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From peasant women to social change: The politicization of identities and materialities toward socio-ecological transformations

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Abstract

Peasant movements are key to thinking and acting creatively in food and socio-ecological transformation processes. Drawing bridges between feminist political ecology and critical ecofeminisms, this article analyzes Chile's National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI) as key agents of social change. The study follows a qualitative methodology based on an analysis of ANAMURI's working papers, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observations of the organization's women leaders (data collected in 2021-2023). The article explores how ANAMURI mobilizes political identity categories (women, peasantry) and politicizes key materialities for food production (land, water, seeds, among others) as strategies for food transitions. It also analyzes ANAMURI's approach to popular peasant feminism and care and earthcare ethics at the center of its political work. The relevance of social organization and the political formation of rural women as agents of social change for food transitions is evidenced.

Keywords

food transitions, food sovereignty, popular peasant feminism, care ethics, earthcare, ANAMURI, Chile

1. Introduction

Reflecting on post-growth perspectives means acknowledging the global socio-environmental crisis, which manifests differently across territories. Six of the nine planetary boundaries have been crossed (Richardson *et al.*, 2023; Rockström *et al.*, 2024; Steffen *et al.*, 2015), while extreme climate events increasingly impact the most vulnerable (IPCC, 2022). This crisis reveals deeper, interconnected problems that question the foundations of Western development models, prompting us to rethink how we live and relate to each other and within nature (Escobar, 2015; Giraldo, 2018; Kothari *et al.*, 2019; Millán, 2013; Svampa, 2022). Food systems, which contribute to a third of greenhouse gas emissions and drive deforestation and biodiversity loss, are central to these issues (Crippa *et al.*, 2021; Gillespie & van den Bold, 2017; Haysom *et al.*, 2019; Ingram, 2011). Post-growth and degrowth approaches urge us to envision new possible futures and place food systems at the heart of needed transformations (Akram-Lodhi *et al.*, 2021; Asher & Wainwright, 2019; Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Feola, 2020; Guerrero Lara *et al.*, 2023; Kothari *et al.*, 2019; Nelson & Edwards, 2020). There are already collective actions driving changes in food systems, and it is essential to understand their proposals and struggles.

Within the context of socio-environmental transformations, food transitions aim to move toward more just, sustainable, ecological, and democratic futures. Proponents of these transitions criticize the hegemonic corporate food system, the commodification of food, its disconnection from socio-environmental relations, and

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the dispossession of livelihoods (McMichael, 2005, 2009). Food transitions include a wide range of practices, policies, and initiatives[2] that share a common recognition of social interconnectedness with the natural systems that enable us to be alive, thanks to interdependence and eco-dependence.

In this context, feminist perspectives have provided substantial evidence regarding the relationship between gender and food, particularly peasant women's role in food and socio-ecological transformations (Borghoff & Teixeira, 2021; Brückner, 2020; Calcagni, 2023; Calvário & Desmarais, 2023; Jarosz, 2011; Motta, 2017; Motta & Teixeira, 2022; Nelson & Edwards, 2020; Portocarrero Lacayo, 2024; Siliprandi, 2010; Siliprandi & Zuluaga, 2014). Most of these contributions shed light on the alliances between feminisms (feminist political ecology, ecofeminisms, popular feminism, communitarian feminism, and decolonial feminism, among others) and food sovereignty struggles and social movements, such as the transnational peasant movement La Via Campesina (LVC). Environmental feminist concerns have addressed socio-environmental inequalities, identities, gender roles, and practices and norms related to those roles, such as care and reproductive work. Who are the women in these collectives; how does participation transform their identities; and how does the movement change with its members?

