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Article

Climate governance and indigenous women: narratives from institutions and personal perspectives

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This article analyzes the narratives about indigenous women in Chilean climate governance and their perceptions and self-conceptions within this context, from an intercultural, intersectional, and multiscale perspective. The main climate change management instruments associated with the Framework Law on Climate Change (LMCC) were analyzed along with a document that systematizes experiences in which indigenous women reflect on climate governance in various action research spaces, using the sociogram technique. We conclude that indigenous women are not recognized as actors in climate governance in Chile, but rather as beneficiaries of a fragmented, disjointed policy for their inclusion. This contrasts with the vision and demands they have, which recognize their differentiated rights, and a logic of collaboration and connection is promoted through horizontal dynamics among diverse actors.
Keywords: indigenous women, climate governance, intersectionality, interculturality.

Governança climática e mulheres indígenas, narrativas a partir das instituições e perspectivas próprias

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar, a partir de uma perspectiva intercultural, interseccional e multiescalar, as narrativas sobre as mulheres indígenas na governança climática chilena, bem como suas próprias percepções e concepções de si mesmas neste contexto. Para isso, analisamos os principais instrumentos de gestão das mudanças climáticas associados à Lei Marco de Mudanças Climáticas (LMCC) e um documento de sistematização de experiências em que mulheres indígenas refletem sobre a governança climática em diferentes espaços de pesquisa-ação e, especificamente, com a técnica do sociograma. Concluímos que as mulheres indígenas não são reconhecidas como

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atuantes na governança do clima no Chile, mas como beneficiárias de uma política fragmentada e desarticulada para sua inclusão. Isso contrasta com a visão que elas próprias têm e exigem, na qual se reconhecem seus direitos diferenciados e se promove uma lógica de colaboração e articulação em dinâmicas horizontais com diversos atores.
Palavras-chave: mulheres indígenas, governação climática, interseccionalidade, interculturalidade.

Gobernanza climática y mujeres indígenas, narrativas desde la institucionalidad y perspectivas propias

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar, desde una perspectiva intercultural, interseccional y multiescalar, las narrativas sobre las mujeres indígenas en la gobernanza climática chilena, así como sus percepciones y concepciones de sí mismas en este contexto. Para ello, analizamos los principales instrumentos de gestión del cambio climático asociados a la Ley Marco de Cambio Climático (LMCC), y un documento de sistematización de experiencias en el que mujeres indígenas reflexionan sobre la gobernanza climática en distintos espacios de investigación-acción y, específicamente, con la técnica del sociograma. Concluimos que las mujeres indígenas no son reconocidas como actoras en la gobernanza del cambio climático en Chile, sino como beneficiarias de una política fragmentada y desarticulada para su inclusión. Esto contrasta con la visión que ellas mismas tienen y exigen, en la que se reconocen sus derechos diferenciados y se promueve una lógica de colaboración y articulación en dinámicas horizontales con diversos actores.
Palabras clave: mujeres indígenas, gobernanza climática, interseccionalidad, interculturalidad.

1. INTRODUCTION

The organisation and influence of indigenous women at the global level have significantly contributed to the multilateral climate change agenda, helping to progressively incorporate their perspectives into climate action. A concrete example of this influence is the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which recognises the rights of indigenous peoples and promotes both gender equality and the empowerment of women (Hernández, 2020; UNFCCC, 2015). The leadership and participation of indigenous women in mechanisms such as the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform and the Women and Gender Constituency have been fundamental as informants for the UNFCCC. Thanks to their work, different climate governance actors have agreed on the dynamics that place indigenous women in greater vulnerability to the climate crisis; however, their political agency and the crucial role they play in concrete actions to address the crisis are recognised to a lesser extent (Carmona et al., 2022a; ONU Mujeres, 2018). Furthermore, it is identified that the fragmentation of civil society participation spaces within the UNFCCC framework into specific identity categories, such as women or indigenous peoples, has hindered the construction of an intersectional struggle that addresses multiple lines of social inequality and action (Flavell, 2023). Consequently, their participation in decision-making spaces presents various obstacles and remains marginal.

Chile, as a member of the UNFCCC since 1994, has been adhering to the various commitments of the global agenda (Carmona, 2023). Despite this, indigenous peoples in Chile, and particularly women, have not been adequately considered in climate policies. Their participation in the initial design and decision-making phases has been limited, and when they are mentioned in official documents, they are presented primarily as a population vulnerable to the effects of climate change or as beneficiaries of conservation programmes, without recognising their fundamental role in climate management and governance (Biskupovic & Carmona, 2024; Carmona et al., 2022a).

In this context, the gender dimension within indigenous groups has been insufficiently addressed, resulting in the exclusion of a differentiated and meaningful participation of indigenous women in climate governance in Chile (Carmona et al., 2022a).

This omission perpetuates conditions of inequality while promoting concepts that, far from combating these inequalities, aggravate them. One example is the notion of indigenous women as "ecological natives", a perspective that, while valuing their knowledge, does so only insofar as they do not challenge existing power asymmetries and the dynamics of inequality generated by extractivism (Ulloa, 2015).

