



Peasant Struggles in Times of Crises: The Political Role of Rural and Indigenous Women in Chile Today

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ABSTRACT This article explores the political role of rural and indigenous women in the context of the socio-environmental, health and political crises in Chile, where social movements have pressured the political establishment to decisively move towards a change in Chile's constitutional foundations. The study analyses the historical political demands and strategies of the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI) as a case of the women's peasant movement with a relevant political role in shaping the social demands in the face of the crises. Following the political ecology of food through the decolonial and ecofeminist perspective and the social movement theory, findings indicate the current relevance of rural and indigenous women as political actors of change, a relevance that has been neglected for most of Chile's history. With their leadership and socially grounded demands, peasant and indigenous women are influencing the political agenda decisively using strategies that are shared with other peasant movements in Latin America. Rural and indigenous women are fundamental political actors that should undoubtedly be considered when studying struggles for social change in the 21st century.

KEYWORDS peasantry; socio-environmental justice; food sovereignty; ecofeminism; peasant popular feminism; ANAMURI; Chile

Introduction

The debate on a new constituent framework is shaping Chile's political and social agenda for this new decade. In 2020, a constituent convention was democratically elected, composed of 154 representatives, with gender equity, and 17 seats reserved for indigenous representatives. The constituent process is still open, since in 2022 the Chilean people voted to reject the constitutional proposal made by the convention. Nevertheless, political actors previously absent from democratic processes made their way into the political arena, among them rural and indigenous women. The first president of the

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Constitutional Convention (CC), Elisa Loncón, was not only a renowned academic but also a *Mapuche* women activist for the linguistic rights of native peoples. Her election, as well as the election of many rural women, indigenous women, and leaders of social movements who have long been absent in the spaces of direct political advocacy, shows the relevance of these political actors in the new power spheres.

The current civilizational crisis in Latin America (Cusicanqui, 2018; Estermann, 2012; Millán, 2013; Svampa, 2010) is manifested in distinctive ways in each country. In Chile, the cradle of the neoliberal model, the critical conjuncture is expressed in at least three coexisting crises associated with the socio-environmental, health and political situation. The expression of these crises over the last 10 years has found its culminating point in the social outbreak of October 2019, the largest social mobilization in the history of the country, aiming for a fairer country and a dignified life.

The context of crises in Chile has opened a window of political opportunity (Tarrow, 2011) for the channeling of demands that historically have not been resolved by a neoliberal, subsidiary and strongly centralized state. Organized citizens have been the ones who have pushed the political agenda and are promoting a profound change in the political landscape, generating a social “tipping point” that has irremediably changed the Chilean identity. This organized citizenship is made up of diverse movements and demands – some more visible than others – that advocate for a change in the development model, and voices that had been silenced for a long time but have now spoken out and repositioned themselves in the space of disputes over the ways of living. One of these voices is that of peasant and indigenous women, whose struggle for political change has been overlooked in the sociological analysis of recent decades.

Drawing on political ecology, ecofeminist and decolonial perspectives, this article aims to explore the political role of rural and indigenous women in this context of crises in Chile. The study offers important insights into peasant and indigenous women as crucial political actors for better understanding the struggles for social change. A case study is presented based on the analysis of the historical political demands and strategies of the oldest and largest women’s movement in rural Chile, the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (*Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas*, ANAMURI). Founded in 1998, ANAMURI’s mission is to contribute to the integral development of rural and indigenous women and “its work is based on an ideology aiming to build equal relations, considering the gender, class and ethnicity, in an environment of respectful relations between people and nature” (ANAMURI, 2021b, para. 2).

The ANAMURI’s foundresses came from other leftist peasant organizations with long territorial work during the civic-military dictatorship (1973-1990) and split from their movements to form an autonomous space exclusively by and for women (Valdés, 2017). Initially with 54 women, today it has over 10,000 members and is present in all regions of Chile, grouped in Inter-

Regional Fronts (northern, central and southern zone). It is composed of 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. In 2021, two members of ANAMURI were chosen to be among the 154 people to write the new political constitution.

Following a qualitative case study, this research conducts a systematic content analysis of ANAMURI's reports, documents, and statements over the last 11 years, covering the period from 2010 to 2021.¹ The main source is the *Correo de las Mujeres del Campo*, a bulletin created to disseminate the activities carried out by ANAMURI, which also includes political articles, analysis of political affairs, and presentations of relevant topics that serve as material for political education. It also analyses the content of the two online conferences held by ANAMURI in October 2020 and May 2021, during the campaign for the elections of representatives for the political constitution.

The structure of the article is as follows. It begins with an overview of three intertwined crises that help us to understand the current socio-political context in Chile is introduced. Next, a theoretical discussion on the political ecology of food through the lenses of the decolonial and ecofeminist perspectives is presented. The third section delves into food movements and popular peasant feminism in Latin America. The fourth section presents the main findings regarding ANAMURI's political demands, while the fifth section describes their main strategies. The last section offers some conclusions, accounting for the perseverance of ANAMURI's demands and strategies that broaden the focus toward hopeful futures for social movements in Latin America.