These questions arise when considering collective struggles and mobilized identities. In Chile, the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI) is a key social actor in food transitions. A founding member of LVC and part of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC), ANAMURI was established in 1998 and has over 10,000 members. "It comprises grassroots organizations and individual affiliations, including the participation of several indigenous women from the *Aymara*, *Colla, Diaguita, and Mapuche* peoples. They have a clear ideological stance against capitalism, neoliberalism, patriarchy, extractivism, and colonialism" (Calcagni, 2023, p. 162). With over 25 years of activism, ANAMURI leads women's struggles for change in Chilean food systems, promotes peasant family farming, food sovereignty, and access to land and means of production. Research on ANAMURI has analyzed its contributions to food sovereignty, labor conditions, trade unionism, and land rights (Calcagni, 2023; Cid Aguayo & Hinrichs, 2015; Cid Aguayo & Latta, 2015; Rodríguez & Sosa Varrotti, 2023; Senra *et al.*, 2009; Valdés *et al.*, 2017). This article explores how ANAMURI mobilizes political and identity categories, politicizing key aspects of food production to transform food systems. The research complements and updates existing evidence by focusing on ANAMURI's political and ethical proposition.

The article is organized as follows: The next section links feminist political ecology and critical ecofeminisms, examining how these discussions help us understand rural women's strategies for socio-environmental transitions. The third section presents the research method. The fourth section illustrates how ANAMURI mobilizes political and identity categories to sustain its practices toward food transitions. The fifth section explores peasant popular feminism and the practices of care and earthcare central to ANAMURI's work. The final section reflects on the role of peasant women's movements in broader socio-environmental transitions.

2. Encounters between feminisms and environmental thought

The article examines processes of politicization of identities and materialities for socioecological transitions. I use ecofeminisms and feminist political ecology to explore rural women's roles in these transitions. Both perspectives highlight the essential connection between gender, environment, and socio-environmental justice struggles (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Harcourt *et al.*, 2023; MacGregor, 2017; Ojeda *et al.*, 2022). These multiple convergences open up relevant themes regarding socio-ecological transitions in Latin America, including gender identity constructions, care, earthcare, the relationship with natural goods, and feminized activism in the global socio-environmental crisis (Carrasco *et al.*, 2017; Gago, 2019; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Ulloa, 2018).

Material ecofeminism emerged in the 1980s to critique essentialist views that reinforced a natural link between women and nature due to their biological roles, reproducing identity politics that did not change the

[2] For example, agroecology, indigenous and peasant food systems, community-supported agriculture (CSA), sustainable diets, solidarity economies, food cooperatives, the promotion of more localized (scale) food systems, and even urban initiatives such as community gardens and edible groves, among others (Motta, 2021).

structural conditions of the most marginalized (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Dengler & Strunk, 2022). MacGregor (2004), on the materialist side, calls for ecofeminism to return to politics and critically interrogates the difference between empowerment and politicization:

> While empowerment makes us think about the allocation and possession of power, politicization does something quite different. It brings us to the meaning of politics. Politics is an end in itself, a performative activity that entails ongoing debate among equals in the public sphere. (MacGregor, 2004, p. 71)

Thus, politicization is understood as a process that occurs in the public sphere, or at least in transition to it. This implies going beyond the narrative of individual experience and connecting it to contextual, historical, and cultural processes, i.e., connecting it to the citizenship dimension (hooks in Gergen & Davis, 1997; MacGregor, 2004). To challenge patriarchal worldviews, material ecofeminism emphasizes the conceptual distinction with practical implications, such as the hierarchical dualisms of culture/nature, male/female, mind/body, productive/reproductive, human/non-human, and developed/underdeveloped (Plumwood, 2003; Warren, 2009). These dualisms form the basis of the modern Western worldview, leading to significant epistemological and practical consequences.

The dual conceptual distinction is not the ultimate problem, as it helps us order certain life aspects. The key issue is hierarchical values, where one set of concepts is deemed superior, justifying and reproducing the logic of domination (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Plumwood, 2003; Warren, 2009). Under this logic, the categories of "nature", "female", "body", and "reproductive sphere" (among others) form part of the same pole that has been considered inferior in patriarchal and colonial capitalist societies that function according to the logic of domination.[3] For the same reason, ecofeminist materialists argue that both women and nature have been subjects of exploitation and thus share a common struggle for the liberation and vindication of all bodies.