This situation relates to several factors. Indigenous policy in Chile lacks a strong institutional framework and is underpinned by a political-societal culture based on a unitary idea of the nation; therefore, efforts to advance towards interculturality have faced resistance, and only limited recognition has been achieved (Fuentes et al., 2023). This has limited indigenous involvement in the implementation level, resulting in a bureaucratic representation with scarce political power. An example is the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), the main entity responsible for indigenous policy in the country, which lacks ministerial status (Huencho, 2022).

This lack of power has hindered intersectoral dialogue, as there is no clear link between gender and indigenous peoples' agendas, and has also affected their dialogue with the environment sector, generating uncoordinated programmes that superficially address the overlap of these themes (Gigena & Cea, 2018).

All this occurs within a context of high conflict and social inequality, rooted in the dynamics of inequity generated by extractivist models, which are widespread throughout the Latin American region. While indigenous women, as main advocates for environmental protection, seek to advance the recognition of their rights and climate justice, the neoliberal framework imposes barriers that impede this project (Acosta et al., 2019; Fuentes, 2018; Svampa, 2015). The interaction between the political and economic systems produces a restrictive governance model, centred on economic efficiency, which leaves room for what Bolados (2012, as cited in Huencho, 2021) terms "neoliberal culturalism"—a model that allows cultural diversity only to the extent that it does not question economic and social structures or asymmetries.

Few studies or documents have addressed the relation of indigenous women in Chile to the climate crisis (Carmona et al., 2022a; Castro et al., 2024; Fuentes, 2018; ONU Mujeres, 2018; Ubilla et al., 2021). It has been highlighted that indigenous women are the main drivers of practical environmental resistance and political strategies, drawing on their diverse experiences and actions, with a strong emphasis on training (Carmona et al., 2022a; Fuentes, 2018; Yon et al., 2024). It is foreseeable that their organisational experience and vision of the climate crisis consider all the scenarios in which they operate—territorial, organisational, educational, among many others—and therefore, their visions of governance include all that complex experience.

Accordingly, there are still few efforts to research the power dynamics in which indigenous women in Chile are embedded regarding national climate governance. Since governance models reflect power and hegemony dynamics, the analysis of their objectives, scopes, and translation into public policies allows for questioning the place occupied by the actors involved (Huencho, 2021; Huencho & Vergara, 2024a). The implementation of the FLCC since 2022 has opened the opportunity to delve deeper into this issue, as it has created various climate change governance instruments derived from its legal framework.

With this contribution, we aim to address central questions in contemporary studies of public policy and climate change, as well as the inquiries raised in this dossier. Examining narratives, we explore the role of public policies in shaping knowledge, as they convey different ideas of governance

shared or not by various actors. Given the implications of policies at different scales (global, national, local) for expanding or mitigating inequality dynamics, especially in the Latin American region and in indigenous territories, this article aims to broaden the discussion of governance, a central topic in climate change.

The reflections we share here seek to analyse these different types of knowledge regarding governance. First, from the institutional framework that spans from the international to the local sphere. And on the other hand, from the organisational actions and situated knowledge of indigenous women in Chile. Specifically, this article aims to analyse, from an intersectional, intercultural, and multiscale perspective, the narratives *about* and *by* indigenous women in Chilean climate governance, based on the main instruments of climate policy in Chile and the perspectives of indigenous women themselves on their role in these governance processes. Some of the questions guiding this analysis are: What narratives are constructed about indigenous women in climate governance? In what climate governance models are these narratives expressed? How do these narratives spread among the different sectors of climate policy?

2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR CLIMATE GOVERNANCE WITH INDIGENOUS WOMEN: PROPOSALS FROM INTERSECTIONALITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

Governance is conceived as the web of multiple actors seeking to participate in decision-making and in the formulation and implementation of public policies (Huencho, 2021; Huencho & Saavedra, 2024b; Kooiman, 2003; Peters & Saldaña, 2005; Ramírez, 2011; Zurbriggen, 2011). Therefore, it is not a neutral concept but rather upholds the values of the State and society; it therefore reflects various dynamics of power and inclusion/exclusion (Huencho, 2022). Some perspectives propose overcoming a hierarchical vision of governing, promoting horizontal approaches that involve diverse actors in resolving complex problems (Peters & Saldaña, 2005; Ramírez, 2011; Zurbriggen, 2011). The complexity of these challenges lies precisely in the interrelationship between diverse actors, as each party involved expects decision-making to respond to this diversity (Ramírez, 2011). Thus, governance could legitimise actions and relationships between states and civil society (Peters & Saldaña, 2005; Ramírez, 2011).

Climate change governance has not always responded to these challenges of diversity. As a political governance phenomenon, climate change gained relevance on the multilateral agenda in the second half of the 20th century, with the perspective of the exact sciences and a lack of global consensus predominating. Over time, it became a contested terrain for various social actors, including indigenous peoples, who introduced new perspectives, criticising the simplification of the issue to one centred exclusively on reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) (Belfer et al., 2019; Blanco, 2016; Carmona et al., 2024).