Understanding the Chilean Situation from the Perspective of Intertwined Crises

Social movements have provided important inspirations for the discussion on the global civilizational crisis (Cusicanqui, 2018; Estermann, 2012; Leinius, 2021; Millán, 2013; Svampa, 2010). Critiques of the development model, the consequences of exacerbated capitalism, and the links between patriarchy and extractivism have become a fundamental part of academic debates and social struggles in Latin America (Leinius, 2021). However, the civilizational crisis is expressed in differentiated manners according to each context. For analytical purposes, I distinguish three different ways in which the civilizational crisis expresses itself in Chile today. These have been forged over the last decades,

¹ The collected documents are available on ANAMURI's website (<https://www.anamuri.cl/>). The content analysis was structured in four stages: (i) exploratory cross-sectional reading of all content on the website since 2010; (ii) selection of the main documents and statements according to thematic relevance and depth of content; (iii) in-depth analysis of the content of the main documents and statements; (iv) in-depth analysis of the online conferences. Coding was carried out in three stages: open, axial and selective, with MAXQDA software.

and although they have different temporal and political origins, today they coexist and define part of the ongoing issues that characterize the current times. The crises correspond to the socio-environmental crisis, the health crisis, and the political crisis.

Firstly, the socio-environmental crisis in Chile is expressed in its vulnerability to climate change and the weak environmental governance of damages caused by extractivist industries. The rural sector in Chile follows an agro-export model that concentrates its main economic activities in the extractive industries of forestry, mining and agriculture. On top of that, for the last 12 years, the country has been facing a megadrought (Alvarez-Garretton et al., 2021), which together with a system of private governance of water resources has caused the increase of pockets of water poverty and inequality in a worrying way (Correa-Parra et al., 2020). At the same time, there are still environmental sacrifice zones where the inhabitants get seriously sick due to the contamination of ecosystems caused by polluting hotspots (Valenzuela-Fuentes et al., 2021). One hundred sixteen socio-environmental conflicts and more than 1,100 socio-environmental protests with demands from indigenous peoples, environmentalists and regionalists were registered only between 2012 and 2017 (Allain, 2019), and that number is likely to have increased. The rise of environmental concerns is not just a question of post-material values (Inglehart 1990), but a material reality that affects all people who require at least clean water, food, and air daily. The concern for the satisfaction of these basic needs:

...is not based on ethical or aesthetic ideals, nor abstract feelings about “nature” or planet Earth; it arises as a response to a concrete situation: the deterioration of the environment in which people live or the change in the rules of access to resources, which has a direct impact on people’s well-being and the reproduction of their ways of life. (Folchi, 2020, p. 101)

Thus, and as Folchi and many other environmental scholars and activists conclude, an environmental issue is in itself a social issue, and environmental justice is also social justice (Folchi, 2020).

The second crisis that helps us to better understand the current Chilean context is the one related to the global health issue, which has been most severely evidenced through the COVID-19 pandemic, but this has also shown the existence of a once-forgotten health crisis: the global syndemic. It refers to the coexistence of high rates of obesity and overweight with rates of malnutrition in the context of climate change and raises the question of food security and food sovereignty (Martorell et al., 2020; Mendenhall & Singer, 2019; Swinburn et al., 2019). Chile is the country with the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity in the OECD (74%), and this figure is increasingly accentuated in the most vulnerable sectors, in the female and rural population (OECD, 2019). The health crisis has also evidenced the lack of a robust social protection system able to cope with the socio-economic repercussions of the

crisis and the need for a transformation of the food systems to sustain a healthy population (Martorell et al., 2020). Recent evidence shows that the COVID-19 pandemic hit women and female-headed rural households particularly hard, especially in terms of income generation and food security (Mlynarz et al., 2021). The explosive rise of communal cooking (*ollas communes*),² as a popular strategy for coping with the food challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, is just one example of the lack of a public policy consistent with the challenges of access to good quality food at a fair price.

Finally, the third crisis has to do with political matters. The political-institutional crisis of the last 12 years in Chile shows the steady decline of trust in institutions while the perception of injustice has increased (Latinobarometro, 2020). Social inequality between rich and poor has increased over the last decade and has been particularly detrimental to women and indigenous people (COES, 2020). Currently, the population in poverty conditions in rural areas is more than double that in urban areas (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2017). From a historical perspective, several scholars argue that rural inequalities date back to the totalitarian regime. All the improvements in social rights of the Agrarian Reform (1964-1973), such as unionization, land restitution and land distribution for peasants, were reversed by the counter-reform carried out during the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1990) (Bengoa, 2015; Bowen et al., 2012; Gómez, 2002; Kay, 1978, 2015; Valdés, 2017). Peasants were expropriated of their means of production, especially land and water, a process that Bengoa (2017) refers to as a period of typical original accumulation. The Chilean agrarian structure changed, replacing the *hacendal* model with the agribusiness model that implied profound changes in rural lifestyles. Among these implications are the precariousness of working conditions, the feminization of agricultural jobs, the increase in seasonal workers (*temporero/as*), and the increase in the immigrant population in informal conditions (Valdés, 2017, 2021). As a result, thousands of peasants ceased to be peasants and became *pobladores*, impoverished inhabitants of small towns or the most impoverished areas of the cities (Bengoa, 2017; Valdés, 2015, 2021; Valdés et al, 2017).

During the last decade, social movements have emerged with great force demanding changes in the policies inherited from the dictatorship, whose epitome is the political constitution imposed in 1980. However, they are also demanding structural changes given the consequences of a neoliberal model that has deepened inequalities and generated unfulfilled expectations (Araujo, 2019; Folchi, 2020). Faced with this neoliberal model, and with the peasantry and the indigenous population being among the most disadvantaged groups,

² *Ollas communes* are a popular strategy for community food and cooking and stand out for being self-managed and with a strong component of political denunciation of hunger. Their leaders are most often women. In Chile, they have been used historically in times of economic difficulties, for example in the economic crises of the 1930s, 1980s and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021.

peasant movements have been demanding for decades a change in the food system and the development model (Bowen et al., 2012).