Feminist political ecology (FPE) emerged in the late 1990s, intertwining feminist perspectives with power dynamics in environmental, political, and economic realms (Ojeda *et al.*, 2022; Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996). It critiques the hierarchy favoring production over reproduction, emphasizing that all human activity relies on social reproduction and the natural processes that sustain life (Dengler & Strunk, 2022). The perspective of body politics is central to FPE, as it recognizes that the body is our first environment, closely linked to Latin American decolonial feminist perspectives on *cuerpo-territorio* as a unity and political vindication (Cabnal, 2010; Gago, 2019; Haesbaert, 2020; Rodriguez Castro, 2021). Given the long history of dispossession and extractivism in Latin America, the concept of the *cuerpo-territorio* has become relevant to understanding women's situated struggles against territorial extractivism. It is argued that the exploitation and dispossession of territories and landscapes are also, indivisibly, the exploitation and dispossession of the bodies that inhabit them (Bolados G. & Sánchez, 2017; Busconi, 2018; Gago, 2019; Rodriguez Castro, 2021; Ulloa, 2018).

Politicization of care and earthcare practices

The contributions of environmental feminisms expand our conception of neoclassical economic models through a fundamental critique of economic organization and the social division of labor, a broadening of the notions of work, reproductive work, and care activities, and a questioning the rendering invisible and devaluation of all that is non-monetized (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Dengler *et al.*, 2023; Dengler & Strunk, 2018; Mellor, 2015, 2019). The patriarchal capitalist paradigm perpetuates gender injustices and reinforces dualisms by devaluing not only caring processes and reproductive labor but also the ecological regeneration processes that sustain life on Earth.

Considering that care is a feminized practice, MacGregor (2004) calls for expanding its notion and overcoming the traditional roles associated with it. One way to extend the scope of care and reproductive work is to politicize it, bringing it out of the private and domestic sphere and illuminating the sociopolitical structures

[3] One attempt to transcend these hierarchical dualisms is the concept of naturecultures coined by Haraway, that acknowledges that nature and culture coproduce each other in an intertwined way (Haraway, 2008).

that sustain it, which she ties to the concept of citizenship. To value reproductive activities, which are mostly carried out by women, the proposal for an ethic of care emphasizes the profound interdependence among human beings, based on radical vulnerability. The ethic of care and the concept of radical vulnerability posit that we are not only dependent on intraspecies care (between human beings), but also capable of providing care at different stages of life. Therefore, acknowledging interdependence among people is crucial to overcoming the logic of domination inherent in the neoclassical capitalist economic paradigm (Polychroniou, 2022; Tronto, 1993, 2013). This requires, among other things, moving beyond the notion of *homo economicus* as an independent individual who makes decisions solely to maximize individual benefit, and re-politicizing vulnerability by recognizing our condition as interdependent beings.

Along with acknowledging interdependence, there is a call to acknowledge our profound condition of eco-dependence, which implies that we cannot exist as a human species without the support provided by nature in all its forms: the ecosystems, the materials that allow us to live, and the bio-geophysical cycles that sustain life on Earth for all species. Therefore, there is a need not only to promote care and reproductive activities among human beings, but also—and this is one of the calls of environmental feminisms—to recognize our responsibility to respect and care for the Earth and the ecosystems that sustain life (Barca, 2020; Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Hosseini *et al.*, 2021; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Salleh, 2010). In 1995, Merchant proposed an ethic of earthcare as a partnership between people and nature that avoids gendering nature as female and associating women as privileged caregivers (Merchant, 1995). "Care is about looking after and providing for the needs of human and non-human others; it is about the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of humans and the more-than-human world" (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019, p. 3).