Climate governance instruments clearly illustrate the range of approaches and actors involved in this agenda, who have shaped the forms, expectations, and scopes within which this governance is structured, reflecting specific interests and values (Belfer et al., 2019; Huencho, 2022; Pugley, 2019). Addressing this requires moving towards an agenda that diversifies alternatives and fosters diverse collective involvements (Carmona et al., 2022b; Huencho, 2022; Monge, 2023).

Studying climate governance requires analysing the dimension of power and hegemony from a multiscale perspective (Huencho, 2021; Jelin et al., 2020). At the multilateral level, climate policies

create a climate *eco-governmentality* associated with the commodification of nature (Ulloa, 2012; Ulloa et al., 2008). These policies reconfigure power dynamics that articulate the local, national, and global, excluding women and indigenous peoples and limiting their participation (Ulloa, 2015).

Interculturality and intersectionality could enhance this scenario by problematising governance, analysing the asymmetrical aspects of power, and examining the dynamics of domination and hegemony among social actors, in light of interconnected situations of inequality (Huencho & Saavedra, 2024a). These approaches promote a critical examination of the relationship among the State, indigenous women, and other societal actors, exploring the narratives and dynamics that are created and reinforced about this differentiated group, and seeking ways to move beyond reductive and/or exclusionary perspectives (Huencho & Saavedra, 2024a).

In contexts of cultural diversity, interculturality as a principle addresses the democratic exercise of considering this diversity in decision-making (Tubino, 2002). It proposes critically examining how this diversity is considered, recognising processes of colonisation, exclusion, and hegemony (Tubino, 2002; Walsh, 2012). This enhances the possibility of projecting actions assumed from subalternised experiences. Incorporating a *critical* intercultural perspective, then, involves deconstructing hegemonies and building a collective project (Walsh, 2012).

For its part, intersectionality and its trajectory in Latin America engage in dialogue with interculturality by rethinking the dichotomies that have operated as exclusionary categories for some groups (Vigoya, 2016, 2023). Such as the dichotomies: nature/culture, man/woman, which have placed relational ontologies and indigenous and racialised women in positions of oppression (Lugones, 2008). In its constructive aim, it avoids falling into reductionism, as different experiences—linked to gender, race, class, geographical location, and age—vary across historical junctures, and their intersection produces qualitatively diverse realities. This approach is used to problematise the intersection of inequalities and the struggles and proposals of indigenous women as political actors (Vigoya, 2023).

These perspectives offer a horizon of climate justice by problematising oppression and considering action, both shaped by historical intersections that influence the capacities to respond to the climate crisis and the demands for a specific type of governance. Thus, a fair climate governance model should emphasise recognising the specific rights of indigenous women within the network of actors involved in climate change management. These include their rights to self-determination; indigenous governance systems; recognition of land rights; problematisation of participation dynamics; and problematisation of colonialism, integrating a critical view of the relations of domination, power, and knowledge that interrelate to understand and respond to the climate crisis (Carmona et al., 2024; Walsh, 2012; Wilson et al., 2022).

Similarly, it should recognise their heterogeneity and collective capacity to engage actively in decision-making and in the development and execution of public policies. In this scheme, indigenous women, although possessing specific collective rights, are not isolated from other actors.

Thus, governance is constructed through the horizontal exchange of knowledge, seeking transdisciplinary modes of relating, where collective leadership and complex collaborations among actors are encouraged, including scientists, indigenous peoples and local communities, environmental activists, industry representatives, and other knowledge producers/users (Carmona et al., 2022b, p. 91). Responding to the diversity of this group, therefore, also implies allowing spaces for flexibility that adjust to each context and territory, each with different contributions to governance and intersectional actions.

3. METHODOLOGY

A content analysis was conducted on two types of key documents to evaluate climate governance models from an intercultural, intersectional, and multiscale approach (Huencho & Saavedra, 2024a). First, an analysis was performed on 33 climate change governance instruments linked to the FLCC in Chile—up to November 2024—including those related to the Paris Agreement —to provide a multiscale overview. The analysis included the FLCC, the Long-Term Climate Strategy, the 2017 National Climate Change Action Plan, 9 sectoral Adaptation and/or Mitigation Plans, the National Adaptation Plan draft, 14 Adaptation and/or Mitigation Plans drafts, 3 Mitigation Plans, 3 Nationally Determined Contributions, 3 Decrees, and 1 Resolution. Out of these, 22 documents were selected for further analysis because they included explicit or implicit references to indigenous peoples (Departamento de Cambio Climático y Economía Circular et al., 2024; Dirección General de Aguas, Ministerio de Obras Públicas et al., 2024; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente & Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura, 2024; Gobierno de Chile, 2020; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2014, 2021; Ministerio de Agricultura & Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias, 2024; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional & Subsecretaría para las Fuerzas Armadas, 2024; Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo et al., 2015; Ministerio de Economía Fomento y Turismo & Subsecretaría de Turismo, 2024; Ministerio de Energía, 2024; Ministerio de Medio Ambiente et al., 2019; Ministerio de Minería, 2024; Ministerio de Obras Públicas, 2024; Ministerio de Salud, 2024; Ministerio de Salud et al., 2017; Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo, 2024; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2022, 2023, 2024; Oficina de Cambio Climático y División de Recursos Naturales y Biodiversidad del Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2014; Subsecretaría de Pesca y Acuicultura, 2024)[1].

