanisms of participation simply lose all effectiveness, as not all the members can participate equally. In indigenous communities, their traditional assemblies are more effective mechanisms for eliciting the community view on public issues.

Part 3. Understanding Development Bureaucracies

Chapter 7. Understanding Development Bureaucracies: Mexico's Development Bureaucracy

Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 presented a case study of how bureaucratic actors in Mexico make choices in the process of implementing a rural development policy, and how those choices shape development practice. They described the chain of bureaucratic actors' translations and strategic behaviour to show how unexpected outcomes can arise as result of a variety of interpretations of one object: the policy. I reported what actors of Mexico's development bureaucracy consider when making their decisions every day, and what factors influence those decisions.

This chapter goes beyond policy implementation from the perspective of each actor involved and investigates the rationale behind actors' decisions. It seeks to understand bureaucratic actors' choices in the political and cultural context and the institutional and organisational settings of development policy. This inevitably reveals the reasons of why unexpected outcomes arise in some specific contexts of developing countries. The case study revealed how members of Mexico's development bureaucracy interpret the directives of Mexico's *Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* in particular ways which lead to an outcome different to that intended by the policymakers, exposing the relevance of bureaucratic actors.

The second main conclusion is that the bureaucratic actors involved, including the programme beneficiaries, play a kind of game mainly based on a political-electoral rationale; but politics is not the only driver influencing actors' decisions the implementation of the LDRS. This was

clearly seen in the behaviour of the lower bureaucracy, whose incentives are as simple as keeping their job or being on good terms with the community, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Some upper-bureaucracy decisions are linked to symbolism associated with personal feelings or history, as in the case of the SAGARPA's Head of Finance who arbitrarily pushed for the allocation of development resources to his home town, as described in Chapter 5. So the notion of democratisation in this bureaucratic context expands the gift-giving culture in the social system to patron-client relations.

The first section points out the relevance of development bureaucracies in the implementation of development policies. It accounts for the most important facts of the case study developed in this research that show the relevance of bureaucratic actors in delivering development. The second section reflects on the potential of actor-oriented approaches for understanding development practice. It goes back to the arguments presented in Chapter 4 to show the kinds of findings that were possible to reach using actor-oriented research approaches. The third section presents the dichotomy observed between the political and non-political drivers that influence bureaucratic actors' decisions in the implementation arena and emphasises how development outcomes are the product of a diversity of interpretations by bureaucratic actors shaped by the wide range of political, cultural, social, organisational and personal motivations in Mexico's rural setting.

7.1 Development bureaucracies matter

My main aim in studying development bureaucracies was to learn how these organisational structures interpret rural development policies and how their interpretations shape development practice and outcomes. I use the term 'development bureaucracies' because I wanted to know if there is a particular rationale behind bureaucratic actors' decisions that

requires attention in the field of development studies for a better understanding of development practice. The case study developed in this research reveals that Mexican development bureaucracies can be very influential actors in the shaping of development outcomes.

The role of development bureaucracies is largely overlooked by most of the development studies literature (Bebbington et al., 2007; Heeks and Stanforth, 2011). Most development scholarship focuses on analysing the 'big' problems such as gender inequity, poverty, unsustainable productive practices, social violence, political disparities and so on, and comes out with 'big' solutions such as empowering local communities, involving women in household decisions, incorporating sustainable productive practices, decentralising government systems and so on (Mosse, 2004: 640). From this traditional perspective the dominant idea is that once the 'solution' is transformed into policy directives, the next step is 'just' to implement it.

The argument of this research is in the opposite direction: it reveals that bureaucratic actors involved in the implementation of policy cannot be seen as a monolithic entity as the same policy can be interpreted in different ways by different actors, leading to a chain of interpretations that shape the policy outcomes. In contrast, the perspective that 'once the policy is designed it just needs to be implemented', unexpected outcomes can be just the result of wrong implementation which may be explained by the inadequate management of human or physical resources, corruption, bad leadership or lack of human capital, among many other factors, so the aspects to address from this viewpoint are building capacity, fighting corruption, appointing high-profile managers, making management accountable and so on; all managerial solutions. However, the Mexican case shows that unexpected outcomes may not simply be the result of managerial issues.

The case of Mexico's rural development policy has provided analytical elements by which to understand how 'promising' development policies with strong support from politicians and authorities, extensive financial resources and adequate organisational and human resources have not fulfilled their brief and have produced unexpected outcomes. The case study reveals how members of Mexico's development bureaucracy interpret the directives of the Mexican Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable in particular ways that lead to an outcome different to that intended by the policymakers.

Although the bureaucratic actors investigated here did not engage in illegal action or contravene any of the directives in the official operational rules, they found ways of adapting the directive to suit their interests, organisational routines and cultural and political contexts, eventually diverting the course of the new policy. This was the case for functionaries of federal and state government who engaged in informal negotiations to make it appear that they were making collective decisions about the use of PAAP's resources. As explained in Chapter 5, both accepted this dissimulation on the part of the other because neither was willing to lose their power to allocate the PAAP's resources to specific places or persons. The federal functionaries considered that the resources belonged to federal government and so state governments should be given PAAP resources according to federal priorities and criteria; state governments considered that the PAAP's decentralised mode of operation should mean that all decisions should with them and that federal government should not intervene in the operation of the programme. They both created an apparently irreconcilable scenario to justify their informal agreement to divide the PAAP's resources into two, one to be allocated under SAGARPA's criteria and the other, under those of the state government. This is not illegal since they achieve collective agreements but the way they reach such agreements does not respect the spirit of the Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable.

Chapters 5 and 6 showed how Mexico's bureaucratic actors behave strategically to satisfy the demands of the Mexican Congress, policymakers and even beneficiaries of the programme without compromising their group interests at different levels. However, doing this makes it difficult to achieve the expected outcomes announced when the LDRS was created. Using Crozier's language (1964), Mexico's bureaucracy found a way to maintain and create the necessary discretionary powers to elaborate their own detailed rules and procedures so that they could influence decisions about the allocation of public resources for rural development. This strategic behaviour was observed in all the types of bureaucratic actors that participated in the study as well as in congresspersons and applicants to and beneficiaries of rural development programmes.

The actors that compose the LDRS implementation network made decisions about policy process in a way that affected the main purpose of this planned intervention. Below I summarise the chain of events and actors' practices observed at different points and stages of the implementation of the LDRS to show how the influence of bureaucratic actors can produce unexpected outcomes.

As was explained in Chapter 2, one of the main reasons of creating a Law as the LDRS was to put a stop to the allocation of public resources for rural development based on political-electoral criteria, mainly around elections. To some extent the LDRS was created as a response to PRI governments' traditional electoral practices. After the PRI's loss of the presidential elections of 2000, the Mexican Congress unanimously approved the LDRS as a promising policy instrument to allocate public resources for rural development efficiently, avoiding any political-electoral bias and addressing the most vulnerable population of the rural sector.

However, the present research finds that from 1994 to 2006 about 25 per cent of Congress had a particular agenda for the rural development budget. This percentage comprises congresspersons linked to civil and producers' organisations in the rural sector. I had the opportunity to interview the presidents of the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) and the National Smallholders' Association, both congresspersons who knew very little about the implications of the new model of rural development behind the LDRS. When I asked if they were worried about losing power as rural organisations to decide over the use of federal rural development programme resources, the CNC president was clear that he would not allow a reduction of the organisation's customary allowance from the federal budget. He let me know that the Confederation uses informal negotiation channels such as social mobilisation to put pressure on the federal government to give them what, from their perspective, is fair. The response of the leader of the National Smallholders' Association was similar; she told me that she negotiated directly with the Federal Secretary for Finance and Public Credit (SHCP) for her organisation to secure a fixed amount of the approved rural development budget, and so was not concerned because, according to her, 'SAGARPA is aware of the negotiations with the Federal Secretary for Finance and must respect them.

This reaction reveals the contradictory role in the implementation of the LDRS of congresspersons linked to the rural sector. As congresspersons, both leaders supported the decentralisation of the operation of the rural development programmes and the incorporation of a productive approach, but both prioritised the interests of their organisation over the principles of the LDRS, even to the extent of using non-technical arguments to secure public funding. A change in the institutional arrangement is observed in the relations between the producers' organisations compared to those under the PRI regime. It is true that

those organisations do not have a corporatist relationship with the 2000 government ruled by the PAN as they did in the past under PRI, but they showed resilience in the new political era and, instead of offering their political loyalty to the regime, offered their support to legitimise the PAN government in the informal spaces that they control. In other words, they did not offer the PAN government public support but instead social peace by withholding protests by the groups they controlled in exchange for public resources from federal programmes addressing the rural sector such as the PAAP. This is a new route offered by producers organisations to legitimise governments.

The allocation of public resources for organisations of this nature does not take place with the implementation of rural development programmes but a year earlier, when the national budget is defined by the Secretariat of Finance and Public (SHCP). The congresspersons feel so powerful that they negotiate the amount their organisations will receive from federal programmes directly with the Secretariat. This is just one example of clientelism in Mexico's rural development arena. When all of these negotiations are completed, SHCP informs SAGARPA of the terms set with national rural-sector organisations. When organisations do not have enough political power to secure the representation of a congressperson they negotiate directly with SAGARPA, exerting pressure by blocking roads and invading SAGARPA offices. These are the first constraints that SAGARPA's functionaries have to deal with in the implementation arena and create informal commitments to avoid any political crises that could affect the image of SAGARPA or the federal government. So paradoxically, the diversion of the intentions of rural development policy and the unexpected outcomes begin at the top with policy-makers and planners.

SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy knows the technical rationale of the LDRS and understands that allocation of PAAP's resources must be carried out

according to the LDRS regulations; however, as described in Chapter 5, they act strategically to protect the political interests of the party in power in Mexico. Most members of the upper bureaucracy appointed from 2000 onwards have a personal or political link to the Secretary of SAGARPA which engenders a strong sense of loyalty to him or her which takes the form of the traditional *compadrazgo* relationship explained in Chapter 2. The main aim of these upper bureaucrats is to control decisions about SAGARPA programme resources and prevent state governments from getting hold of them.