Hence, care underpins the notion of interdependence, just as earthcare underpins the recognition of our condition of eco-dependence. The concept of earthcare (Barca, 2020; Merchant, 1995) serves as an entry point, a hinge concept that helps connect social caring practices with practical and material reality. Interdependence and eco-dependence thus become two structural elements of environmental feminist thought that must form the basis for recognizing the processes of struggle and emancipation of both women and nature.

3. Methodology

This research is part of a broader qualitative study on ANAMURI and its role in food transitions in Chile. As in many studies involving social movements, access to the field site was neither immediate nor easy, due to a high level of distrust and criticism of academic 'extractivism.' To overcome these barriers, it was essential to be transparent about my trajectory, the research objectives, the funding, and also my positionality as a researcher. It was also crucial that I made myself available to collaborate with their purposes and to share my research process and results. Once the initial access difficulties were overcome and we became better acquainted, the ANAMURI leaders were (and continue to be) very generous in sharing their knowledge and experiences for the research. Initially, I had access to some of the organization's leaders and then followed a snowballing strategy, focusing on interviewing women leaders as well as active members of the organization.

This article is based on an analysis of 28 in-depth interviews with women members of ANAMURI throughout Chile, representing the northern, central, and southern inter-regionals. During the first round of data collection (between October 2021 and March 2022), twenty-two in-depth interviews, two group interviews, and ten participant observation sessions were conducted. The interviewees met the profile of either holding or having held leadership positions in the organization. In the second round of data collection (March 2023), already having established a relationship of greater trust with some members of ANAMURI, I was invited to visit six women producers in their fields in the north and south-central parts of the country. I conducted day visits, during which I was welcomed into their homes, observed their houses and properties, and carried out interviews, informal conversations, and observations.

The data were analyzed following a systematic content analysis and a coding process using MaxQDA software. The following research findings address how ANAMURI politicizes identities and materialities. I begin with a brief passage from the fieldwork that frames and situates the strategies of the struggle to transform food systems in Chile.

4. ANAMURI and the politicization of identities and materialities

We pass through arid hills of orange-colored earth, embellished with bushes and cacti, and the sun shines brightly in the cloudless sky of northern Chile. *María*[4] drives and tells me about her trajectory as an activist and peasant. She parks and gets out of her pick-up, and I accompany her. The air is dry and fresh. We walk together toward the hills; she wears a hat and carries a shepherdess's cane. She doesn't need help walking, she is still young and strong. María shouts toward the hill: "Girls, girls, come here, run, run! Girls, come here, come here, let's go to the house, let's drink some water!" (fieldnotes, March 13th, 2023).[5]

Within seconds, a dusty commotion appears on one of the hills. The goats are coming down the mountain; they recognize María's voice and trot down together after a morning of grazing. There are over 20 goats, and one large billy goat trailing at the end. María greets them and opens the fence that separates the hills from the road leading to her parents' home. I accompany Maria and her parents to keep the goats in the barn and milk them. We also feed the chickens and collect the eggs from the barnyard. These are some of the family's daily chores that support her parents' household economy. We are in the agricultural community (*comunidad agrícola*[6]) of Carquindaño, Coquimbo region, which was formed in the late 1960s during the Agrarian Reform (1964-1973). Agricultural communities are a model of communal land tenure that is now rare in the country.

María is the daughter of a married couple who were part of the original group of 40 community members (*comuneros*), and, like many leaders and members of ANAMURI (though not all), is considered a "daughter" of the Agrarian Reform. That is, she belongs to a generation of women whose parents were rural dwellers who benefited from the processes of replacing the *hacendal* land structure with a model of land distribution and restitution to peasants, promotion of unionization, and community management of common goods such as land, water, and production. However, the advances of this political project were quickly reversed during the agrarian counter-reform[7] under the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1990) (Bengoa, 2015, 2022; Bowen *et al.*, 2012; Gómez, 2002; Kay, 1978; Valdés, 2017).