At the same time, this process has coexisted with the cycle of social mobilizations that began in 2011 with the student mobilization demanding public, free, and good quality education. It was followed by the social movement for a decent retirement and a pay-as-you-go pension system, the environmental movements, and the feminist movement. The latter burst with great force as an important wave in 2018, demanding gender equality, free and safe abortion, and the end of patriarchal violence. Thus, social mobilization from the last decade has been the form of expression of a broad social discontent that criticizes the fundamental bases of a neoliberal social and economic model that has prevailed for at least four decades (Araujo, 2019).

The culmination points of the social mobilizations occurred in October 2019 with the social outbreak (*Estallido Social*), which was initiated by a hike in the subway fare (see Araujo, 2019; COES, 2020; Folchi, 2020; Waissbluth, 2020). The student revolt reacted quickly to this fee increase and was joined by many of the social actors who had been demanding sectoral changes for over a decade, this time with a common demand for a dignified life. The mobilized actors included students, labor unions, health and education unions, the feminist movement, the environmental movement and movements for popular sovereignty and peoples' autonomy.

As mentioned above, these political demands were channeled institutionally, opening the way for the election of a Constitutional Convention with gender equity and representation of indigenous people in October 2020. After the rejection of the proposal in 2022, the constitutional process is still ongoing, and will probably be open for a long time. It is very early to conclude what the constituent process will bring about. However, in this article, I am interested in highlighting the work that ANAMURI has been doing during the last decade and that allowed them to reach the constitutional process supported by a long trajectory of work in pursuing the claims for rural and indigenous women.

A Political Ecology of Food from the Decolonial and Ecofeminist Perspectives

One of the fundamental critiques advanced by political ecology has to do with the rejection of positivist approaches such as the ontological separation between nature and culture, and the epistemological and political consequences of this separation in the context of power and inequalities (Moragues-Faus & Marsden, 2017). Food and its hybrid ontology of both pure matter and also loaded with cultural meanings and symbolisms (Fischler, 1988; Gupstill et al., 2013), offers a useful perspective to analyze and rethink human-environment interactions from an approach that overcomes, or at least questions, the traditional nature-culture dichotomy. I define this dualism as an anthropocentric analytical distinction of Eurocentric, Christian and Cartesian

origins that envisions the human being as a species with subjective and reflective intellectual capacities (“culture”), a fact that would separate us from the rest of the material world, which does not possess these capacities (animals, plants, objects). Nature from the Cartesian approach is seen as mere matter or resource, establishing a radical split between subject and object (Larraín, 2021). This analytical distinction has had substantive epistemological consequences, as it constitutes the basis of the modern Western worldview. In Latin America, this ontological separation was brutally imposed in the colonial period, as the original inhabitants (now called indigenous) did not and do not necessarily share this ontology. Of course, over time this analytical distinction has been debated and complexified in a dialogical way, mainly by the decolonial perspectives that intend to offer meaning to the alternatives or subaltern cultures (Conway & Lebon, 2021b; Cusicanqui, 2018; Escobar, 2012; Espinosa Miñoso et al., 2014; Kiran, 2013; Kothari et al., 2019).

Questioning the predominant ontology of nature/culture duality is key for the discussion of the socio-environmental crisis and has led to a debate on the epistemological process of standpoints, and a return to the basic questions of who observes, from where they observe, and what observation is considered valid. For that, the work of Amerindian anthropology, especially that of Viveiros de Castro (2013) on Amerindian perspectivism, is illustrative. Something that for the current Eurocentric academia seems disruptive, in Latin America appears as a founding part of the diverse worldviews that exist in the territory and makes evident that for centuries these worldviews have been silenced, criminalized, and underestimated. Boaventura de Sousa Santos thus proposes the need to delve into the epistemologies of the South that acknowledge the diverse ways of understanding the world beyond the Eurocentric ontology (de Sousa Santos, 2010). These diverse ways of understanding are also different ways of feeling, acting, and relating. This decolonial perspective calls for diversity not to be monopolized by a general theory, but to move towards the recognition of the plural and *pluriversal* forms of knowledge that historically have been oppressed (De Sousa Santos, 2010).³

Another contemporary variant of the debate on standpoints, although with origins in feminist theories and science and technology studies, has contributed to the understanding that all knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988). In line with the idea of overcoming dualities and recognizing that these dualities are not equivalent, but that there is a moral valuation that privileges one over the other (knowledge produced by privileged epistemic subjects vs. marginalized subjects of the feminist standpoint theory), Haraway criticizes the idea of empiricist and positivist scientific knowledge and proposes that all knowledge is situated and partial knowledge (Haraway, 1988). This gives relevance to peripheral, marginalized or subaltern perspectives, the worldviews of which

³ The notion of pluriverse refers to a “broad transcultural compilation of concrete concepts, worldviews, and practices from around the world, challenging the modernist ontology of universalism in favor of a multiplicity of possible worlds” (Kothari et al. 2019, p. xvii).

are usually rejected or subjugated. One of Haraway's radical ideas, in line with the neo-materialist school of thought, is that nature is not a raw material subject to humanization, to be "discovered," decoded or produced, but is rather a conversation charged with social relations of power (Manzi, 2020). Feminist political ecology takes up the concept of "naturecultures" proposed by Haraway, understanding that "nature is not other to culture but rather the two inform and co-create each other" (Harcourt & Nelson, 2015, p. 17). Thus, and in coincidence with Amerindian perspectivism, Haraway proposes an analysis that acknowledges the active agency of the "world," and not only of human beings (also see Chakrabarty, 2021). Following ecofeminisms, understanding the world as an active subject implies recognizing its agency and not seeing it as an appropriable resource (Haraway, 1988; Piazzini, 2014).