For the upper bureaucracy structure, supported by informal *compadrazgo* relationships, it is easy to create relationships of clientelism with the beneficiaries of the PAAP programme. When the upper bureaucracy stratum selects beneficiaries it considers their economic and political influence in the region to ensure a degree of certainty that when elections or organisational changes take place the beneficiaries will support them. At this level most of the beneficiaries are individual producers with a high income, businesspersons in the rural sector or big organisations with an important presence in specific regions or states. Although since 2001 the PAAP should have been focusing on the most vulnerable rural population, its resource allocation has not reflected this. As FAO's evaluation reports show, from 2002 to 2006 most Alianza para el Campo resources were allocated to producers with high incomes with only about 20% going to low-income producers (FAO, 2003; 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2004a; 2004b; 2005; 2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2007a; 2007b)., After the programme was renamed the PAAP in 2008 this trend continued (FAO, 2008).

The way SAGARPA's upper bureaucrats make decisions about important productive projects affects how the middle and lower bureaucracy carry out the PAAP's operational rules. Since the upper bureaucracy does not use the formal process of technical analysis to allocate resources, the

middle bureaucrats, represented by programme directors and sub-directors, and lower bureaucrats, represented by *operadores de ventanillas* (*government front desk attendants*), have to generate paperwork that makes it look as if the allocation process has been carried out according to the operational rules. They formulate a productive project using data collected from the selected future beneficiaries and take these to the technical commissions for approval and the signature of both federal and state government –both signatures a formal requirement in the decentralised mode of operation of PAAP. All this is made possible by informal agreements between federal and state governments.

At state level, state governments accepted a role in the implementation of the PAAP because it gives them access to federal resources. This is a strong incentive, as most state governments are highly dependent on federal resources to run public programmes. In the decentralisation of rural development policy, state governments have deployed their own political and social power to influence decisions about the PAAP's resources in their own political interests.

Neither in Oaxaca nor in Jalisco did the PAAP's decentralised mode of operation work according to the spirit of the LDRS. The government of Oaxaca did not want to follow the operational rules, specifically in relation to making joint decisions with the federal government, because it considered that if the PAAP's resources were to be decentralised all decisions about the allocation of its resources should be the responsibility of states without interference from the federal government. Thus Oaxaca's government boycotted the technical commissions at which federal and state governments were supposed to make joint decisions about the eligibility of applications by withholding their signatures, which were needed to release PAAP resources to the beneficiaries, until projects proposed by Oaxaca's state government

were also accepted by the federal government. Withholding their signature from the approved projects put pressure on federal government because the PAAP's operational rules state that resources must be allocated in specific months of the year, so the closer the deadline for distributing the resources, the more likely the federal government is to accept the of the state government's demands. This is where informal agreements to split PAAP resources for allocation between the two levels of government take place. This solution is not in the spirit of the LDRS.

The antagonistic behaviour of the Oaxaca government responded basically to differences between political parties from which federal and state governments come from, Oaxaca being governed by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and the federal government by the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). However, in Jalisco, although both state and federal government are ruled by the same political party, PAN, there were also struggles between the political group supported by the state governor and that of the President of the Republic. Thus while in Oaxaca there is open antagonism between the two levels of government, in Jalisco the antagonism is subtle and takes place in private; but as in Oaxaca, the two groups fix the percentage of PAAP's resources that each will allocate for distribution.

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, two strata of bureaucracy were identified in state governments. The upper bureaucracy is composed of the Secretariats and sub-secretariats for agricultural development and the lower bureaucracy, of the directors and operators of state programmes. The first stratum is strongly linked to the political elite that rules the state and is principally connected to the state governor's political group. Its main concern is to build political capital for use in elections to keep the government in their hands.

The members of the lower State bureaucracy are mainly unconditional servants of upper bureaucrats since they got and keep their job thanks to the personal relationship they maintain with their superiors. So the most important concern for this bureaucratic level is to keep their jobs, so they try to fulfil the whims of upper bureaucrats even when many of them are unethical such as carrying out political-electoral practices to create political clientele with public programmes. As at this level there is no civil service guaranteeing their posts and so they are willing to put their bosses' priorities before citizens' needs.

Fourth, there are two important points to highlight regarding community participation and the involvement of municipal governments in the allocation of PAAP resources: a) the exclusion of municipal governments in decisions over the allocation of PAAP resources by state and federal governments, and b) the exclusion of civil society in decisions related to allocation of PAAP resources by municipal governments and the attempts to create *ad hoc* councils in the mayor of the municipality's interests. In relation to the first, it was observed that even when the LDRS have a decentralisation mode of operation of rural development programmes to go up to the municipal governments, these are not empowered to do so by the state or federal government; instead upper state and federal bureaucracy fight to persuade municipal governments to become their political allies, offering resources for the municipality. Again, the political-electoral rationale takes place in the implementation arena, this time locally. Presidents of municipalities are expected to provide political support for the state or federal functionaries that provide them with the most public resources for development programmes. The mayors of the municipalities do not realise that the LDRS empowers municipal governments to decide on the use of federal resources for rural development, so state or federal governments act strategically to make it appear that they are providing special help to local government in order to create political loyalty.

A second phenomenon observed at the municipal level is that municipal authorities' use of citizens' councils to make collective decisions about the allocation of PAAP resources is a threat to their political and personal interests because majors of the municipalities feel that they lose power to make decisions over public resources and risk not fulfilling their political and personal commitments they did in the electoral campaign they were elected. Hence they people the municipal council with members who do not necessarily represent the community of the municipality, inviting instead people that are politically or personally close to them to take part in the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development, which ensures that council decisions are made according to the will of the mayor of the municipality. However, as we have shown, this effort by municipal authorities to constitute *ad hoc* citizens' councils is useless because federal and state governments do not allocate the PAAP's resources according to the will of local councils but for their own personal and political gain. Discontent and disappointment was observed among members of the municipal councils when they realised that their resolutions had been ignored in the PAAP allocation process.

Thus states and federal bureaucratic actors involved in the implementation of the policy have developed a structure that simulates the inclusion of community opinions through the integration of local councils. The policymakers sought to decentralise the operation of rural development programmes through the LDRS; they tried to reduce the amount of central bureaucratic red tape through the delegation of decisions and functions and by effectively identifying local needs, but in fact it was the federal bureaucracy itself that created barriers to state and local government participation in the final decisions on how federal rural development programme resources are allocated. Hence neither democratisation nor community participation have been included on the implementation of the LDRS.

These key aspects, analysed in the case study, show that in practice the LDRS does not function as intended. The rural development policy is not creating any of the benefits that decentralisation and community participation should produce according to the paradigm of development on which this national policy is based. All the actors involved, including programme beneficiaries, play a game mainly based on a political-electoral rationale; but politics is not the only driver influencing actors' decisions in the implementation of the LDRS. This is clearly seen in the behaviour of the lower bureaucracy, whose incentives are as simple as keeping their job or being on good terms with the community, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Some upper-bureaucracy decisions are linked to symbolism associated with personal feelings or history, as in the case of the SAGARPA's Head of Finance, who arbitrarily pushed for the allocation of development resources to his home town, as described in Chapter 5. So the notion of democratisation in this bureaucratic context expands the gift-giving culture in this social system to patron-client relations. While section 7.3 explores the drivers behind bureaucratic actor's decisions, it is important to highlight their influence on the generation of development policy outcomes as their bureaucratic practices can shift the original objectives of a policy.

7.2 Actor-oriented approaches to understanding development bureaucracies

Chapter 4 presented the actor-oriented approach which was used to analyse Mexico's development bureaucracy. Two streams of this research approach were considered to understand bureaucratic practice in the context of the implementation of Mexico's new rural development policy. Norman Long's research approach centres on actors rather than processes, using the latter only as referents to analyse actors' decisions in specific arenas and contexts, whether social, political, cultural or

organisational. It provides an analytical framework within which to explore planned interventions based on the lifeworlds of the actors involved in implementing development policy, and sees as important the identification of the social fields, arenas and domains in which actors make decisions.

Actor network theory was used to build conclusions about how the implementation actors' network generates outcomes, how different actors interpret one another and how different meanings are produced from the interactions between the different human and non-human actors. ANT's nature led us to know who produces development practice, which actors influence it, how actors interpret each other to make decisions, what those decisions are and how they produce development practice. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the two approaches are used in this research as complementary to reach whole explanations since ANT alone is unable to fully explain the rationale behind actors' decisions.

ANT does not question the nature of decisions or whether a specific interaction between two actors is pertinent to producing the expected outcomes of a policy. It only describes how actors interact in the network to produce the network's outcomes. ANT's approach sees some actors as 'black boxes', as it is easier to focus on the interactions between actors than on the causes of those interactions. For this reason Long's (2001) analytical framework is employed to carry out microanalysis of actors' lifeworlds and contextualise their decisions in order to open the 'black box' of some actors to understand development practice.

In building the case study, considering the foundations of actor-oriented approaches allowed the identification and analysis of different types of bureaucratic actors and the elements of their lifeworlds, and to understand their decisions in specific context. It was possible to identify some objects that produced different meanings for different actors in

different situations and some whose meaning has changed over time to satisfy the needs of other networks' actors.

The case study presented in the two previous chapters has shown that the bureaucratic structure responsible for carrying out the LDRS's directives is not a monolithic entity or a huge machine that works steadily to implement policy. On the contrary, Mexico's development bureaucracy is composed of a diversity of administrative units, which are themselves composed of a diversity of actors, such as operators, supervisors, managers, directors and external personnel, responding to different organisational, political and personal interests. Even people in similar positions at different levels of government behave differently and respond to different motivations and rationales.