María grew up in this agricultural community, but the territory is no longer the same as the one her parents lived in. Permanent drought and the expansion of mining within the region's valleys have affected water availability and, consequently, the productive capacity of households. She speaks with concern about the disappearance of more than half of the commune's vegetable gardens due to lack of water and how, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they listened with anguish to instructions to wash their hands when water was scarce—even for providing drinking water for the animals. Today, María is one of the coordinators of ANAMURI's Northern Inter-Regional, and for her, the grassroots organization represents a space for struggle and politicization of demands that matter to her family and territory. The challenges of democracy and the visibility of the rural world persist, and ANAMURI offers a platform to confront them. Other members of the organization share the perspective of an increasing politicization of ANAMURI. When asked about how the organization has changed in the last three decades, one of them states:

> I believe that ANAMURI has become more and more political. That is to say, ANAMURI's political analyses are becoming more and more profound and more shared by all the women who are members. There is already a growing politicization, which also accelerated with the popular revolt of 2019. I think that is arguably the most significant change: a deepening of their political understanding of what is happening in the country. (*Constanza*, Personal Communication, 20th March 2022)

[4] The interviewee's names have been changed to protect their privacy.

[5] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish are the author's.

[6] A system of land tenure, resource use, and conservation, characterized by indivisible communal land, inherited rights to use common land and individual plots, democratic governance, and cooperative labor (Alexander, 2008).

[7] The Counter Agrarian Reform in Chile refers to the process that took place after the 1973 military coup. The process reversed a large part of the expropriation of large landholdings, returning land to former owners and promoting once again the concentration of property, dismantled the peasant cooperatives, the advances of peasant unionism, and liberalized the agricultural sector, favoring large corporations and export agriculture.

ANAMURI: Diversity of identities and political demands

From its origins, ANAMURI's struggle, like many other peasant food movements, has been associated with struggles for food sovereignty and peasant rights. However, evidence shows that it is much more than a food sovereignty movement (Calcagni, 2023; Rodríguez & Sosa Varrotti, 2023; Valdés *et al.*, 2017). As stated by one of her leaders:

> Our criticism is that the food production model destroys the environment, destroys nature, generates global warming, climate change, and has to do with the extractivism present in each of our territories in different ways, both the agri-food model and mining and forestry extractivism. In short, our commitment is that the land can return to peasant hands and fulfill the social function of food production for the Chilean people, as well as national sovereignty and food sovereignty. (...) Everything is interrelated: food, water, modes of production, who produces the land... (*Rayen*, Personal Communication, 23rd November 2021)

The most notable aspect of this organization is its status as the foremost peasant group nationally, characterized by decentralized leadership and active engagement in formal political spheres. Not only has it presented candidates for municipal counselors in different municipalities of the country, but it also had two representatives at the Constitutional Convention in 2022. Although the citizens did not approve the constituent proposal, ANAMURI served as the voice and co-organizer of the peasant demands in the country, playing a fundamental role in positioning their collective demands and establishing themselves as key actors of social change. However, what constitutes membership in ANAMURI, and what specific identities does it promote? The organization actively engages with and advocates for women's peasant identities, as outlined below.

As a movement of over 10,000 women, diverse identities coexist within the organization. It has sought to include not only peasant women but also women living in rural areas, recognizing their multiple knowledge and skills, including food production, small-scale farming, fishing, artisanal work, cooking, agricultural labor, housework, teaching, and artistry, among others. The peasant identity promoted by ANAMURI goes beyond the urban/rural binary. It also encompasses women living in urban areas who identify with and feel connected to the peasant way of life. In its origins, although there were Indigenous members, their recognition was not explicit in the organization's name (*ANAMUR* originally). Their inclusion—both in the acronym and actively—emerged from internal demands, which was eventually accepted and embraced. Today, Indigenous women of various ethnicities are present, and there is a front organized exclusively for their demands (Front of Indigenous Women). Afro-descendant women and their needs have increasingly been included, and today they are explicitly recognized as part of the organization. "ANAMURI seems to break analytical divides, as while it was born from a union class-oriented experience, its identity is peasant and Indigenous and goes further as it also represents Afro-Chilean women" (Rodríguez & Sosa Varrotti, 2023, p. 2). ANAMURI members emphasize that these different worldviews enrich the organization and strengthen it. In this regard, one of their Indigenous leaders, a Mapuche woman, states:

> This is an enriching coexistence because from the different perspectives, from the different ways of seeing the world, of assuming the ways of life, there is a permanent enrichment that means something very nice to ANAMURI, a very nice encounter (...). We also embrace the migrant women who come to Chile and who join the agricultural salaried work and who are part of the women who live in exploitation, who live in the violation of rights. They are our class sisters as well. (*Rayen*, Personal Communication, 23rd November 2021)

Although the organization has nearly 30 years of history, its founders began participating in political projects at a very young age (12-14 years old), including militancy in communist or socialist parties, as well as peasant and trade union organizations. They directly experienced the repression and violence of the dictatorship, with some working clandestinely or in exile. Today, these founders are over 70 years old and remain active in the organization, continuing to strengthen the movement and updating its demands. It was precisely within

spaces of popular organization, particularly peasant organizations, that the first seeds of women's coordination were planted—first within partisan peasant organizations such as the Ranquil Confederation (associated with the Communist Party) and the Newen (associated with the Socialist Party), and later in the creation of the Women's Department of the National Peasant Commission. In response to the chauvinistic practices of these organizations, the women decided to form an organization exclusively for and by women.

ANAMURI represents a diverse group of working- and middle-class women, including peasants, Indigenous women, and rural workers, advocating for peasant family farming, territorial autonomy, and social and labor rights. According to Calcagni (2023), ANAMURI reinforces the discourse of peasant women's identity through four key demands. First, the struggle for popular sovereignty, focusing on social rights, gender equity, and women's labor rights, grounded in solidarity, social justice, and anti-extractivism. Second, self-determination of peasant and Indigenous women, with the ability to sustain and reproduce their own identities and traditions while protecting common goods such as land, water, and seeds. This demand also includes fostering popular peasant feminism through joint work with the organizations of the LVC and the CLOC. Third, food sovereignty and the defense of traditional modes of production, care of peasant seeds, and advocacy for a new agrarian reform that supports the social function of land. Finally, a demand for structural change of the neoliberal political and economic model that prevails in Chile (Calcagni, 2023).

The organization has influenced formal policy processes at local, regional and national levels. ANAMURI's grassroots organizations often collaborate with municipalities or neighborhood councils, promoting agroecology or holding positions of popular representation to actively resist mining, fishing, and agro-industrial extractivism. At the regional level, members engage in rural women's roundtables. Nationally, ANAMURI collaborates permanently with the Ministries of Agriculture and Gender and actively participated in the 2021-2022 constituent process with two elected members drafting a proposal for a new constitution, where they promoted peasant demands, the right to food, Indigenous autonomy, anti-extractivism, the recognition of water as a human right, and the rights of Nature. These actions renew the traditional peasant struggle and align with MacGregor's concept of environmental citizenship (MacGregor, 2004).

5. Peasant women and the way forward for popular peasant feminism

The diversity of ANAMURI members' backgrounds has created a fertile space for political conversations around identities that transcend simple socio-demographic categories. Underlying their demands and struggles is a notion of womanhood that has been actively mobilized for political purposes, politicizing the identity of being a peasant woman and generating debates about the promotion of certain types of feminisms—specifically, and more recently, popular peasant feminism.

A generational gap exists among women between 30 and 40 years of age, as many leave the organization when they begin family life; some return after age 45-50. The younger participants (between 20 and 30 years old) are generally daughters of older members who grew up accompanying their mothers to political workshops and have since become politicized themselves. Generational differences strongly shape how women identify and mobilize.