Using open coding, the presence of intercultural and intersectional approaches and associated concepts—such as gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity—was examined, followed by an analysis of the content associated with these notions.

Secondly, the collectively authored document "*From School to Action: Strategies of indigenous and Afro-descendant women to face the climate crisis*" (Mamani et al., 2025) was analysed. This was prepared primarily by indigenous women in collaboration with female academics and Afro-descendant women, with the authors of this article being part of that group. The document systematises training and action-research experiences conducted between 2022 and 2024, allowing for a participatory analysis of interactions and tensions within existing governance models. Specifically, based on the

[1] The analysed documents were: Anteproyecto - Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático sector Silvoagropecuario (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan sectorial de Adaptación al Cambio Climático en Pesca y Acuicultura (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan Adaptación al Cambio Climático de la Zona Costera (2024); Anteproyecto Plan Adaptación y Mitigación de Minería (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático para el sector Recursos Hídricos (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan de Adaptación y Mitigación al Cambio Climático Sector Infraestructura (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático (ECLP: Componente adaptación) (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático Salud (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan sectorial de Adaptación al Cambio Climático del Turismo (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan sectorial de Adaptación y Mitigación al cambio climático de Energía (2024); Anteproyecto - Plan sectorial de mitigación del ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo y actualización del plan sectorial de adaptación al cambio climático para ciudades (2024); Contribución determinada a nivel nacional (2020); Decreto 16. Aprueba reglamento que establece procedimientos asociados a los instrumentos de gestión del cambio climático (2023); Decreto 58. Aprueba reglamentos que establece el procedimiento para la elaboración, revisión, y actualización, así como el monitoreo y reporte de los planes estratégicos de recursos hídricos en cuencas (2024); Estrategia Climática Largo Plazo (2021); Ley Marco de Cambio Climático (Ley nº 21.455, 2022); Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático en Biodiversidad (2014); Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático para Pesca y Acuicultura (2015); Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático sector Salud (2017); Plan de Adaptación al Cambio Climático sector Turismo en Chile (2019); Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático (2014); Resolución 200. Extracto norma de participación ciudadana del Ministerio del Medio Ambiente que establece modalidades formales y específicas en el marco de la Ley 20.500 (2024).

sociogram technique, it analyses the positions of climate governance actors at local, national, and global levels, considering criteria of decision-making power and affinity in climate action from the perspective of the research group—indigenous women. On a second level, it problematises the nature of the relationship between the identified groups and indigenous women.

This tool operates as a critical device and counter-mapping, translating situated and diverse visions regarding the relationship dynamics that emerge between actors beyond formal and institutional aspects. Furthermore, it promotes a strategic analysis grounded in experience to project actions and alliances that enable the incorporation of their own visions into climate action at various scales. In both cases, we seek to identify the power dynamics at play in governance models, as well as alternatives and proposals for these models from a multiscale perspective, where various spaces of exclusion and/or influence between the local and the global intersect.

4. NARRATIVES ABOUT INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONS. A GOVERNANCE MODEL WITHOUT INDIGENOUS ACTORS

The initial point of this analysis, the FLCC, suggests various principles that should guide the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes, regulations, and actions. We investigated principles such as Equity and Climate Justice, Territoriality, Citizen Participation, and Transversality, among others (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2022), as they could inspire governance with women and indigenous peoples. However, when moving to the level of specific instruments, we see a disconnection from these proposals; as such, being principles—and despite their relevance—they do not ensure effective consideration and are diluted in the narratives that follow.

Overall, indigenous women are not yet recognised as actors in the national climate governance model. They are mentioned marginally and restrictively, indicating a lack of structural integration into Chilean governance schemes. They are named in some instruments as a group and linked to specific lines of action, such as the Ministry of Agriculture programmes led by the Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies (ODEPA) aimed at rural indigenous women (Ministerio de Agricultura y Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias, 2024). This demonstrates a marginal recognition of cultural diversity, reinforcing cultural hegemony (Walsh, 2012).

Furthermore, narratives about indigenous peoples appear uncoordinated across different sectors and policy levels, especially regarding an intersectional approach, which, when it does appear, is interpreted only partially. Or rather, it is understood as an approach adapted/domesticated to the institutionality, which does not engage with its theoretical-political trajectory aimed at revealing oppressive patterns and building alternatives (Vigoya, 2016). This is evident in the FLCC, the primary legal framework for climate policy, which adopts a multicultural approach limited to the sphere of citizen participation, transferring institutional culture from the indigenous sector to this area. The narrative's lack of coordination, in turn, reflects fragmented action across policy sectors that could potentially involve indigenous women in more active roles in both the political and bureaucratic spheres.