The main lesson here is that not all bureaucrats understand policy and programme directives in the same way as they can represent different things to each. Hence bureaucratic practice is shaped by a chain of independent interpretations of the PAAP's directives. Upper bureaucracy is motivated by the political aspirations and careers of the Secretary of SAGARPA itself and of its sub-secretariats. On one hand this upper bureaucracy seeks to project an international and national image of a Secretariat of State that bases its programme design on top-notch development approaches in which anti-politics discourse is used as a resource to build a good public image of SAGARPA as an organisation and of its top functionaries.

The Secretary of SAGARPA privately confided that applying the principles of decentralisation and community participation could interfere with SAGARPA's hidden agenda of keeping the social peace in the rural sector through the creation of political alliances with producers and peasants' organisations. Hence it is possible to see how SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy pretends that their programmes comply with the

principles of decentralisation and community participation of the LDRS. This strategic behaviour is possible by setting up a double game in the implementation of PAAP; one game played by SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat for Rural Development which addresses strategically the poorest population of the rural sector and the other by the Sub-secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock taking advantage of their discretionary powers to allocate PAAP resources to organisations and individual producers that represent whether a political clientele for SAGARPA or political allies for the political aspirations of upper bureaucrats. The interview with the Secretary of Oaxaca's SEDER illustrates the encounters between state and federal government and the strategic behaviour of both as they seek to fulfil their respective interests.

In this interview 'black-boxed' entities arose, such as the Secretary of Oaxaca's SEDER in his luxurious office. In the context of Oaxaca's local politics it is meaningful that a state Secretary is able to show his power through the luxuries displayed in his office and his personal property. As described in Chapter 5, on the walls of his office were pictures of the Secretary with ex-presidents of Mexico and with the Mexican political elite. His big desk of fine wood sends the message to everyone who goes to his office that he is a powerful actor in the state government and plays with the institutional rules of the PRI regime, so all visitors understand how they are expected to behave in front of the Secretary: that is, submissively.

The lower bureaucracy is mainly composed of functionaries of whom most have been working at SAGARPA for more than 15 years in the same. These actors have seen functionaries coming going from the upper bureaucracy. They are the visible face of SAGARPA and act as its representatives on the ground. Their general view of SAGARPA programmes is that over time they have all been very similar; the only

change that they perceive being in the requirements that an applicant has to fulfil to be eligible for public resources. That is to say lower bureaucrats do not identify the different ideas or paradigms of development that have shaped SAGARPA's programmes over the years, and see the changes as the whims of upper bureaucrats.

The main concern at this level is not political or electoral, as in the upper bureaucracy. The lower bureaucracy is concerned with administrative issues, and particularly with adapting the new regulations to its established administrative practices and procedures. Making it compulsory for applicants to present a productive project in their applications simply represents more workload for the same salary. Members of the lower bureaucracy saw the PAAP's new rules as highly demanding procedures, so instead of adopting them they tried to adapt the new procedures to the existing ones (Merino and Macedo, 2006). This stratum has the feeling that there will soon be another change to the operational rules or to the names of the programmes, so there is no need to put too much effort into radically changing the way they have been operating the programmes.

Another important factor identified in the lower bureaucrats' interpretations of the policy is the fact that they have to compete between them if they belong to different levels of government, e.g. federal lower bureaucrats vs state lower bureaucrats. As the PAAP is a decentralised programme, its applicants can decide whether to apply at a federal or a state office or even, where applicable, at a municipal office. Theoretically the assessment of each application must be the same, independently of where it was received, but in practice we found that the results differed as each level of government has its own commitments and procedures. When dissimilar results are produced by middle bureaucrats the lower bureaucrats have the job of explaining to some applicants why they have been rejected. This face-to-face contact

between lower bureaucrats and citizens establishes personal links with the rural population which involve personal pressure from local inhabitants that also shape bureaucratic practice. The lower bureaucrats prefer to publicly discredit lower and middle administrative procedures in order to be accepted as trusted members of the local community.

Using the actor-oriented approach allowed the mapping of the diversity of actors involved in the implementation of the LDRS and the drivers that influence their decisions. Here is the summary:

Federal government: SAGARPA

Federal upper bureaucracy

Represented by Secretary of SAGARPA and sub-secretaries and general directors at SAGARPA's headquarters; heads of SAGARPA's local branches.

Drivers: Political-electoral clientelism, personal sentiments (*compadrazgo*)

Federal middle bureaucracy

Represented by programme directors and administrative unit sub-directors at SAGARPA's headquarters, programme directors and administrative unit sub-directors at SAGARPA's local branches, Directors of Rural Development Districts (DDR)

Drivers: Organisational

Federal lower bureaucracy

Represented by CADER and DDR *operadores de ventanillas* (front-desk attendants)

Drivers: Organisational, cultural, *compadrazgo*

State government: State Secretaries of Agricultural and Rural Development

State upper bureaucracy

Represented by State Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development

Drivers: Political-electoral, personal sentiment, *compadrazgo*.

State lower bureaucracy

Represented by state programme directors and *operadores de ventanillas*

Drivers: *Compadrazgo*, economic (keeping their jobs)

Municipal government

Municipal upper bureaucracy

Represented by the mayors of the municipalities

Drivers: political-electoral clientelism, *compadrazgo*

Municipal lower bureaucracy

Represented by Rural Development directors, municipal advisors

Drivers: Political-electoral clientelism, *compadrazgo*, economic (keeping their jobs)

***Consejos Municipales para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (Municipal Councils for Sustainable Rural Development)**

Represented by peasants and agribusiness owners

Drivers: clientelism, *compadrazgo*, cultural.

Differentiating all these actors allowed the setting up of different encounters that revealed the various rationales behind bureaucratic actors' everyday decision-making. All of these actors converge in the implementation of the LDRS and specifically in the implementation of the PAAP. The diversity of drivers identified for each type of actor

reveals possibilities for different understandings of policy, whether political-electoral, cultural constraints or personal, and these cannot be neglected where the objective is to understand how development practice is produced and its outcomes. Understanding the nature of those drivers could reveal the actors' rationale behind their decisions and clarify how unexpected outcomes arise.

Equally important has been the identification of some non-human entities that have been 'black-boxed', to use the term from the actor network theory framework, such as the rural development programmes, the PRI regime and even the Mexican Revolution. None of these three entities are material objects such as the office or the desk of the Secretary of Oaxaca's SEDER, but they all have a particular meaning in the context of the implementation of PAAP. The Mexican Revolution is well known to have been caused by several historic facts that are commonly accepted in Mexican society. Of course some of the facts are matters for debate for academics and historians, but that is not relevant to the role of the image of the Mexican Revolution in the rural development policy realm.

The Mexican Revolution is used by peasantry organisations as a flag to claim that they have the right to public resources to foster rural development. As pointed out in Chapters 2 and 6, peasants' organisations feel that they represent the 'sons of the Mexican Revolution' and that Mexican State is in debt with them for the development of Mexico after the revolution. This traditional relationship between the federal government and national organisations generates inequity in relation to peasants who do not belong to any organisation. In this field of rural policy the notion of the Mexican Revolution has evolved over time to be used as a tool that is adjusted according to circumstances, as if it has its own agency.

In general terms, rural development policy is another non-human entity that interacts specifically with bureaucratic actors in different ways. For the lower federal bureaucracy, which has been in operation for more than 15 years, the rural development programmes continue to have the same objectives independently of changes to the formal regulations. These bureaucrats have witnessed different modifications to the programmes' operational rules without observing a change in their superiors' approach to allocating resources. So despite the fact that PAAP's design was backed by a new national rural development law, the LDRS, the lower bureaucracy did not make any great effort to change their internal administrative processes to manage the programme, with the rationale that this was just another whim of another new upper bureaucrat, and everything would continue as always at SAGARPA.

For the upper federal bureaucracy the rural development policy represented a very important tool for maintaining the peace in the social sector. So despite PAAP's operational rules allowing everybody to apply for the resources, the upper bureaucracy already had a list of the producers' organisations and individual producers that were to receive PAAP resources, whether in exchange for their political power or for their historic symbolism in the sector. Although the PAN government tried to implement the PAAP following the spirit of the LDRS at the beginning of its administration, it quickly understood the relevance of fulfilling the expectations of some producers and social organisations of the rural sector in order to avoid protests against their administration which might affect their political image at the national level. So the meaning of the rural development policy has taken a very different form from that laid out objectively in their programmes' operational rules.

Finally, the 70-year PRI regime, represented by a strong president with more power even than Congress and the Court, created a set of formal and informal institutions representing the decision-making frameworks

for all members of the society. As explained in Chapter 2, at the end of the regime there was an image of PRI as antidemocratic and corrupt, using clientelism and *compadrazgo* to win elections and hold onto power. This research is set post-PRI with a PRI opposition party, PAN, ruling the country. The case study presented in Chapters 5 and 6 shows how even though PAN intended to govern without the corruption, clientelism and informal institutions of the PRI regime, by the end of 2005 the electoral system was so connected to clientelistic practices that PAN had to use the PRI regime's informal rules to interact with the rural sector and implement its rural development programmes without a political cost. The conclusion here is that even after the PRI lost the presidential elections and with the many changes that occurred until it appeared that the PRI regime was finished, bureaucrats of the PAN government strategically and efficiently used informal PRI-regime institutions to fulfil the political interests of its upper bureaucracy. The PRI regime institutions were interpreted situationally and their meaning was transformed to legitimise the new government.

7.3 Drivers of development bureaucracies

This section explains the rationale behind bureaucratic actors' decisions on the implementation of the LDRS. The research confirmed that the development arena is highly influenced by the political interests of the different actors involved in it (Ferguson, 1992; Escobar, 1995; Chhotray 2011), and in the case of Mexico this political-electoral factor is explained by informal institutions such as clientelism. But political-electoral drivers are not the only influences on bureaucratic actors' decisions. Other drivers are organisational, cultural and personal reasons and historic informal institutions such as *compadrazgo*. The following subsections explain how two of these dimensions – the political and the non-political – influence bureaucratic actors' decisions and produce unexpected outcomes, mostly unconsciously.