As early as 1993, Mies and Shiva developed the foundations of ecofeminist thinking, concerned with the recognition of women in the reproductive sphere. They wondered about the relationship between patriarchal oppression and the oppression of nature in the name of progress (Mies & Shiva, 2014). The authors developed the ecofeminist theory as a practical and activist philosophy, where the intersectional approach acquires fundamental importance when analyzing socio-environmental phenomena.⁴ Ecofeminisms question the hierarchical dualisms and ask for alternatives, subaltern visions and proposals for new ways of inhabiting that allow us to understand not only the relationships between humans but also between humans and other living beings (Herrero, 2016; Mies & Shiva, 2014; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). This is one of the founding ideas of the "more-than-humans" perspectives, which starts from the recognition of an ethic of care as the basis of any social interaction between humans and non-humans (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Thus, according to Mies and Shiva, ecofeminisms could give us clues to solve the civilizational crisis, affirming that there can be no development without respect for human and ecological limits (Mies & Shiva, 2014).

However, ecofeminist perspectives have been criticized for being essentialist and valuing women's reproductive capacity as a feature that would bring them "closer to nature." For example, the traditional simile between women and seeds as both with potential and reproductive capacity has been strongly criticized by constructive ecofeminists, calling it a positivist essentialism typical of the structuralism that is at the base of the patriarchal notion. For the same reason, Alicia Puleo García (2017) proposes the urgent need for critical ecofeminism to overcome the capitalist and patriarchal model. Indeed, given the relative position of women in economic development and the increasing feminization of agricultural work, women farmers are more likely to be

⁴ Intersectionality "recognizes the multidimensional and relational nature of social locations, places and forces (economic, cultural, political), lived experiences, and overlapping systems of discrimination and subordination. In this way too, an intersectionality approach captures several levels of difference while simultaneously revealing how intersecting forms of oppression create opportunities and benefits for those who identify as normative" (Williams-Forson & Wilkerson, 2011, p. 11).

affected by socio-environmental crises, especially those related to access to critical resources such as water, land and food (Agarwal, 2014; Valdés, 2005, 2015). According to Puleo, “food sovereignty and agroecology have proven to be excellent travel companions of ecofeminism in the construction of this new model that not only addresses the environmental balance but empowers women in their daily lives” (Puleo García, 2017, p. 214).⁵

Studying ANAMURI seed curators, Cid and Hinrichs (2015) report that the female seed curators produce an identity based on the historical female roles of caring for and conserving seeds from the gardens. This image consolidates the traditional rural sexual division of labour, which associates women with the reproductive sphere. However, the authors argue that this production of identities is a political strategy to acquire visibility and political centrality. This production of identity would be associated with what Spivak calls strategic essentialism, which corresponds to “reflecting on the claims of subaltern groups (indigenous people and women, among others) that call upon and construct an essence to achieve political, economic and/or social objectives” (Cid & Hinrichs, 2015, p. 353).

The approaches of political ecology, together with decolonial and ecofeminist perspectives presented in this section, will illuminate the critical analysis of the demands and strategies used by ANAMURI to position itself as a social movement that claims food sovereignty and the role of peasant and indigenous women in food production and agricultural cultures in Chile.

Food Movements and Popular Peasant Feminism in Latin America

Food systems have been strongly criticized by social movements for their severe social impacts (Edelman et al., 2014; Fundación Heinrich Böll et al., 2018; McMichael, 2009; Schiff & Levkoe, 2014) and environmental impacts (Crippa et al., 2021; Gillespie & van den Bold, 2017; Haysom et al., 2019; Ingram, 2011). These impacts have generated many forms of inequalities that are interconnected and influence each other in an entangled way (Jelin et al., 2017).

Alternatives to the corporate food regime (McMichael, 2006) are diverse in their demands and scales of action (local, national, regional, transnational) coming mainly from peasant, indigenous and organized ecological activist groups. These groups can be interpreted analytically as food movements that advocate for transforming the corporate food regime towards a more just, ecological and democratic food system (Allen, 2010; Motta, 2021b).⁶ In this sense, ANAMURI as a peasant and indigenous organization can be understood

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish or Portuguese are the author's.

⁶ Food movements advocate for overcoming inequalities in the food system. They include but are not limited to peasant movements, alternative food networks, feminist alliances for food sovereignty, food justice movements, vegetarian or vegan movements (Motta, 2021b).

as a food movement. Many of these movements question the very logic of the human-environment interactions described in the previous section, as well as the intersectional inequalities (i.e., class, gender, ethnicity, race, citizenship, etc.) that are reproduced in the food system (Motta, 2021a; Teixeira & Motta, 2022). It is precisely these alternative movements that have made visible the main injustices and negative impacts of the agribusiness sector, with a focus on combating hunger, land grabbing, climate change, food waste, nutritional health, and social rights, and which are promoting a food and agricultural transition (Fundación Heinrich Böll et al., 2018; Motta, 2021b). Therefore, they fight for a transition based on productive alternatives, such as peasant family farming, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, organic production, and permaculture, among others.