Mostly, updated instruments incorporate greater indigenous participation; however, there has been no progress in the intersectional identification of this group, just as the gender approach does not always correlate to interculturality. Consequently, there is no explicit consideration of indigenous women. From this context, the analysis aimed to identify other dimensions where implicit identification might occur; these mainly relate to gender and ethnicity.

The documents reveal a tension between local and global dynamics in climate governance. A bureaucratic vision of the indigenous remains, alongside a global vision that presents women and indigenous people as vulnerable. Far from repairing inequalities, this reproduces exclusions based on gender and ethnicity, maintaining them as marginal categories (Vigoya, 2023).

5. NARRATIVES ON GENDER AND ETHNICITY

5.1 The immovability of the vulnerability narrative

One of the narratives most frequently associated with gender and ethnicity is that of vulnerability. This narrative is supported by and primarily addresses the concept of "vulnerable groups" in the FLCC, which relates to the risks posed by the negative impacts of climate change and their existing marginal status (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2022, p. 5). This definition, as presented in the documents, does not problematise the origin of this marginalisation.

However, it is interesting that the concept of vulnerability is not consistent across the various instruments, with some plans offering a more comprehensive vision grounded in academic sources. These identify a greater risk associated with other factors, such as socioeconomic status, age, rurality, and geographical isolation, in addition to gender and ethnicity (Dirección General de Aguas et al., 2024, p. 31). This happens without necessarily using a genuine intersectional approach that recognises how these experiences operate specifically within each context and how their intersection creates diverse realities of inequality (Vigoya, 2023).

5.2 Sub-narrative of participation

A second narrative, though less common, concerns the participant group. Some instruments—particularly updates or second versions, and those linked to Green Climate Fund financing—featured differentiated indigenous participation processes during their development. While indigenous women's participation is not explicitly highlighted here, the discussion focuses on 'vulnerable groups', with an emphasis on a gender approach. However, specific mechanisms to ensure the consideration of vulnerability and gender are not detailed. The only participation mechanism explicitly mentioned is the Indigenous Consultation, referenced in the FLCC and in instruments such as Decree 16, the 2022 Strengthening of the Nationally Determined Contribution, and Resolution 200 on citizen participation from the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) (Gobierno de Chile, 2022; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2022, 2023).

The narrative of participation is referenced in content related to approaches for addressing cultural diversity; we inquire whether it could, to some extent, contribute to the inclusion of indigenous women in climate governance. The perspectives identified were diverse, reflecting a lack of coordination within the FLCC regarding necessary climate policy approaches. This lack of coordination is evident even within the policy instruments themselves, with some adopting more than one approach. The approaches identified included multicultural, intercultural, and gender-based, with the latter being the most widespread in the documents. To a lesser extent, approaches also encompass dialogue with the territorial context, and an intersectional approach is utilised to discuss issues related to gender and other social categories that generate inequalities. Similarly, some instruments explore

methodologies for identifying vulnerability considering intersectional inequalities (Ministerio de Obras Públicas, 2024; Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo, 2024; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente y Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura, 2024). With some exceptions, participation is seen as taking place within governance and decision-making spaces, such as working groups; however, it is far from being a transversal axis of the governance model (Dirección General de Aguas et al., 2024; Ministerio de Energía, 2024).

This understanding—aligned with the consideration of gender and ethnicity in the documents—serves as a sub-narrative of vulnerability, and intersectionality is not understood from the perspective of actions, collaboration, and participation in governance. The notion of vulnerability is thus central to identifying risks and threats to certain groups; however, it reproduces a homogeneous and static view of indigenous women and confines them to bureaucratic spaces within the governance framework, stripped of political power, thus connecting with the third present sub-narrative.

5.3 Sub-narrative as beneficiaries of climate policy

Thus, the presence of gender/intersectionality/interculturality, and multiculturality approaches is not evident at the political, decisional, or transversal levels within climate policy and its governance model, nor does it involve the agencies responsible for its implementation. For example, joint participation and actions proposed between the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and CONADI, or the Ministry of Social Development and Family, are limited. Mostly, the ministries competent to address climate change issues are Energy, Transport, Environment, and Agriculture, among others, and these must coordinate with those policy sectors considered as "other sectors"; it is then that the latter appear in the governance scheme.

The FLCC addresses this issue by establishing that, in preparing Sectoral Plans, Sectoral Authorities must collaborate with competent bodies—especially the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and the Ministry of Social Development and Family—to incorporate the gender approach and vulnerable groups (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2022).

This narrative is evident not only in the lack of transversality but also in that, when gender and cultural diversity approaches—which would seem to have a central place—are incorporated into the governance scheme, they are usually limited to the policy implementation stage. An example of this can be seen in the measure sheets of different action axes, which state that these approaches will be considered for implementation, aligning closely with a multicultural model and unreflective intersectionality. This is accompanied by the group's general absence, as well as its isolation from other stakeholders present in the documents, with whom they could dialogue and/or collaborate, such as the scientific, academic, and private worlds, local governments, among others. In short, the spread of these narratives within the governance framework across various sectors is shaped by uncoordinated approaches, global financing incentives, and levels of implementation.