7.3.1 Political drivers of development bureaucracies

The first important thing to explore to understand Mexico's development bureaucracy is the meaning of the word 'politics'. It is important because, as Chhotray points out, for a wide range of people 'politics' is a means of solving social conflict without the use of violence or authoritarian mechanisms. Chhotray says:

I understood politics to be the gateway to a fascinating world of collective decision-making of which we were inescapably a part. The result of this broad-based focus has been to bring nearly every conceivable aspect of human existence into the fold of the study of politics: rule and resistance, social organization and disintegration, faith and disenchantment, access and exclusion, identity and violence. (Chhotray, 2011).

In Mexico the above notion of politics is used in the academic sphere; in the development arena the connotation of politics is quite different.

In development policy the term 'politics' has been shaped in Mexico by the notion of the type of corporative politics that the Mexican government has used to create relationships between the governmental and the social sphere. The post-Mexican Revolution era was marked by strong social organisations such as the Peasantry's National Confederation, National Workers' Unions, the Smallholders National Association, the National Organisation of Public Functionaries and National Teachers' Unions, which had strong links to the regime. In electoral times candidates made political promises to the leaders of such organisations rather than to the population as a whole, each the member of Mexican society being represented by at least one of these national organisations, whose leaders were members of the Institutional

Revolutionary Party (PRI), the political party in power.

With the decline of the PRI, the social demand for the democratisation of the political system and the poor performance of the Mexico's economy, international organisations played an important role in the stigmatisation of the term 'politics'. The image of development programmes as instruments used by government to exchange its support for electoral votes was used in the discourses of the opposition and international organisations as an undesirable practice in democratic systems. As was explained in previous chapters, this exchange of favours was sometimes an explicit act of buying votes on the day of the election and at other times was implicit through corporative clienteles in the form of social organisations which the regime saw as their political strength in electoral times.

Thus, the idea of depoliticising the management of development programmes, and mainly those oriented to social and rural development, was one of the main ideas that the opposition used in their political campaigning to foster the change that Mexico needed: a government that would distribute public resources with no political bias. In 2000 the opposition won the presidential election, and with it several changes were expected in the management of development programmes were. The LDRS, created in 2001, was meant to be an iconic national law revolutionising the way rural development programmes work. The technical rationale behind its design was to prevent governmental agencies from handling public resources in such a way as to create or maintain electoral clienteles.

This research has shown that despite the apparent consensus achieved between key actors of the Mexican State including the Congress, the Office of the President, state governors and representatives of national rural producers organisations to create a new law guaranteeing equality

and neutrality in the allocation of public resources, such principles are barely recognisable in its implementation (see chapters 5 and 6). Actors in top positions have particular agendas shaped by their 'political' interests.

In the Mexican context the term 'political interests' has a negative connotation – politics is a 'nasty business', as Chhotray (2011) names this face of it – with actors using their position to influence or manipulate the allocation of public resources for the benefit of the social organisations they patronise. In most cases such patronage seeks the votes of the members of these organisations for a particular candidate or political party in return. In this way rural organisations maintain their prerogative in the allocation of rural development programme resources.

The rationale behind this practice rests on a complex chain of actor's interpretations of the LDRS. The role of the Mexican Congress in the early stage of the policy-making process, and later in its implementation, reveals the aims of the actors at this level. Standard Mexican Congress procedure was followed in creating the LDRS in a process where technical commissions of experts in the field, congresspersons from different political parties and members of civil society participate in formulating the directives of the new law; then the Congress votes to pass or reject the bill. The LDRS was unanimously voted in, so no major obstacles were expected in the implementation arena.

However, settled rural development practices created difficulties in implementing the LDRS as intended. First, it is important to mention that nearly 80 of the 500 congresspersons come from the rural sector; most being representatives of rural producers or peasant organisations. Interviews with some of those linked to the rural sector revealed that they had supported the LDRS bill because after informal negotiations

they had received a guarantee from top federal government functionaries that the organisations they led would receive resources from these federal programmes. So while they are aware of the objectives of the new law, they see them as idealistic and impossible to achieve. They feel that the needs of the rural sector cannot wait to be addressed until the LDRS is fully implemented; thus despite the consensus that decentralisation and community participation are important factors in the improvement of public resource allocation, congresspersons representing the interests of rural organisations support its implementation only to the extent that it does not affect the support they expect their organisations to receive from SAGARPA's programmes.

If the federal government tries to allocate SAGARPA resources based on the spirit of the LDRS, many organisations represented by congresspersons will not receive public resources. This happened in 2003 and 2004 when the LDRS was new and SAGARPA tried to allocate resources based only on technical analysis of the applications. The result was a chain of demonstrations which included actions such as roads blockages and the taking over of its offices. Social pressure was exerted on federal government not only in the streets but also at the top level of the bureaucracy as congresspersons linked to the rural sector directly demanded that Secretariat for Finance and Public Credit make the necessary budget adjustments to fulfil the demands of the rural sector organisations. Here congresspersons acting as if the organisations they are linked with were 'the' civil society of the rural sector with no political-electoral interests while in fact these organisations were led by members of the Mexican Congress and linked to specific political parties.

After two years of trying to implement the new development approach the federal government realised that applying technical criteria to allocate public resources with no previous informal negotiations with

influential rural sector organisations was creating a 'nightmare' for government as public demonstrations affected the economic activities of the regions where they were held and the image of the government was affected. So the new federal government, which for the first time had been elected from the opposition since Mexican revolution times, learnt that they must return to informal negotiations to keep the social peace in the country and build a good image for the government for the next elections, which entailed creating electoral clientele to keep them in power. Without this they had no chance of being competitive in elections as most of rural society saw the electoral process as a time for exchanging economic incentives with the government. For most peasants this is the only time they can get something they want from the government.

In the federal elections of 2006 the opposition party that won the election in 2000, PAN, kept the presidency of Mexico, but now, with more experience of national governance, it decided to quit the LDRS's new approach to rural development. Community participation mechanisms were no longer funded by SAGARPA and the decentralised mode of operation dispensed with the joint action of federal and state governments. The reasoning behind this retreat was mainly associated with the 'politics' of development. The newly-elected federal government understood that the poor represent the easiest vote they can get; they are the least educated and have more material needs than the rest of the country so can easily and cheaply be manipulated with small amounts of funding and material 'gifts' through the rural development programmes.

The interface encounters at the process of the decentralisation of governmental responsibilities from federal and state governments to the municipal level illustrate the federal and state bureaucracies' apparent rejection of community participation as a key element in the improvement of the allocation of public resources. SAGARPA's

bureaucratic units appeared stubbornly unwilling to change their established procedures. However, at the level of the upper bureaucracy the boycott of the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development's efforts was based on the hidden mission of SAGARPA's Secretary: maintaining the social peace in the rural sector to retain the federal government's political capital for future elections.

As if rural development organisations were a market, SAGARPA and SEDER's officers compete for their electoral support in exchange for financial contributions from the programmes they operate. In the case of the PAAP they promised certain resources or funding for the acquisition of productive assets in exchange for their support in electoral processes. Politics in the context of Mexico's development policies is associated with two practices: the government securing votes for a particular political party, candidate or person seeking a party post, and social organisations seeking benefits from government programmes in exchange for social peace.

The opposition was very critical of the old regime's use of government programmes for electoral purposes, but we observed that in practice this new government –that came from PRI's opposition—does not have enough patience to wait for the results of the new approach to development. We identified two different mindsets in SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy: the understanding that decentralisation is a development strategy on the international agenda and its potential benefits through allocating public resources more efficiently; and, synchronously, knowing that effectively decentralising the operation of SAGARPA's programmes would put the federal government at a disadvantage in relation to state governments to promote politically the federal government image at national level.

SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy is aware that the decentralisation

process is a mid- to long-term process, but their political aims as a group are set in the short term at no more than five years, as the elections are every six years. Despite all the inconveniences and risks of managing programme resources discretionarily, the new opposition party decided to do so because they saw it as the most effective way of creating a clientele for elections. Thus the notion of decentralisation as a development approach was used only as a tool in public discourse to create the image of a responsible and reformist federal government at international diplomatic events and in internal debates with the opposition.

Federal functionaries lost the sight when they asserted that *Alianza para el Campo* resources belong to them –as federal government—so state governments should no have right to decide over those resources. Thus SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy disagree with the idea of decentralising the operation of federal programmes because they think it is unfair to incorporate other levels of government in the decisions over the allocation of federal resources. Hence SAGARPA created a control system to make state governments accountable to federal government but not to society. The intention of controlling state governments was maintained in the sense that most state governments were led by the PRI's members, which would intentionally spoil the PAN federal government's new rural development policy. There was no trust in PRI state governments to comply with the assumptions of decentralisation, as they were seen as led only by their own political interests, so the new aim was to depoliticise rural development in Mexico. That was the official discourse in 2003

Unfortunately for SAGARPA's Sub-secretariat for Rural Development the community-driven rural development strategy was never thoroughly implemented, at least as intended. The idea was simply absorbed by the upper bureaucracy as the whim of a bureaucrat with no knowledge of

the sector. Most of the functionaries at SAGARPA's headquarters shared the view that municipal governments do not have the capacity to manage public resources efficiently and giving them such power would end in a waste of public resources. Of course the official discourse from the office of the President of the Mexican Republic expressed the opposite, stressing the importance of local government and community participation in the development agenda.

Civil society is involved everywhere in the political discourses of Mexico's federal government. Its inclusion has been interpreted as the discretionary inclusion of what are called 'representatives' of civil society. The analytical description of how the bureaucratic network has translated the notion of community participation cannot be seen as wrongly implemented as such an idea was never implemented at all. We can conclude that the bureaucratic rationale is diverse at each level; the drivers of bureaucratic behaviour are different at each bureaucratic level so the justification of their decisions. The clash of all these views, interests and representations of reality shape the bureaucrats' decisions in ways that have little to do with the original intention of the policy.