Despite local particularities, the struggle of peasant movements in Latin America has been organized around certain common demands in the region, among which I highlight the struggle for land, the struggle for food sovereignty, the defense and promotion of labor rights, the recognition of indigenous and peasant cultures and their ways of production, and access to and governance of common goods.

Sociological interest in the figure of the peasantry faded as rural migration to urban spaces and agribusiness progressed. However, the civilizational crisis seems to bring back the figure of the peasantry as a relevant political actor, especially for critical agrarian studies and feminisms in Latin America (Carrasco & Corral, 2017; Edelman, 2016; López & Betancourt, 2021; Rosset & Altieri, 2018; Svampa, 2010; van der Ploeg, 2010).

Although critical agrarian studies acknowledge the peasant as a relevant contemporary actor (Edelman, 2011; Edelman et al., 2014; van der Ploeg, 2010; Rosset & Altieri, 2018), the gender perspective is still absent and represents a challenge for current sociological research. There is evidence, though, that the interlinkages between popular feminisms, food sovereignty and peasant struggles are gaining more attention from both scholars and social movements and require further analysis (e.g., the World March of Women, *Marcha das Margaridas*, ANAMURI, *La Via Campesina*) (Conway, 2018, 2021; Motta, 2021a; Teixeira & Motta, 2022).

Popular feminism emerged in Latin America in the 1980s, with specific demographic and political features. It represents the demands and experiences of the lower class, economically marginalized, and working-class women commonly called popular sectors, with a leftist political stance characterized as anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal and anti-colonial (Conway, 2018, 2021). In its origins, it closely overlapped with the struggles of the women's movements of that time (Conway, 2021; Hiner, 2021). Due to geopolitical factors such as neoliberal democratization processes and the decline of socialism as a political horizon, the concept lost salience among academics and activists during the 1990s (Conway & Lebon, 2021a, 2021b). Popular feminism returned to the forefront in the 2000s, with the World March of Women as one important referent.

However, the absence of deeper reflections and debates on the inclusion of indigenous perspectives and racialized communities in Latin American popular feminism has been criticized (Conway, 2021; Hiner, 2021). Thus, recent efforts have been made to foster popular feminisms that advocate for understanding the complexity of racialization, indigenization, and decolonization processes (Conway, 2021). Popular peasant feminism is one of these multiple strands and has its origin in social movements, specifically, in the Women's Articulation of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (*Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo, CLOC*) – *La Via Campesina* (Pinheiro Barbosa, 2021). It started as a political project distancing itself from urban and upper classes feminisms, but also from the popular feminism of the 1980s, acknowledging decisively and explicitly the specific struggles of indigenous, afro-descendant, and peasant women in rural territories in Latin America (Bhattacharjya et al., 2013; Cid & Hinrichs, 2015; Hiner, 2021; Pinheiro Barbosa, 2021; Siliprandi & Zuluaga, 2014). The rise of popular peasant feminism has brought new spaces of convergence among women's struggles, now related to the natural commons. In this, we find many points of convergence with the approaches of critical ecofeminisms:

As popular feminism is reconfigured in relation to rural, racialized, and indigenous popular sectors, the content of women's care work and the politics of popular feminism shift and expand to include the defense of land, water, and ecosystems and resistance to despoliation and dis-possession. (Conway & Lebon, 2021b, p. 20)

This invites us to delve deeper into the political demands and strategies used by women peasant movements, and ANAMURI in particular.

ANAMURI's Main Demands: Popular Sovereignty, Self-determination, and Food Sovereignty for a New Political Constitution

ANAMURI was founded in 1998 to strengthen the partnership and demands of indigenous and rural women, but its origins date back to the pre-dictatorship period. Some of the foundresses call themselves “daughters of the Agrarian Reform,” acknowledging their peasant and popular origins. Others were militants of socialist or communist political parties and were initiated into trade union struggles at a very early age. They define themselves as a peasant and women's movement with socialist political demands, as a movement opposed to the capitalist, extractivist and patriarchal economic system that “violates the rights of peasant and indigenous women to live in a place free of contamination, in harmony with the environment and that denies us the basic necessities for the subsistence of our agro-cultures” (ANAMURI, 2021b).

With over 20 years of experience, ANAMURI's struggle is complex and advocates for systemic change. To better understand ANAMURI's struggle, I distinguish and describe its political demands organized into four intertwined

categories, which refer to popular sovereignty, self-determination and the question of feminism, food sovereignty, and the demand for a new political constitution.

The political claim that encompasses all the demands and is at the base of ANAMURI's struggle is popular sovereignty rooted in requests for fundamental social rights, with a strong focus on labor rights and gender equity, and principles such as solidarity, sisterhood, the common good, cooperativism, and social justice. Popular sovereignty can be considered as an umbrella concept that implies more than just the right to vote (commonly interpreted as national sovereignty), and more than the defense of constitutional rights and guarantees. It is grounded on a motivation to change the prevailing extractivist, racist, and neoliberal capitalist model in Chile. This is expressed in the following statement:

Under the concept of Modernity there is no guarantee for historical social rights and rights of nature, the individual and collective rights are restricted: gender, class, territory, sovereignty are alien concepts. Therefore, the right to a life of dignity and free of violence towards sovereignty and the recognition of the active role of women and dissidents in all spheres of society is vital for a new deal. Differences exist, but the State under capitalism maintains a relationship of Entrepreneur–Salaried, Employer–Tenant. Our struggle is against Capitalism and against Imperialism. We advocate for other forms of non-vertical and non-sectarian organization, as well as respecting the differences. There is a segregating culture, the violence is singular and collective, material and cultural, gendered, physical, psychosocial, symbolic, and economic. It is imposed and does not respect otherness. (ANAMURI, 2020, p. 48)

ANAMURI has developed a radical and profound criticism of extractivism and the exploitation of nature, which reflects the deep discomfort felt by rural and indigenous women with Chile's development model. A significant part of ANAMURI's reports is dedicated to criticizing the extractive and agricultural industries and their negative social and environmental impacts. The salmon industry, forestry, mega-mining, agribusiness and agrochemicals are the main industries scrutinized and criticized. Government policies are also criticized for allowing and promoting the extractive industry in the national territory.