5.4 Narrative of indigenous contributions and knowledge

A fourth narrative was identified, centred on the recognition of the knowledge and contributions of indigenous peoples to face climate change. However, although this narrative primarily refers to indigenous peoples in general, the gender dimension—which was present in the vulnerability narrative—disappears.

This narrative originates primarily within the framework of global policy—exposing aspects of the local-global dynamics of climate governance around indigenous issues, such as references to the Paris Agreement and reports from organisations such as the UN, ILO, and FAO—and is not specifically linked to indigenous women. They portray indigenous peoples as custodians of knowledge about biodiversity, but do not recognise knowledge associated with gender roles or other variables such as territory or age. While this is beneficial for some groups of indigenous women, it also ignores their internal diversity. When they are mentioned in relation to their knowledge, this suggests a homogeneous group focused mainly on rural indigenous women, overlooking other spaces of knowledge and the roles that indigenous women play in other contexts. Hence, these narratives circulate mainly through plans associated with watershed management, energy (due to firewood use), and the silvopastoral sector (Ministerio de Energía, 2024; Ministerio de Agricultura y Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias, 2024).

> In this sense, the recovery and dissemination of traditional and ancestral knowledge, present in indigenous peoples and in the country's male and female peasants, is fundamental in the climate change adaptation process, as is the emphasis on training women and the country's younger generations (Ministerio de Agricultura y Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias, 2024, p. 39).

By being excluded from the core actors in governance, indigenous women's knowledge is portrayed as isolated or subordinate, mainly validated through traditional sciences (Gobierno de Chile y Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2021). Consequently, power dynamics continue to push their knowledge and practical experiences to marginal positions, as the instruments state, "these will be considered when judged pertinent". This is primarily addressed within the framework of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), a "permitted" domain for indigenous women, thereby perpetuating new forms of extractivism and unequal power dynamics by ignoring existing inequalities.

6. CLIMATE GOVERNANCE FROM INDIGENOUS WOMEN

6.1 Narratives around the crisis: experiences and knowledge of indigenous women

As an initial approach, indigenous women begin with different diagnoses of the climate crisis, contrasting with the scientific perspective of national policy. They propose interpretations grounded on their worldviews and indigenous sciences to explain the causes of the climate crisis from a spiritual dimension and the imbalance among different forms of life. This is reflected both in the identification of environmental changes and in extractivist practices on their territories, which lead to extreme climatic events, shifts in relationships among territorial communities, and the loss of biodiversity, among other effects.

From this diagnosis, they recognise themselves as responsible for the transmission of situated knowledge within their communities, families, and other forms of organisation. This enables the maintenance of ancestral ways of relating to territories and the reclaiming of experiences and practices of interconnection with nature, even beyond their communities. It is knowledge in transit between different territories and responds to functioning within articulated networks and to the reclamation of this knowledge in spaces such as cities.

> In the city, how do we adapt? By listening to our different experiences, that is what we have, and we have to go on collecting our experiences of *kume mongen* [...] that is why it is important to maintain knowledge, keep ourselves informed, share and know how to contribute (Mamani et al., 2025, p. 30).

In their narratives, indigenous women critically identify themselves as vulnerable due to their close connection with the territories they inhabit, which are particularly fragile in the face of the adverse effects of the crisis. They include the causes that explain this vulnerability, such as dynamics stemming from extractivism, forced migration, and historical inequalities of colonial and patriarchal origin, which are deeply intertwined with their territories. This intersectional understanding challenges reductionist narratives by recognising multiple systems of oppression that, interconnected, place them in qualitatively unequal positions (Lugones, 2008; Vigoya, 2023).

Indigenous women perceive their roles as both cultural and identity-based, given their role in maintaining and transmitting practices and knowledge, as well as being political and decisive. Their territorial, organisational, and ancestral knowledge makes them essential political actors in decision-making concerning the climate crisis. Therefore, they see themselves as vital figures for producing diagnoses and actions within their territories and across different levels of influence. They challenge the exclusion inherent in state governance frameworks, where cultural diversity is not always reflected in effective participation in decision-making (Tubino, 2002; Walsh, 2012).

This role, combined with their trajectories of leadership in communities and grassroots organisations, also strengthens their capacities to relate to other actors. Therefore, their narratives about their roles, capacities, and potentials are shaped by their personal and collective experiences, forming a foundation for articulation, dialogue, and leadership with other actors.

The experiences that support indigenous women's participation in governance are diverse and dynamic, reinforcing their status as a key interest group. They are diverse because they represent a heterogeneous group with varied territorial belongings, individual and collective trajectories, ways of life, and modes of negotiation. They are dynamic because their experiences and trajectories evolve in response to the different scenarios, relationships, and opportunities that arise, influencing their responses to the climate crisis.