The notion of community participation through the use of municipal councils is mentioned as one of the drivers of the decentralisation of governmental responsibilities from federal and state governments to municipal level. In 2006 the head of SAGARPA's Sub-secretary for Rural Development said at an international conference: 'Mexico has 2,393 rural municipalities; 2,110 already have *Consejos Municipales para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable* (municipal councils), and 1,858 of these already have a Municipal Rural Development Plan, which was made by the municipal authorities with the consensus of rural representatives of each region' (Ruiz García, 2006).

Of course these figures presented by SAGARPA's Sub-secretary for Rural

Development are very useful for creating an image of Mexico progressing into decentralisation and integrating of civil society in public decisions. What the speaker did not mention was the view of the programme operators interviewed for this research, who see that while 99% of municipal councils have been created, they have not yet achieved their purpose of taking effective decisions over the allocation of PAAP's decentralised resources. He also did not say that most of the Municipal Rural Development Plans do not match local needs and lack methodological rigour and accurate data. Most of these plans were formulated just as a formality to make municipalities eligible to receive resources from SAGARPA's programmes.

An external observer believing officials' claims would get the idea that the use of municipal councils is a successful strategy for rural development. However, our analysis shows that to understand the outcomes of development policies one must know how bureaucratic actors translate development notions and how these are transformed into practice. Knowing this may provide plausible explanations for the different results produced by similar development policies in different locations.

My main argument here is that in developing countries where democracies are incipient, politics is not a mean to achieve social consensus but to concentrate power in a specific group or person. So in the rural sector of Mexico the use of politics it is generally understood in the light of the electoral processes and nothing else. The rationale is not along the lines of economic efficiency and social justice but of an artificial legitimisation of the governing bodies. The principle followed is one of *not making waves* (*no hacer olas*) in the social arena, keeping the peace and winning followers using traditional mechanisms to create political-electoral clienteles.

7.3.2 Non-political drivers of development bureaucracies

Theories of bureaucracy, reviewed in Chapter 3, state that bureaucratic organisations produce and reproduce specific patterns of behaviour in ways that lead to unexpected outcomes. Many of these patterns are the result of factors that influence the choices of bureaucratic actors, but unlike those associated with political interests discussed above, the emphasis here is on showing that non-political factors also shape bureaucratic actor's decisions and influence the outcomes of Mexico's rural development policy.

Bureaucracy theorists such as Gouldner (1952), Merton (1952), Selznick (1949) and Crozier (1964) challenge Weber's classic administrative paradigm of the theoretically neutral standpoint taken by bureaucracies to achieve their organisational, administrative and policy objectives. All of these authors provide important insights into why bureaucracies do not – or cannot – perform neutrally.

Selznick (1949) stresses that where unexpected outcomes occur there is a presumption that sociological forces are at work, so bureaucratic actors may face constraints, tensions and dilemmas in making everyday decisions. According to Selznick, they deal with this by establishing *commitments*, which are the main source of unanticipated consequences of bureaucratic organisations. The commitments bureaucratic actors are attached might be not compatible to organisational or programmes' goals.

Merton (1952) says that bureaucratic organisations present dysfunctions produced by the nature of their structure; Gouldner (1952) stresses that there is 'something' about bureaucratic organisations that makes the personalisation and *routinisation* of procedures difficult to avoid. In SAGARPA's lower bureaucracy, represented by the front desk

attendants some of these factors influenced the implementation of the PAAP. The latter adapted the new directives to old practices, and routinisation and personal styles of management influenced their development practice further.

Some of the arguments put forward by bureaucracy theorists provide plausible explanations for how the unexpected outcomes were produced in the Mexican case. Some individual actors and administrative units implicitly agreed to pretend that decisions related to SAGARPA's programmes were based on technical arguments when in practice they knew that they were the result of the whim of a top functionary. The encounter presented in Chapter 5 describing how a top SAGARPA functionary influenced the allocation of public resources based on a romantic view of his hometown illustrates how, in developing countries, non-political interests can influence the outcomes of development policies. The functionary was not seeking political or economic gain – his intention was to help the rural producers in his home community to progress economically and socially, but in doing so he automatically produced inequity in the access to public resources of this and other communities.

The relevant question here is why this SAGARPA functionary did this, knowing that such allocation of programme resources is not considered in the programme regulations. The answer is connected to the *personal commitments* of upper SAGARPA bureaucrats and symbolic links in an exchange called *compadrazgo*, which performs as another actor in the institutional and organisational setting of this development bureaucracy. The top bureaucrat has a personal relationship with the Secretary of SAGARPA: both were born in the State of Jalisco and one is the godfather to the other's child. They are thus linked through *compadrazgo* and call one another *compadre* as a mutual sign of respect. Beyond the religious and personal meaning of *compadrazgo* it is a link of respect and self-

protection.

While this top SAGARPA functionary knows well that his post is very influential in the organisation, he also knows that his personal relationship with SAGARPA's Secretary makes it very difficult for other members of SAGARPA to question his decisions. The political position that he thus holds is recognised by all of SAGARPA's administrative units, which see the exposure of his actions as risk to lose their jobs. So the heads of the programmes and the middle bureaucrats that operate them prefer to create a strategy to fulfil his demands. They look for people that live in the area in question to invent applications and present them as having been evaluated by a technical commission and assessed as priorities in the region.

The risk to the middle bureaucrats of not complying with the demands of the top functionary are exclusion from the Secretary of SAGARPA's close circle where institutional decisions are made and from participating in future projects as well as being seen as disloyal. In this sense, 'institutional' behaviour means supporting the decisions of the organisation heads rather than putting the goals of the organisation before those of any individual. As many bureaucracy theorists have suggested (see Bardach, 1977), organisations have to fight to survive and in doing so they sometimes shift away from their original aims.

Another way to explain the non-political rationale is through the practices identified in SAGARPA programme front-desk staff, who reported that the discretionary way in which state governments allocate resources is turning the community against them and generating an image of SAGARPA functionaries working only to help their friends. Front-desk staff spends many hours each day explaining the federal government's rural development priorities to applicants and clarifying

that decisions on their applications are made at the upper levels, denying any responsibility for the final decision. For front desk functionaries it is very important to maintain good relations with the local population because they have created a personal link with them over the time they have been in charge of the local SAGARPA office.

As the position of these functionaries does not depend on their personal relationship with top bureaucrats they prefer to point SAGARPA headquarters as responsible for decisions about the allocation of programme resources in their dealings with the local population. When a new development approach is applied to the design of SAGARPA's programmes, as the case of the LDRS, those working on the front line see it as the whim of the current Secretary of SAGARPA or technocrats of upper bureaucracy. They are very reluctant to believe that new programme regulations are responding to a legitimate decision to change how rural development policy has been managed in recent years. So rather than informing potential beneficiaries about the change of approach in the development programmes they explain the changes in terms of the administrative requirements and procedures now they –as potential beneficiaries—have to fulfil to apply for programmes' resources.

The behaviour of SAGARPA's front desk functionaries is aimed at avoiding the 'social punishment' of rejected applicants accusing them of corruption. This is because some applicants think that front desk functionaries have greater influence over the allocation of resources, so some applicants think that they need to give a bribe to the front desk functionaries to have more possibilities to be successful in the application process. To some extent front desk attendants do not implement the new development approach because they understand that most decisions about programme resources are made based not on technical criteria but on the political commitments of upper bureaucracy

to particular rural organisations. So they adapt the processes of the 'new' programme design to the existing ones that have been performing over the years.

Chapter 6 analysed the 'political' rationale behind federal and state bureaucracies' adoption of community participation as a key element for improving the allocation of public resources. However, there are bureaucratic practices that show that the Sub-secretariat for Rural Development was boycotted by other SAGARPA Sub-secretariats due to internal competition between administrative units for the attention of SAGARPA's Secretary. As much as the 'new' approach of rural development does not produce the expected results the more influential will be the Sub-secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock to manage and allocate SAGARPA's programme resources, since they would have demonstrated their point that the new approach does not deliver development. The head of the Sub-secretariat that most effectively keeps the social peace in the rural sector and provides evidence that can be used to improve the political image of SAGARPA is the one who will receive the support of the overall Secretary of SAGARPA to advance his or her career in the organisation: those that fail in this are removed or isolated from the big decisions.

The analysis in this section focuses on the non-political drivers that shape the decisions of bureaucratic actors. In this research these drivers are called non-political, as all of them are based on personal or cultural commitments in which aspects such as *compadrazgo*, social recognition or career progress behave as incentives in the implementation network, influencing the decisions of human actors who behave strategically to fulfil their personal or professional aspirations. Crozier (1964) tells us that there may be commitments, as Selznick proposes, or inner aspects of big organisations such as routinisation, as Merton (1952) proposes, but in all of this bureaucratic behaviour the actors try to control the

decisions in which they are involved. Crozier (1964) sees this control as the discretionary power than an actor can have over a decision as result of the uncertainty that other actors over the outputs of making certain decisions. As much uncertainty surrounds a decision more the power the actor has over the rest of the participating actors. So the power lodged in individuals and groups is used rationally to fulfil diverse interests and conflicting goals.

Crozier (1964) sees conflict as a source of stability rather than a dysfunction of bureaucratic organisations. All the actors play a game in which they pretend to be interacting on a new basis in asking for and allocating SAGARPA's programme resources, but in fact they are playing by the old rules, which are meaningful for most of the actors of the LDRS implementation network.

Conclusion: What must be understood about development bureaucracies

Ten years after the LDRS was created, nobody in Mexico is talking about a 'failure' of the 'new' strategy of rural development even though there is no evidence that today rural development has been decentralised or that local Councils for Rural Development are including citizens in decisions about the allocation of SAGARPA programme resources. Since 2003, when the first attempts to implement the LDRS through the redesign of SAGARPA's programmes took place, the LDRS has been missing from the public agenda and the actors that should be interested – peasants, rural organisations, SAGARPA, the State Secretariats for Agriculture and Rural Development and congresspersons – have not raised it, even when there is evidence, as observed in the fieldwork for this research, that the implementation of the LDRS, as it was meant, has been abandoned.