This generational difference extends to understandings of gender diversity, the female body, and modes of expression in public demonstrations. While feminist movements in Chile have a deep-rooted history, they've recently witnessed new expressions through urban and student feminism, particularly following the feminist protests of May 2018, which emerged amid recurring accusations of sexual abuse within educational establishments.[8] Although some members of ANAMURI have embraced these causes, participating actively in organizations such as the *Coordinadora Feminista 8M* or the World March of Women (which commemorates International Women's Day and organizes the country's largest feminist demonstration on March 8th), some older members view these expressions from a certain distance.

From conversations with older women from the southern and northern zones of Chile, it is evident that the concept of feminism has not yet permeated the peripheries of the country in a clear or effective way. It

[8] ANAMURI has always been close to student demands, and in fact, the student movement from 2006 onwards is part of its strategic alliances for social change (Calcagni, 2023).

remains a concept that ANAMURI leaders are actively promoting through popular education and political training. In a group interview, members of a grassroots organization from southern Chile expressed discomfort with young women protesting half-naked for abortion rights and body autonomy, and they rejected associations with lesbianism when identifying as feminists (Group interview, personal communication, 29th November 2021). Similarly, many Indigenous women in ANAMURI, including a Mapuche interviewee, perceived feminism as a Western concept incompatible with the Mapuche perspective on gender complementarity (personal communication, 29th March 2022). These nuances are addressed within the organization during political training and discussions of organizational positioning. Since struggles over bodily autonomy, gender identity, and, above all, reproductive rights are essential demands of contemporary feminism, ANAMURI's leaders approach these challenges with great seriousness. One of the youngest members of the organization tells me:

> The generational difference is still a problem because, in the end, not so many young people stay in the countryside (...). Sexual dissidence is a topic that has recently been discussed. I believe that ANAMURI is not as advanced as other regional organizations. ANAMURI does not have a dissidence front and, to be honest, it is also very much heteronormative. (*Valeria*, Personal Communication, 23rd November 2021)

Evidence suggests a heteronormative perception of women, linked to the identification with female and cisgender bodies. In this sense, a more traditional vision of womanhood is reproduced by most of the members of the organization interviewed, and queer perspectives emanating from LVC are still largely absent in the experiences and discourses of ANAMURI women, representing an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless, different generations within ANAMURI share a common commitment to pursuing gender equity, opposing all forms of male violence and subjugation, and promoting strong, hardworking, empowered, supportive, and politically active women (ANAMURI, 2014, 2015, 2020b; Rodríguez & Sosa Varrotti, 2023). Efforts have been made to unify discourse around the demand for popular peasant feminism, which is officially promoted by ANAMURI, CLOC, and LVC (ANAMURI, 2020a; Calcagni, 2023; Rodríguez & Sosa Varrotti, 2023).

One of the founders of ANAMURI and in charge of political training told me: "12 years ago, ANAMURI was neither feminist nor pro-abortion" (personal communication, 22nd March 2022). Since then, the organization has developed in-depth self-training spaces to foster a gender perspective and promote women's rights. The slogan "Without feminism, there is no socialism" began to spread at the 5th CLOC Congress in Quito in 2010. ANAMURI has embraced the challenge of political training on gender equity, focusing on personal development, women's rights, domestic violence, and women's empowerment and leadership. In 2023, popular peasant feminism was again highlighted as a fundamental pathway for youth, and the broader movement. However, popular peasant feminism remains a concept and political project "under construction." It is actively promoted at the leadership level and through sustained international alliances with CLOC and LVC—a central part of the organization's strategy—but it has not yet fully taken root in the experiences and daily struggles of all members. Therefore, it continues to be an ongoing political project for ANAMURI.

Care and Earthcare ethics for socioecological transition

The issue of care has always been central to feminist debates. A fundamental part of ANAMURI's peasant women's identity is associated with their work in care and earthcare ethics. Discourses and practices around care play a critical role in developing the political identities of ANAMURI's members. For them, care is not only understood in the traditional sense—household maintenance and caring for children and elders—but also as a defining feature of their identity as political subjects, closely linked to solidarity. Care is embraced as part of women's political role and ethical framework.