ANAMURI's demand for popular sovereignty simultaneously reflects social class and decolonial struggles. It refers, on the one hand, to the traditional struggles of the lower classes (hence the term popular) demanding the fulfilment of social and labour rights. On the other hand, from a decolonial perspective, it demands the capacity to generate political guidelines based on indigenous identities and respecting ancestral knowledges and nature. Popular sovereignty can be understood as a critical concept that questions the foundations of power; it is a demand that opposes and tries to overcome the subordination and economic and cultural domination of the popular classes and indigenous peoples in Chile.

The struggle for popular sovereignty is intertwined with a second fundamental demand, which I refer to as the self-determination of peasant and indigenous women. Following the work of Margara Millán, this demand for self-determination can be understood as a struggle to recover its *poiesis* (Millán, 2013), that is, its capacity to produce and maintain itself. Although other scholars have referred to it as a struggle for autonomy and the reduction of economical dependency (Rosset & Altieri, 2018; van der Ploeg, 2010), the idea of self-determination is more comprehensive and includes the question of peasant identities. For ANAMURI, self-determination implies having access, governance, and protection of common goods (such as water, land, and seeds) and to be able to have an “economic development with local identity” (ANAMURI, 2015b, p. 12) that does not leave rural and indigenous women at the mercy of the variations of the capitalist labor market. ANAMURI’s concerns regarding self-determination have a special focus on preserving peasant and indigenous identities and traditions. Although ANAMURI recognizes that indigenous and peasant identities are diverse,⁷ they defend and celebrate the plurality of these identities and find common ground in the struggle for their historical demands. Some older women leaders and members have expressed concerns about the feeling that indigenous and peasant identity is disappearing or fading because of the migration process of the young people that move to cities for working or studying. This reveals a concern for the relationship between identities and territorial belonging.

The demand for self-determination also includes a stance on feminism and the relevance of women’s rights. ANAMURI does not have a unique vision regarding the type of feminism they endorse as an organization, but there is a clear reference to popular peasant feminism, and although not explicit aspects of ecofeminism were found in the document analyses. The idea of a “feminist proposal” appears for the first time in the analysis of the May 2015 bulletin and a special issue for popular peasant feminism was launched in December 2015. Popular peasant feminism and the role of women’s mobilizations were highlighted in 2019, pointing out particularly the joint work with other feminist organizations such as the *Coordinadora 8M* in Chile and the World March of Women. According to ANAMURI, popular peasant feminism is a term under construction that unifies feminist demands with a class perspective, specifically, peasant demands, and “calls for equality and justice between men and women at the level of society, of the peasant movement organizations themselves and of the families and communities to which they belong” (ANAMURI, 2015, p. 53).

⁷ The acronym was originally “ANAMUR” and did not explicitly include indigenous demands. But indigenous women, especially Mapuche, quickly insisted on incorporating their identity explicitly in the name and in the organization’s demands, especially claims to land restitution and self-determination.

The idea of popular peasant feminism is relatively recent and is shared by other LVC organizations (Áreas Blass, 2021).⁸ Analysis of the complementary bibliography confirms that the dispute over the various types of feminisms is not resolved within ANAMURI and is mainly related to the perspectives of indigenous women who do not always share feminist thought. Mapuche communities, for example, do not believe that the popular feminist tradition is something they can relate to since its cosmovision is based on complementary duality (ANAMURI, 2015a; Cañet & Painemal, 2018; Painemal & Huenul Colicoy, 2021). In this regard, two Mapuche members of ANAMURI, Isabel Cañet and Millaray Painemal, pose the following question: “how much does embracing a ‘Chilean’ or Western-style feminism contribute to our [Mapuche] people’s struggle?” (Cañet & Painemal, 2018, para. 11). Referring to the popular peasant feminism, they state:

Indigenous women have said they do not feel represented and have expressed their disagreements [with it], which have not been well received and have generated certain tensions. Indigenous women have appealed for recognition of their own way of thinking and to reestablish elements such as balance and complementarity, which is present in the cosmovision. (Cañet & Painemal, 2018, para.8)

This shows the disputes within the organization that demonstrate the complexity of creating a national movement that unites common demands. Nevertheless, ANAMURI has embraced this complexity and the differences within their members through the idea of peasant and women’s solidarities and by stating that respecting their differences is what makes them stronger. The idea of solidarity is closely related to that of class identities, and the cause of preserving rural and popular cultures seems to be something that unites the members within ANAMURI. The concept of solidarity among indigenous and peasant women appears as a guiding principle in most of ANAMURI’s texts, by calling upon cooperation and building women’s alliances to face adversities. Members are encouraged to foster solidarity in the struggles, and it is also celebrated when it becomes evident, as in catastrophes such as the 2010 earthquake, the forest fires in the summer season and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many other food movement members of LVC, food sovereignty is perhaps ANAMURI’s most visible flag, and it includes choosing what and how to produce, defend and reproduce the peasant seeds,⁹ and demanding a new agrarian reform that advocates for the social function of the land. In Latin

⁸ The slogan “without feminism there is no socialism” was embraced in the Quito Declaration (La Via Campesina, 2010), during the IV Assembly of Articulation of Rural Women of the CLOC, but it did not explicitly refer to popular peasant feminism.