This thesis has shown how a rural development policy that created great

expectations simply has not produced the planned outcomes, even with enough resources to implement it. The emphasis has been put on the role of development bureaucracies in producing development outcomes with the main research question posed as *How does Mexico's development bureaucracy produce development practice and influence the outcomes in rural Mexico?* A macro-analysis of Mexico's case has shown how the President of the Mexican Republic, congresspersons and SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy's notions of decentralisation and the community participation of development actors have been used in official discourse to create an image of depolitisation of Mexico's rural development policy and empowerment of municipal governments and civil society.

Beyond the official discourse it has been possible to observe that many congresspersons are leaders of rural producers' organisations that have traditionally put political pressure on federal government to give them fixed amounts of resources from federal programmes run by SAGARPA. SAGARPA's upper bureaucracy constrains the decisions of state and municipal governments about the allocation of its programmes' resources in order to retain control of it. In the same way, state governments boycott some of SAGARPA's programme regulations that were created to implement the LDRS in order to get discretionary power to allocate the resources of these decentralised federal programmes themselves. Federal and state governments neglect the Municipal Councils for Rural Development because such councils could hinder Federal and State preferences to allocate decentralised PAAP's resources based on clientelism and *compadrazgo* criteria. So, as described in Chapter 6, the empowerment of civil society has not occurred in the implementation of SAGARPA programmes, at least regarding decisions to influence the allocation of public resources.

The federal bureaucracy sees the decentralisation of rural development

programmes as a threat to SAGARPA's political power to distribute federal resources for rural development and have therefore opted instead to split SAGARPA programme resources with state governments and retain control of their portion rather than share control of all of it. This allows SAGARPA to retain the electoral clientele in which they are interested, and gives state governments a tool by which they can maintain their own electoral clientele to compete with other electoral forces. Hence the implementation network has not respected the spirit of the LDRS, there are no intergovernmental relations, no identification of local problems and no more effective allocation of public resources.

The other key development idea behind the LDRS was the inclusion of civil society in public decisions. Its design included the creation of local councils in each municipality where citizens could participate in decisions on the allocation of SAGARPA's programmes. The councils were officially created, but barely functioned as intended. Today they are imaginary councils in the official statistics; in practice they are not composed of representatives of civil society and have no say in decisions about SAGARPA programmes.

Nobody is complaining about the way the LDRS is being implemented and there is no apparent reason for this indifference since there were high expectations about the LDRS when it was created. We argue that there are no complaints because the actors in the implementation network would be affected –according to their own bureaucratic rationale – if public resources were allocated, as intended based on technical rural development arguments, so most prefer to pretend that the LDRS is operating as planned while rural producer and peasant organisations, SAGARPA and state and municipal governments play by their own rules.

Thus at the macro level, the main conclusion about the Mexican case is

similar to Ferguson (1992) and Chhotray's (2011) ideas. There are pieces of an anti-politics machine embedded in the Mexico's rural development policy. Both authors have arrived at the general conclusion that using anti-politics language nullifies the institutional channels provided by politics to solve social conflict. When the LDRS was approved it faced barriers to its implementation as the new institutional channels were unable to reduce social conflict around the issue of allocating public resources for rural development. Hence the expected policy output was hindered by traditional practices associated with established political institutions such as clientelism and *compadrazgo*. The anti-politics discourse has helped the Mexican State to legitimise its decisions about rural development towards the population of urban areas and outsiders, such as foreign governments and international organisations, which know and understand little of the social, economic and political dynamics of Mexico's rural sector.

Understanding the meaning that non-human actors produce on human actors and the rationale behind decisions made in the implementation of Mexico's rural development policy has been an important object of this study. These non-human actors – for example Mexican Revolution discourses and history; rural development programmes in generic terms as a steady political instrument; and the peasantry as a social entity – all produce meaning that the actors implementing the LDRS have used strategically to produce discourses and debates to fulfil and justify their specific interests.

The findings from the case of Mexico's rural development policy provide insights about the rationale that can be behind development bureaucracies and how bureaucratic practice can influence development outcomes. The policymaker must understand that bureaucratic practice is the result of a chain of interpretations by individual actors, each with a different history and motivation, and the success of a development policy

is directly associated with how the development ideas behind it can be interpreted in terms of the risks and benefits that they represent to each actor. Thus a basic principle of the design of a development policy must be to know the bureaucratic rationale of the operational and administrative structures that are to be involved in the policy's implementation.

A development policy design must be tied not just to certain paradigms of development but also to the nature of network of actors that will implement it. The various rationales that converge in the implementation arena, and where these are not negotiable, must be identified. As shown in the case study, the importance lies not so much in the policy's comprehensive technical design as in providing the right incentives for bureaucratic actors to understand and execute the policy as it is intended.

In Mexico's case, what moves bureaucratic actors to participate in international funding is the chance provided by global programmes to manage monetary resources and use them to reinforce their political and social network created in the rural sector. Mexico's upper bureaucracy needs to be visible in the international and national arena. Anonymity does not incentivise heads of federal secretariats, state governments and municipal governments to participate in development programmes that require administrative effort to allocate public resources. They need public recognition to fulfil their political aspirations.

In this sense, corruption is not an undesirable anomaly of the system but a key element in the system, an element that has a function to act strategically in the rural development arena. Informal agreements that affect the expected operation of development programmes make it possible to allocate public resources that would otherwise become paralysed in the bureaucratic apparatus; hence the paralysis of Mexico's

rural development public spending.

We have learnt that Mexico's development bureaucracy is neither as mechanical nor as efficient as the Weberian model, but paradoxically the discourse of neutrality of this Weberian model is used strategically by upper bureaucracy to create the notion of anti-politics discourse to legitimise their political decisions. Politics as Ferguson (1992) and Chhotray (2011) have studied it is a very important engine of bureaucratic rationale in developing countries, mainly in upper bureaucratic structures that work based on the electoral cycle.

But bureaucracies are composed of human actors who base their decisions on drivers of a different nature, such as the personal, the professional and the cultural. Whatever the nature of the driver, the one must not see these motivations as steady factors that make actors' decisions predictable. Actors behave strategically according to the situation, so development practice is the result of a dynamic chain of interpretations. Hence at the micro level it is possible to observe that the bureaucratic apparatus is not monolithic but composed of a network of actors with a wide range of interests, who make individual or group decisions based on several criteria that do not necessarily attend to a political rationale. Crozier's (1964) view of individuals capable of interpreting and manipulating the components of the social system to achieve their particular interests is evident in the Mexican case. It is possible that the social system, in which bureaucratic decisions take place, is divided into several social arenas and domains where actors' decisions have different dimensions and consequences and acquire different meanings for different actors, as Norman Long (2001) has documented in the Mexican case.

Finally, the evidence presented in this work has shown that development bureaucracies can influence the outcomes of development policies.

Traditional approaches based on the reviewed managerial views have argued that when the bureaucratic structures produce undesirable outcomes it is product of dysfunctions. Many of the dysfunctions have been qualified as such because political decisions were made rather than the intended technical ones. As was shown, in the Mexican case the political decisions of development bureaucrats are not dysfunctions but functions of coherent rational behaviour that respond to the incentives embedded into the institutional setting.

In general terms this work is a small contribution to the view of Mosse (2005) and Lewis and Mosse (2006) on how development practice is produced, and its general conclusion points in the same direction: in the first place, development projects may work not because they are perfectly designed but because there is already an actor's network in there, working with one or another policy, embedded into particular institutional, cultural, social or economic settings; and second, imposing policy prescriptions without taking institutional settings into account can be futile, as the probability of inducing the expected change is surrounded by uncertainty. Bureaucracies matter more than has been recognised in the field of development studies, where they are usually taken for granted.

This work has considered the case of Mexico's rural development policy to describe and explain how development practice is produced in specific contexts. The main argument is that development outcomes are far from what policymakers plan because development practice is shaped by several bureaucratic rationales that converge in the implementation of a development policy, some based on political and others on non-political drivers, which give the actors a framework within which they behave strategically to fulfil their own interests. While the study of development bureaucracies is not yet common in the field development studies, this research is a contribution to the work

developed by Fox (1993; 1994; 1996), Long (2001); Rap, Wester and Pérez-Prado (2004) and Rap (2006) to understand the role of Mexico's development bureaucracy in the arenas of the formulation and implementation of policies addressing the rural sector, mainly in relation to those that produce apparent unexpected outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix 1. List of interviews

Interviewee position	Organisation	Place of interview	City	State
Livestock Office Manager	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	Interviewee's office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
Coordinator of Programme Evaluations	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Interviewee's office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
Rural Development District Chief (Tomatlán)	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	CTEE Jalisco Coordinator's Office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
Rural Development District Chief (Ameca)	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	CTEE Jalisco Coordinator's Office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
Programme officer (Rural Development)	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	Interviewees' office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
State Coordinator of the Sustainable Rural Development Councils	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Functionary's office (Seder)	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Planning Manager with his work team	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's meeting room	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Planning Manager's Assistant	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's meeting room	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Intermediate clerk/Programme operator	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's office	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Coordinator of Programme Evaluations	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	"Kamilos" Restaurant	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Head Officer of Jalisco branch	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	Interviewee's office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
ASERCA's functionary	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	Interviewee's office	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
Clerk/Programme operator	Indesol	Interviewee's office	Guadalajara	Jalisco

State Coordinator of the Sustainable Rural Development Councils	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Car	Carretera La Barca	Jalisco
Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Freelance	Hallway (Sagarpa, local branch)	La Barca	Jalisco
Jamay Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Sagarpa/Seder/Municipal Gov. (Jalisco)	Sagarpa, Regional office	La Barca	Jalisco
Rural Development District Chief (La Barca)	Sagarpa (Jalisco branch)	Sagarpa, Regional office	La Barca	Jalisco
Coordinator of Programme Evaluations	Sagarpa/Seder (Oaxaca)	Interviewee's office (Sagarpa local branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Freelancer	Garden bench (Sagarga, local branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Clerk, Chief Officer of a CADER (Subject: technology transfer and research)	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Garden bench (Sagarga, local branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Clerk, Chief Officer of a CADER (Miahuatlán)	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Garden bench (Sagarga, local branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Planning and Rural Development Manager	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Clerk/Programme Operator	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's meeting room	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Planning and Rural Development Manager	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Rural Development District Chief (Tehuantepec)	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Sagarpa offices (Oaxaca branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Fisheries Office Manager	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's car	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Fisheries Office Manager	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's office (Seder, operational offices)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Technology Transfer and Research Manager	Statal Secretary of Rural Development	"Casa Oaxaca" Restaurant	Oaxaca	Oaxaca