Although these experiences have a historical basis, they have adapted to the complexities and power dynamics that cross territories, making them deeply political expressions. Despite differences in worldviews, realities, territorialities, contexts, and ethnicities, indigenous women project themselves in an articulated manner, with the capacity to generate strategies, actions, alliances, and recommendations in governance spaces. Thus, they contribute to facing climate change with an approach centred on maintaining their ancestral practices and knowledge to guarantee *Buen Vivir* (well-being).

6.2 Governance models from the perspectives of indigenous women

The relationship map presents a collective analysis in which principles, actors, and interactions that articulate relevant responses at local, national, and international levels are glimpsed. Far from being a neutral tool, the sociogram reflects the power relations and inequalities found in this case in climate governance. This enables a critical analysis of interactions among actors and a strategic understanding of how to generate influence in public policy.

As general principles of their own governance model, they recognise the mainstreaming of an intercultural, intergenerational, gender, and intersectional approach as relevant. This responds to a break in hierarchisation and promotes horizontal approaches that critically recognise asymmetrical power relations among diverse actors (Huencho & Saavedra, 2024a; Peters & Saldaña, 2005; Zurbriggen, 2011). In this sense, they promote collaboration and the potential of experiences, knowledge, and practices to face the crisis, without losing sight of intersected inequalities. Likewise, they seek to strengthen capacities for their incorporation into various spaces of influence.

This analysis is presented through a multi-level, multi-actor approach, where local and/or territorial experience guides how actors articulate. It reflects a model that operates from the bottom up and promotes dialogue between different levels. This seeks to overcome the dynamics of climate eco-governmentality that articulates power relations from the global to the local, excluding women and indigenous peoples from effective participation (Ulloa, 2015), promoting "alternatives to current governance models, seeking possibilities to overcome hierarchical and limited forms of relating" (Mamani et al., 2025, p. 96).

6.3 Web of actors for climate governance

In their governance model, the involved actors are recognised for their positioning and capacities for influence, which are dynamic and diverse. These actors may hold multiple positions simultaneously—since different contexts of encounters and disagreements intersect where indigenous women negotiate, resist, and influence—reflecting the variety of experiences involved in constructing the sociogram.

Building on this, indigenous women do not limit themselves to a single type of actor within this web. Their presence spans across various positions in this actor mapping, moving from their roots in organised indigenous civil society to positions in state institutions, academic spaces, and specialised technical roles. This broadens their possibilities for multi-level engagement and influence. Likewise, by acknowledging interdependence with all forms of life, they conceive themselves as representatives of non-human actors—deserts, forests, highlands, wetlands, mountains, among many others—within this web of interactions.

They first distinguish the connection with the State as relevant to the influence on public policies, through various agencies, institutions, and forms of relationships between indigenous peoples. Some of these forms are characterised by being occasional, occurring through specific initiatives or mechanisms, such as project financing, dialogues, and indigenous affairs offices for managing actions. Alternatively, they are established through indirect links in actions that require intermediaries, such as indigenous consultations regarding extractivist projects in territories. Lastly, relationships are characterised by the recounting of dynamics of exclusion and racism, either through their absence in relevant instances that concern them or due to a lack of understanding of their own territorial dynamics. This is exemplified in the relationship between Aymara communities and the Army in transboundary territories.

However, the State is not the only actor involved in their governance models, where "influence transcends what is traditionally known as climate governance into other spaces relevant for [our] action" (Mamani et al., 2025, p. 93). Indigenous women also consider other actors outside the institutional sphere, both indigenous and non-indigenous, to take various actions in response to

climate change, as well as to create alliances to reach other spheres of power. They consider, for example, international organisations, private and non-state actors such as universities, environmental NGOs, cooperatives, and the private sector for capacity building, knowledge exchange, collaboration for legal causes in territories, or for negotiating access to services.

On the other hand, they also engage actors from organised indigenous and non-indigenous civil society to articulate demands, mobilise territories, and pursue coordinated actions. And finally, although with a lower capacity for influence, non-organised sectors of indigenous peoples and non-indigenous civil society are distinguished, where they recognise themselves as groups with potential for action.

In analysing this distinction of actors, it is relevant to note that while each actor's capacity for influence is primarily determined by power dynamics, factors such as flexibility, openness, and sensitivity to the topic also play a role, either promote cooperation or cause strain in relationships and actions, thereby shaping potential trends. For example, spaces that are more closed, rigid, and intermittent in their sensitivity could limit opportunities for action. This is evident in the case of indigenous women holding public office in local governments, who describe numerous restrictions on their ability to influence the subject.

In this sense, the potential for action, relationship, and influence in multiple spaces is diversified for strategic purposes. On the one hand, using existing mechanisms, tools, and instruments as relationship mediators, such as Indigenous consultation and the use of ILO Convention 169. On the other hand, promoting collaborative links that overcome tainted or unjust forms of relating. For example, as seen with scientific institutions, indigenous women seek to tackle cases of academic extractivism through suitable procedures for intellectual property and collaborative research using horizontal methodologies. This capacity to move and operate across various institutional spaces enhances their strategic potential in climate governance.