⁹ The term “peasant seeds” “refers to all or part of a plant organ (seed, tuber, cutting ...) which is for reproduction. The peasants’ seeds come from plant populations managed by farmers, selected, sorted, and preserved before being sown, hence the term ‘peasant seed.’ The selection of seeds is both a selection by the farmer and a natural selection in the fields” (Dubrulle et al., 2019).

America, the commercialization of seeds and the promotion of industrial monocultures were marked by the entry of Monsanto (now Bayer) in the 1990s. ANAMURI was founded in this context, working in the defence and recovery of peasant seeds from its beginnings as a movement. ANAMURI has declared itself against the International Convention for Plant Breeders (UPOV 91) that allows the breeder (whoever creates or discovers a seed variety) to have intellectual property over the seed. UPOV 91 was approved in 2011 despite citizen discontent but had to be reversed in March 2014 after criticism and large mobilizations by peasant and environmental organizations, including ANAMURI. However, now the most pressing struggle in this regard is against the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11, including Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam), which among other things would affect the right to preserve indigenous and peasant seeds by again including UPOV 91 during its ratification. The government of President Sebastián Piñera put four times “extreme urgency” to the bill approving the TPP11, generating the frustration of social movements (including ANAMURI) that advocate for the protection of popular sovereignty. ANAMURI’s demand for food sovereignty also includes a struggle for a new comprehensive agrarian reform with a focus on the restitution of land lost during the counter-reform in the dictatorship. Although calls for comprehensive agrarian reform were made as early as 2011, this demand is seen more distinctly in the analyzed reports from 2019, the year of the social outbreak.

Concerning ANAMURI’s struggle for food sovereignty, this quotation sums up their perception of the role they are playing in challenging the dominant food system:

We are the peasant, rural and indigenous women who feed the world under healthy and clean peasant production systems, who fight every day against the agro-industrial food systems that manage monocultures and industrial animal production under perverse systems of production and animal abuse, which are causing enormous damage to people’s health and greenhouse gas pollution unprecedented in the history of our planet. (ANAMURI, 2020, p. 5)

The demands for popular sovereignty, self-determination and food sovereignty have their culminating point in the demand for profound changes in the Chilean political model. ANAMURI’S demand for a new political constitution through a “free and sovereign” Constituent Assembly (CA) has been a historical one, precisely because its founders fought for democracy and the end of the dictatorship. The current constitution was written in 1980 during the military dictatorship, and although it was reformed once in 2005 the social outbreak of 2019 was a sign of citizen discontent with the Constitution and its origins. ANAMURI, which has its origins in peasant and leftist movements that fought against the dictatorship, has been campaigning for over 20 years for a Constituent Assembly to create a new Supreme Law. ANAMURI advocates for a new Constitution to involve parity, and be plurinational and sovereign:

A new constitution is necessary through a Constituent Assembly that encompasses all the assemblies and popular councils. It must be PLURINATIONAL, that is, to assume that in the national territory there were other people before the constitution of the Chilean State. The existence of other people and nations in the territory with their full sovereignty must be recognized. (ANAMURI, 2020, p. 38)

Many of the demands raised above have been curbed by Pinochet's constitution, well known for its emphasis on the role of the private sector (water rights being the epitome of this). Hence, the struggle for a new constitution has become relevant and highly valued. As shown in the following section, these social demands have been channeled through political strategies and windows of opportunity that have allowed ANAMURI to position the movement's demands.

Strategies for Social Change: Alliances, Political Training, Unionism, and Advocacy Towards a Fair Future

The main strategies used by ANAMURI follow formal and informal institutional channels. The political strategies for directing ANAMURI's demands can be grouped analytically into four interlinked dimensions: (i) alliances and political articulation; (ii) social and political training; (iii) unionism and women's labor rights, and (iv) political advocacy. The first two can be understood to be "actions of social reproduction," a term used by Teixeira to refer to "activities that create the necessary conditions for the development of collective actions and for the very existence and permanence of social movements, such as the politics of alliances with other social movements, meetings, and political training" (Teixeira, 2021, p. 5). The actions of social reproduction differ from forms of collective action, which refer to public and visible actions for advocacy such as strikes, demonstrations, or participation in public policy processes (Teixeira, 2018, 2021). In that sense, the strategies of unionism and political advocacy can be understood as forms of collective action.

Concerning the alliances and political articulation, ANAMURI follows the traditional pattern of creating alliances at different scales, which are the basis of its operation. As an association, it is composed of grassroots organizations or individual members who decide to come together for a common good. At the national level, ANAMURI coordinates its actions with other social, indigenous and peasant movements, among which long-standing alliances with other Chilean movements that are part of LVC stand out (e.g., with the Ranquil Confederation, the National Assembly left-wing Mapuche, the Beekeeping Network and the National Council of Producers (CONAPROCH)). In addition, relevant alliances with other social movements are with the student movement (from 2011 onwards), the *No + AFP* movement and, especially, the feminist

movement. ANAMURI is part of the *Coordinadora 8M* for the Women's Demonstration on the 8th of March, and the *Articulación Territorial Feminista Elena Caffarena*, which comprises many feminist organizations and works for a feminist perspective in the Constitutional Convention. At the international level, the main alliances are with LVC, CLOC, and their member organizations, in addition to other food movements in the region that, although not part of LVC, share ANAMURI's principles, such as the Union of Land Workers (UTT) of Argentina. In these alliances, it is possible to observe a direct coincidence between ANAMURI's demands described above and those of the other organizations and movements with whom they are articulated, generating a coherence at the level of movements in the Latin American region. In addition to these alliances, ANAMURI receives support from international organizations that help them finance their trips, projects or activities. The German foundations *Heinrich Böll*, *Friedrich Ebert* and *Rosa Luxemburg* have strongly supported its work, as have other socialist organizations from Europe.