Secretary of Rural Development	(Seder) Statal Secretary of Rural Development	Secretary's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Technology Transfer and Research Officer	(Seder) Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Rural Development Manager	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's office (Seder, operational offices)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Clerk/Programme Operator	Indigenous Development Comission	Indigenous Development Committee's Regional Offices	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Project Director	FAO Mexico	"Vips" Restaurant	Celaya	Guanajuato
Former Agriculture and Livestock Sub- secretary	Sagarpa Headquarters	Functionary's current office (Sagarpa, Guanajuato branch)	Celaya	Guanajuato
State Sub-secretary (Agriculture Manager)	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Meeting room (Sagarpa, Guanajuato branch)	Celaya	Guanajuato
Clerk/Programme Operator	Fira-Firco-Aserca	Meeting room (Sagarpa, Guanajuato branch)		Guanajuato
Section Manager (Ex-Programme Operator)	Semarnat	Semarnat (Guanajuato branch)	León	Guanajuato
Dean of Instituto de Tecnologia Roque	Instituto de Tecnologia Roque	Interviewee's office	Celaya	Guanajuato
Meeting with scholars	Instituto de Tecnologia Roque	Interviewee's meeting room		Guanajuato
Clerk/Programme Operator	FIRCO	Interviewee's meeting room	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco
CIATEJ Research Centre Dean	CIATEJ	Interviewee's office	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Clerk/Programme Operator	SEMARNAT Local Office	Interviewee's meeting room	Guadalajara	Jalisco
Regional Head Officer	CONAFOR	Semarnat (Jalisco branch)	Guadalajara	Jalisco

Researchers	INIFAP	Interviewee's meeting room	Zapopan	Jalisco
Coordinador Regional de Consejos de DRS	Seder Jalisco	Car	Guadalajara	Jalisco
CMDRS Member (Women Group Leader)	Citizen	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatán de Juárez	Jalisco
CMDRS Member (Maize Producer Leader)	Citizen	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatán de Juárez	Jalisco
CMDRS Honorary Member	Citizen	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatán de Juárez	Jalisco
CMDRS Member (Political leader)	Citizen	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatán de Juárez	Jalisco
President of the Municipality	Acatlán de Juarez	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatán de Juárez	Jalisco
Agriculture and Livestock Director	Acatlán de Juarez	CMDRS's meeting hall	Acatlán de Juárez	Jalisco
Municipality advisor	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Car	Acatlán de Juárez	Jalisco
State Coordinator of the Sustainable Rural Development Councils	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Car	Guadalajara	Jalisco
CMDRS Member	Citizen	Municipality offices	Jamay	Jalisco
Municipality advisor	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Municipality offices	Jamay	Jalisco
Jamay Farmers	Citizens	Municipality offices	Jamay	Jalisco
Director of Agriculture and Livestock and Rural Development	Acatlán de Juarez	Municipality offices	Jamay	Jalisco
State Coordinator of the Sustainable Rural Development Councils	Sagarpa/Seder (Jalisco)	Car	Jamay	Jalisco
President of the Municipality with local farmers	La Manzanilla de la Paz	Municipality offices	Manzanilla de la Paz	Jalisco
Clerk/Programme Operator	FIRCO-FIRA	Interviewee's meeting room	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Subdelegado and Programme operators	Semarnat (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca

Subdelegado and Programme operators	Semarnat/Conafor (Oaxaca branch)	Meeting room (Semarnat, Oaxaca branch)	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
CTE Coordinator	Sagarpa/Seder (Oaxaca)	Car	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Farmer Leader (Grains Farmer Association)	Citizen	Association's offices	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Coordinator of Programme Evaluations	Sagarpa/Seder (Oaxaca)	Car	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Planning and Rural Development Manager	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Coordinator of Programme Evaluations	Sagarpa/Seder (Oaxaca)	Car	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Farmer Leader (Coffee Association)	Citizen	Association's offices	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Fisheries Office Manager	Sagarpa (Oaxaca branch)	Interviewee's office	Oaxaca	Oaxaca
Members of the CMDRS (Teacher, Juan, Secretary, County Advisor)	San Miguel Suchixtepec	Municipality offices	San Miguel Suchitepec	Oaxaca
Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Independent PSP	Car	San Miguel Coatepec	Oaxaca
Members of the CMDRS	San Miguel Coatepec County	Municipality offices	San Miguel Coatepec	Oaxaca
Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Freelance PSP	Car	San Miguel Coatepec	Oaxaca
Municipality advisor (PSP, Freelance)	Freelance PSP	Local restaurant	Miahuatlán	Oaxaca
Planning Manager	Statal Secretary of Rural Development (Seder)	Interviewee's office	Metepec	Estado de México
INIFAP Researcher	INIFAP	Interviewee's office	Zinacantepec	Estado de México

Planning and Rural Development Manager	Sagarpa (Estado de Mexico branch)	Interviewee's office	Zinacantepec	Estado de México
Clerk/Programme operator	Probosque	Car	Metepec	Estado de México
Budget General Director	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
Programme operators Group 1 (responsible of regulations)	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
Programme operators Group 1	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
Programme operators Group 3 (responsible for the Physical Capital Acquisitions Programme)	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
Programme operators Group 4 (Rural Development Programme)	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
Coordinators of programme evaluations Group 6	Sagarpa Headquarters	Interviewee's meeting room	México D.F.	México D.F.
CEDRSSA Forum: Presentation of participants	Mexican Congress	Conference room	México D.F.	México D.F.
CEDRSSA Forum: Territoriality presentation	Mexican Congress	Conference room	México D.F.	México D.F.
CEDRSSA Forum: FAO presentation	Mexican Congress	Conference room		México D.F.
Congresswoman: President of the Commission of Budget Surveillance	Mexican Congress	Her Office	México D.F.	México D.F.
Former SAGARPA Director of Rural Development. Central structure	Sagarpa Headquarters	His office at University of Chapingo	Texcoco	Estado de México

Former SAGARPA Director of Rural Development. Central structure	Sagarpa Headquarters	His office at University of Chapingo	Texcoco	Estado de México
Former assistant of the Secretary of SAGARPA	Sagarpa Headquarters	Meeting room (Sagarpa, Headquarters)	México D.F.	México D.F.

Appendix 2. Interview guide questions

Addressing upper bureaucracy

What is the LDRS about?

What was the origin of the LDRS?

How the LDRS modified the rural development policy in Mexico?

What are the most important implications to implement the LDRS (organizational, political, or economical)?

In your organization, where can we identify the LDRS?

What programmes are based on the principles of the LDRS?

What is the objective of the programmes that your organization manages?

Do you think that decentralising the operation of the programmes it will be possible to obtain a more efficient use of public resources?

What is your experience of operating the programmes under a decentralised model?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of decentralising rural programmes?

What are the main problems that your organization has had in the coordination of activities with other levels of government?

What are the mechanisms that your organization uses to let the people know the way that public resources are being applied under a decentralised strategy?

Do you prefer a centralised or a decentralised model to carry out the rural development policy in Mexico?

What is the rationale of decentralising the programmes?

What is your conclusion about the LDRS and its decentralised strategy to foster rural development?

Addressing middle and lower bureaucracy

Do you know the objectives of rural development stated by the federal government?

Which are the main objectives of the programme you manage?

Do you think this programme is compatible with the national objectives of rural development?

How the LDRS modified the operation of the programme you manage/operate?

What are the most important implications of considering the LDRS in your programme (organizational, political, or economical)?

In your programme, where can we identify the principles of the LDRS?

Do you think that decentralising the operation of the programme you manage/operate it will be possible to be more efficient in the use of public resources?

What is your experience of manage/operate the programmes under a decentralised model?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of decentralising rural programmes?

What are the main problems that your organization has had in the coordination of activities with other levels of government?

Do you prefer a centralised or a decentralised model to manage/operate your programme?

What would be the best incentive to prefer a decentralised model of operation?

What is the rationale of decentralising the programmes?

What are the mechanisms that your organization uses to let the people know the way that public resources are being applied under a decentralised strategy?

What are the most important implications for you (organizational, political, economical) of decentralising the operation your programme?

What do you win and lose in the two models of operation?

What is you conclusion about the process of decentralisation of rural

development programmes?

Do you prefer a centralised or a decentralised model to manage your programme?

What are the mechanisms that your organization uses to let the people know the way that public resources are being applied under a decentralised strategy?

Appendix 3. Organisations of the Social and Private Sectors that take part in the Consejo Mexicano para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable

Organisations that belongs to the private sector:

AMEG

Asociación Mexicana de Engordadores de Ganado Bovino, A.C.

(Mexican Association of Bovine Meat Producers)

ANGLAC

Asociación Nacional de Ganaderos Lecheros, A.C.

(National Association of Dairy Cattle Producers)

CANACINTRA

Consejo Coordinador de las Industrias de Alimentos, Bebidas y tabacos

Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación

(National Bureau of Transformation Industry: Council of Food, Drinks and Tobacco)

CMF

Consejo Mexicano de la Flor

(Mexican Council of the Flower)

CNA

Consejo Nacional Agropecuario

(Agricultural National Council)

CNOG

Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Ganaderas

(National Confederation of Cattle Organisations)

CNPR

Unión Nacional Ganadera de la CNPR

Confederación Nacional de Propietarios Rurales, A.C.

(National Confederation of Rural Owners: Meat Producers Union)

COCESAVE

Coordinadora de Comités Estatales de Sanidad Vegetal, A. C.