ANAMURI promotes a social perspective on care, viewing it not as an individual action but as a process of solidarity and reciprocity aligned with the common good and the politicization of care. This notion goes beyond traditional gender roles, fostering solidarity and sorority, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or emergencies like fires, earthquakes, or floods (ANAMURI, 2014, 2015, 2020b; Rodríguez &

Sosa Varrotti, 2023). The organization embodies mutual care, social responsibility, and communitarian ways of living, which are integral to its political action agenda for socioecological transitions. Their demands for fairer pensions, better working conditions for women in the agri-food sector, the promotion of local and solidarity economies, and other social justice demands emerge from this ethics of care grounded in solidarity.

Earthcare, manifested in protecting, restoring, and defending nature, is also critical to ANAMURI's struggles. It underpins their active resistance to mining, fishing, and agro-industrial extractivism, which are increasingly common in Chile. Earthcare ethics are similarly informed by solidarity, rooted in the recognition that humans are part of a larger whole—sometimes referred to as Mother Earth, *Pachamama* in Andean cosmologies or *Ñuke Mapu* in Mapuche thought. Diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews are present among ANAMURI members. From a decolonial stance, they challenge anthropocentric perspectives and the hierarchical dualisms that separate humans and other beings. Many interviewees describe a relationship of belonging to the Earth and Nature; in this sense, earthcare expresses interdependence and connectedness. Recalling her childhood, one of ANAMURI's leaders told me:

> I live in the city but feel I belong to the earth. We were very poor, lived by collecting the fruits of the forest and saved for the winter. We had many things that the forest gave us. Since I was a child, I understood the meaning of the *tree-and-me*, the *water-and-me* (...). So how could it not be important to recognize that we are daughters of the earth? (*Antonia*, Personal Communication, 16th December 2021)

The opening passage on María's work—caring for goats, chickens, gardens, while also attending to her parents—is not the only example of everyday politics in practicing earthcare. Her way of living is intertwined with nature, reflected not only in her daily routine but also in an ethic of care and earthcare rooted in interdependence and eco-dependence, widely shared among ANAMURI's members. María's daily experience, like that of many members engaged in care and earthcare practices, is also expressed through the organization's involvement in formal politics. The politicization of materiality—embodied in the land-water-seeds triad—is reflected in ANAMURI's earthcare practices, including struggles for food sovereignty, promotion of agroecology, opposition to extractivism, and pathways toward socioecological transformation.

> We aim to preserve life, to take care of life, to take care of the planet, to take care of nature, mother earth, love for the earth, love for the forests, the springs. (...). Our way of seeing the world involves a lot of spirituality. So, it is not only looking at the land or resources for commercialization or commodification, but it is something that, for us, has a soul. We are earth, we are nature, we are the same (...). We are part of that whole, we are interconnected. (*Rayen*, Personal Communication, 23rd November 2021)

6. Conclusion

To conclude, rural and Indigenous women are significant political actors in advancing food transitions and socio-ecological change. This research highlights the multifaceted strategies ANAMURI employs to foster these transitions.

While promoting popular peasant feminism remains an ongoing political project, it strengthens internal dialogue and political formation among peasant women. ANAMURI's politicization of the integral materialities of food production—land, seeds, and water—anchors its struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology, serving as strategies to transcend the urban-rural binary and to promote peasant identities beyond territorial divisions. The ethics of care and earthcare are a fundamental to this politicization, shaping the daily practices and struggles of ANAMURI women. This research provides evidence of the close relationship between care and earthcare ethics and the ontological notions of interdependence and eco-dependence, which, in turn, guide and constitute a substantive part of the ongoing project of socio-ecological transformation.

By analyzing ANAMURI, this research corroborates the importance of peasant movements as dynamic agents of social change, capable of imagining and implementing transformative pathways toward sustainable, just, and equitable food systems. The articulation and mobilization of diverse political and identity categories, the politicization of essential materialities, and the ethics of care and earthcare underscore the indispensable role of rural women in driving socioecological transitions.

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