7. FINAL DISCUSSION

Narratives about indigenous women in climate governance vary considerably between state climate policy and their own perceptions. In the former, they do not seem to be recognised as relevant actors, being marginally mentioned and addressed in an uncoordinated manner under the frameworks of gender and ethnicity. On the other hand, the perspectives of indigenous women themselves present heterogeneous visions, in which they play multiple roles and have diverse, dynamic experiences that are fundamental to both political and bureaucratic spheres. This is reflected in prominent leadership trajectories and the capacity to influence across various scenarios.

Climate change policy instruments address gender and ethnicity primarily through the narrative of vulnerability. However, these narratives tend to present indigenous women in an immovable role, stripping them of their political power and thus perpetuating their marginalisation (Huencho & Saavedra, 2024b). Furthermore, they omit the power dimensions that make them more vulnerable, relegating their participation to bureaucratic levels. While indigenous women agree with this vulnerability narrative, they also associate it not only with the effects of climate change but mainly with their exclusion from decision-making spaces. They highlight their organisational and political capacities, underlining how their knowledge has enabled them to confront socio-ecological inequalities and extractivist contexts, thereby underscoring their potential for leadership in the face of the crisis.

In this context, notions of governance also differ between the two types of documents, reflecting governance as a space of dispute (Zurbriggen, 2011). This difference manifests in the principles, actors, and sectors involved, as well as in dialogues between levels. In national climate policy, uncoordinated action across sectors is observed; initiatives related to gender, intersectionality, interculturality, or multiculturality are not integrated in a coherent manner. In contrast, indigenous women propose models that integrate intercultural, intergenerational, intersectional, and gender approaches, promoting relationships that reflect their diversity and links with various actors, based on a critical analysis that considers the dimension of power. In these models, the State is a relevant actor but not the only one, as they also incorporate multiple other actors to exert influence, which multiplies their possibilities for action in different spheres and levels of governance.

On the other hand, climate change policy instruments reflect themselves primarily in their references to multilateral organisations, financing, and global governance, which have guided the consideration of indigenous peoples based on certain criteria of vulnerability and knowledge (Carmona et al., 2024). This may explain the narratives found in those documents. Despite the Paris Agreement mentioning the rights of indigenous peoples, the documents lack a rights-based approach, highlighting the need to investigate more deeply the connection between instruments and why certain narratives are privileged over others. In this analysis, the power dimension will be crucial (Huencho, 2021). In contrast, indigenous women are committed to dialogue at all levels, a process that begins in local and territorial spaces, where their capacities are built, and relationships with other actors are established, as well as their relationship with the territory and nature. Although it is not limited to this space, these actors also have the capacity to scale to broader influence dynamics, maintaining a multi-level perspective.

Based on the plurality with which indigenous women narrate their experiences and their governance models, it is appropriate to promote diverse climate action models that centre the rights of indigenous women, including their collective political rights and their right to self-determination. Governance must be conceived as a collective and dynamic process that involves the participation of multiple actors in decision-making. To involve indigenous women in climate governance, it is necessary to adopt intersectional and intercultural approaches that not only recognise cultural diversity but also consider power relations among the actors and sectors involved (Huencho, 2022).

The challenge, on the other hand, is to build a governance model that encompasses the diversity of strategies and maximises participation possibilities across different levels. This model must recognise the various trajectories and experiences of indigenous women, seeing them as an opportunity to face the complexity of the climate crisis, as well as the structural and historical inequalities they face in decision-making. This would allow the establishment of new standards that overcome marginalised positions. It is expected that a governance model that includes indigenous women will do so from a political participation approach, not be limited to the bureaucratic. To achieve this, it is necessary to coordinate the various State instruments and agencies, mainstreaming intersectional and intercultural approaches, which requires advancing indigenous policy at a political level.

Within the framework of developing policy instruments associated with the FLCC, the idea is promoted that the different territorialities, worldviews, and experiences of indigenous women are valuable elements for climate action, making them key actors in generating situated diagnoses and projecting pertinent alternatives. This includes urban spaces or sectors where they have gained greater prominence thanks to advances in indigenous policies, such as health or housing. Their

participation and involvement are fundamental in sectoral climate change adaptation plans, as well as in communal and regional action plans.

This article seeks to contribute to the formulation of diagnoses and to the creation of governance models that promote climate justice, in which indigenous peoples, and particularly women, are active actors. A limitation of this work is that, while governance is understood as the inclusion of various actors, we have focused more deeply on the State and indigenous women, without addressing with the same depth the perspectives of other involved actors. Another limitation arises from using the sociogram, which, in this case, may favour a timeless and deterritorialised view of power relations, thereby invisibilising transformations and/or contradictions within the same actor groups. This is an area requiring further exploration and depth.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The entire data set supporting the results of this study was published in the article itself.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

The artificial intelligence tools NotebookLM and Grammarly were used to assist in the grammatical review of the text in Spanish; likewise, they were used for the translation and grammatical review in English.