(Union of State Committees for Vegetal Safety)

COFUPRO

Coordinadora Nacional de las Fundaciones Produce, A. C.

(National Union of Produce Foundations)

COMECARNE

Consejo Mexicano de la Carne

(Mexican Council of Meat)

CONCAMIN

Confederación de Cámaras Industriales

(Confederation of Industrial Bureaus)

CONPAPA

Confederación Nacional de productores de Papa de la República Mexicana

(National Confederation of Potato Producers of the Mexican Republic)

CPM

Confederación de Porcicultores Mexicanos, A.C.

(Confederation of Mexican Pork Meat Producers)

CVA

Organismo Nacional de Certificación y Verificación Agroalimentaria, A. C.

(National Organisation of Certification and Verification of Agricultural Food)

FUNDAR

Fundación Mexicana para el Desarrollo Rural

(Mexican Foundations for Rural Development)

REDRS

Red para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable

(Sustainable Rural Development Network)

UNA

Unión Nacional de Avicultores

(National Union of Poultry Farmers)

Organisations that belongs to the Social Sector:

ADS**Titular: Rubén Antonio Rebollo Vázquez**

Secretario General

Alianza Demócrata Social, A. C.

Suplente: C. Tomás de Jesús González Rodríguez

ALCANO**Titular: C. Juan Leyva Mendivil**

Presidente de la Alianza

Alianza Campesina del Noroeste, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Raúl Pérez Bedolla

AMUCSS**Titular: Lic. Isabel Cruz Hernández**

Directora General

Asociación Mexicana de Uniones de Crédito del Sector Social, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Juan Mario Meléndez

ANACC BU**Titular: C. Alfonso Ramírez Cuellar**

Secretario General

ANACC Barzón Unión

Suplente: C. Martín Solís Bustamante

ANCIAM**Titular: Lic. Rolando Valentín Benítez Sánchez**

Secretario Técnico Nacional

Asociación Nacional Campesina e Indígena de Adultos Mayores, A. C.

Suplente: C. Margarito Cruz Cruz

ANEC

Titular: Ing. Víctor Suarez Carrera

Presidente

Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras de Productores del
Campo, A.C.

Suplente: Ing. Sergio Ivan Polanco López

ANSAC

Titular: Ing. Alfredo García Solís

Presidente de la Asociación

Asociación Nacional del Sector Agropecuario y Campesino, A.C.

Suplente: MVZ. José Antonio Cerda Salazar

CAM

Titular: Prof. Humberto Serrano Pérez

Secretario General

Confederación Agrarista Mexicana, Prof. Francisco Hernández Mercado,
A.C.

Suplente: Ing. Humberto Serrano Novelo

CCC

Titular: Lic. Max Agustín Correa Hernández

Secretario General

Central Campesina Cardenista, A.C.

Suplente: Ing. Santiago Domínguez Luna

CCI

Titular: Lic. Rafael Galindo Jaime

Secretario General

Central Campesina Independiente, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Antonio Jiménez Portillo

CCNCS

Titular: Ing. Heriberto Santana Rubio

Presidente

Consejo Coordinador Nacional de Cajas Solidarias, A.C.

Suplente:

CIOAC

Titular: C. José Dolores López Barrios

Secretario de Planeación y Desarrollo Rural

Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos, A. C.

Suplente: C. Gilberto Silvestre López

CNC

Titular: Dip. Lic. Gerardo Sánchez García

Presidente del CEN de la CNC

Confederación Nacional Campesina

Suplente: Dip. Ing. Fermín Montes Cavazos

CNPA

Titular: Dr. José Narro Cespedes

Miembro del Consejo Consultivo

Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala

Suplente: Sr. Carlos Ramos Alva

CNPA MN

Titular: C. Alberto Galindo García

Titular

Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala "Movimiento Nacional", A. C.

Suplente: C. Yuri Zareth Uribe Montero

COCYP

Titular: C. José Socorro Jacobo Femat

Presidente

Central de Organizaciones Campesinas y Populares, A.C.

Suplente: Sr. Rafael Jacobo García

CODUC

Titular: C. Marco Antonio Ortíz Salas

Secretario General

Coalición de Organizaciones Democráticas Urbanas y Campesinas A.C.

Suplente: C.J. Refugio Quintana Vera

CONSUC

Titular: C.P. Guadalupe Martínez Cruz

Secretaria General

Consejo Nacional de Sociedades y Unidades de Campesinos y Colonos,
A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Alfonso Garzón Martínez

COUC

Titular: Ignacio Iris Salomón

Presidente

Coordinación Organizadora de la Unidad Campesina A.C.

Suplente: MVZ. Javier Cruz Vega

FEPUR

Titular: Marco antonio godoy Rodríguez

Titular

Federación de Pueblos Rurales, A. C.

Suplente: José Dagoberto Ordoñez Rabanales

FNDCM

Titular: C. Rangel Espinoza López

Presidente

Frente Nacional para la Defensa del Campo Mexicano

Suplente: Sr. Manuel Antonio Cázares Castro

FRCTM

Titular: C. Juan Rojas Pérez

Secretario General del Comité Ejecutivo Nacional

Frente Revolucionario de Campesinos y Trabajadores de Mexico, A. C.

Suplente: C. Oscar Rojas Reyes

MAIZ

Titular: C. Alejandro Cruz Juárez

Presidente

Movimiento Agrario Indígena Zapatista, A. C.

Suplente: C. Juan Olmedo Daza

PRO MAZAHUA

Titular: Mtra. Jeannette Arriola Sánchez

Representante Titular

PATRONATO PRO ZONA MAZAHUA, A.C.

Suplente: C. P. Jorge Familiar Haro

RED-MOCAF

Titular: Ing. Gustavo Sánchez Valle

Director Ejecutivo

Red Mexicana de Organizaciones Campesinas Forestales, A. C.

Suplente: Ing. Juvenal Rodríguez Maldonado

REMUI

Titular: Lic. Amparo Gutiérrez Reyes

Presidenta

Red de Mujeres Indígenas Mexicanas

Suplente: C. Miguel Díaz Arias

RENAMUVI

Titular: Lic. Guadalupe Ivonne Solís Sandoval

Presidenta

Red Nacional de Mujeres Vigilantes

Suplente: Ing. Armando Domínguez Pérez

UCD

Titular: C. Antonio Tirado Patiño

Presidente

Unión Campesina Democrática, A.C.

Suplente: Dr. Eugenio E. Santacruz de León

UFIC

Titular: C. Isidro Pedraza Chávez

Presidente del Consejo de Administración

Unidad de la Fuerza Indígena y Campesina, A. C.

Suplente: C. Rocío Miranda Pérez

UGOCM-JL

Titular: Lic. José Luis González Aguilera

Secretario General

Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México, "Jacinto López
Moreno", A. C.

Suplente: Dr. José Antonio Euán Martínez

UGOCP

Titular: Lic. Luís Gómez Garay

Representante Titular

Unión General Obrero, Campesina y Popular, A.C.

Suplente: C. Miguel Ángel Barón García

UGOCP-CN

Titular: Prof. Miguel Angel Castro Cosío

Representante Titular

Unión General Obrero, Campesina y Popular, A.C. Coordinadora Nacional

Suplente: Ing. Efren Agustín Portuguese Miranda

UNIMOSS

Titular: Lic. Javier Eduardo López Macías

Presidente

Unión Nacional Integradora de Organizaciones Solidarias y Economía Social A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Gregorio Viramontes Pérez

UNOMDIE

Titular: Ing. Beymar López Altuzar

Presidente

Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Mexicanas para el Desarrollo Integral de la Ecología

Suplente: Sr. Ricardo Fernández Calderón

UNORCA

Titular: C. Rogelio Alquisiras Burgos

Comisionado Ejecutivo Nacional

Unión Nacional de organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Marcos Pinedo Hernández

UNPP

Titular: Mvz. Juan Arizmendi Hernández

Presidente

UNIÓN NACIONAL DE PRODUCTORES PECUARIOS, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. Pablo Sánchez López

UNTA

Titular: Prof. Álvaro López Ríos

Presidente

Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Agrícolas, A.C.

Suplente: Lic. José Luis López Cepeda

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASERCA	Apoyos y Servicios a la Comercialización Agropecuaria (<i>Subsidies and Services for Agriculture Commercialisation</i>)
WB	The World Bank
CADER	Centros de Capacitación para el Desarrollo Rural
CDDRS	Consejo Distrital para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable
CEDRS	Consejo Estatal para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable
CIDRS	Comisión Intersecretarial para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable
CMxDRS	Consejo Mexicano para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable
CMDRS	Consejos Municipales para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable
CNC	Confederación Nacional Campesina
CONAGO	Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores
COPLADE	Comités de Planeación para el Desarrollo Estatal
COPLADEM	Comité de Planeación de Desarrollo Municipal
DDR	Distritos de Desarrollo Rural
FAO	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
FIRA	Fideicomisos Instituidos en Relación con la Agricultura
FIRCO	Fideicomiso de Riesgo Compartido
FOFAE	Fideicomiso de Fomento Agropecuario Estatal
INCA RURAL	Instituto Nacional de Capacitación Rural
INAFED	Instituto Federal para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo
LDRS	Ley de Desarrollo Rural Sustentable (<i>Sustainable Rural Development Act</i>)
ONG	Organización No Gubernamental
OPORTUNIDADES	Programa de Desarrollo Humano Oportunidades
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PAAP	Programa para la Adquisición de Activos Productivos
PEA	Población Económicamente Activa
PEC	Programa Especial Concurrente para el Desarrollo Rural
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PROCAMPO	Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo
PRODESCA	Programa de Desarrollo de Capacidades para el Medio Rural
PROFEMOR	Programa de Fortalecimiento de Empresas y Organizaciones Rurales
PROGRESA	Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación
PRONASOL	Programa Nacional de Solidaridad
UTOE	Unidad Técnica Operativa Estatal
SAGARPA	Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural,

	Pesca y Alimentación (<i>Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food</i>)
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social
SEMARNAT	Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
SEDER	Secretaría de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural Estatal

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