Social and political training is one of the main strategies used by ANAMURI to consolidate its work and expand its territorial scope. ANAMURI's organization is decentralized, but there are three thematic axes or fronts that articulate the work at the national level: the women workers' front, the women producers' front, and the indigenous front. To strengthen the fronts, ANAMURI has created training schools for rural and indigenous women that operate under the decolonial perspective. They work under the peasant-to-peasant (PtP) methodology of horizontal learning, *diálogo de saberes* (dialogue of knowledge), and the promotion and safeguarding of ancestral and indigenous knowledge through orality. Among the schools they have developed, the following stand out: the School of Union Training, the School of Parity Constitution, the Gabriela Mistral National Itinerant School (on women in the movement, human rights, sustainable development, and organizational development), the School of Agroecology, and the Sociopolitical School. In fact, in 2015 the School of Agroecology evolved into the Institute of Agroecology of Latin America (IALA) Chile called "*Sembradoras de Esperanza*" (Sowers of Hope), through an initiative prompted and supported by CLOV and LVC.

An important demand of ANAMURI is related to the labor rights of women workers in the agricultural and aquaculture sector. For the same reason, and following its trade unionist tradition, ANAMURI has consistently fostered the promotion of women workers' labor rights and the recognition of reproductive work. The Union Training School and the work of the front salaried women evolved into the creation of the first National Union of Women Workers of the Land and Sea in 2019, which aims at "the unity and strengthening of the agricultural and maritime sectors in the face of the subjugation of companies and the lack of interest of governments in solving the problems that afflict women workers" (ANAMURI, 2020, p. 30). The main reasons why they formed this union are related to their perception of trade unionism as a tool of legitimation of the organization, to strengthen the national unity of women

workers in front of the companies, and to define unique tariffs in the country. ANAMURI had worked in ethical tribunals, but they had no legal weight. Now, these tribunals became legal instances of denunciation and protection of labor rights before the National Labor Directorate. This represents an important step forward in making concrete the political demands of the organization for the defense of the labor rights of rural and indigenous women.

In terms of political advocacy, ANAMURI is already a well-recognized national movement and has positioned itself as a relevant voice for public policies related to rural development and women. For instance, in the case of the UPOV 91 and TPP11 discussions, ANAMURI was invited to present at the working tables of the National Congress to give its opinion on the matter and has also been invited by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity to work in the Rural Women's Roundtables at the national and regional levels. The long trajectory of political advocacy allowed ANAMURI to deploy all its forces of active and binding participation in the constitutional process initiated after the social outbreak in October 2019.

In line with their historical demand for a constitutional assembly, in the elections of councilors and constituents in May 2021 ANAMURI presented 13 women candidates to the municipal councils and eight women candidates to the Constitutional Convention. In this process, two women candidates for constituents were elected (Ivanna Olivares and Alejandra Flores), in a context where the lists of independents (not affiliated to political parties) achieved a relevant incidence and some traditional parties saw their incidence reduced to a minimum. By way of reference, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) which is a party with a long trajectory and was crucial during the last 30 years of democracy from the centre-left coalition also obtained two seats, which represents a total failure for them. However, for ANAMURI, a movement with neither resources nor party trajectory, having two seats is probably the most relevant triumph in its history as a movement.

The elected candidate Ivanna Olivares (30 years old) is the president of the *Diaguita Taucan* indigenous community. She could have made use of the quotas reserved for indigenous peoples but did not use them in a strategic way, thus increasing the membership of indigenous representatives in the Convention. So did Alejandra Flores (60 years old), a teacher of *Aymara* origin and self-defined ecofeminist. Ivanna Olivares is part of both ANAMURI and the Movement for the Defense of Water, Land and Environmental Protection (MODATIMA), and the main focus of her campaign was the promotion of a solidary, plurinational, feminist, ecocentric, decolonial, secular and decentralized State. Likewise, Alejandra Flores developed a program with the axes of human rights guarantees, labor and social security, health, education, culture, science, gender equity, free development and reproductive rights, inclusion and ecocentrism (among others). In the context of heated campaigns, both candidates stood out for having invested very little money in their campaigns compared to the traditional politicians running for office, thus disproving the idea that the more money political campaigns invest in

advertising, the better the result will be.¹⁰ This was a historic triumph for ANAMURI, as they had a direct impact on the drafting of the proposal for a new Chilean constitution to position their political demands, an inconceivable situation only 10 years ago.

In the following quote, Alejandra Flores summarizes the themes that marked her political campaign and shows her disapproval of the traditional political parties:

As I am *Aymara*, one of the main issues is to fight for Chile to be a plurinational, intercultural, ecological State, with the defense of our Mother Earth, of course, of water, land, territories, air... everything that implies the Rights of Nature. But my campaign focused more on bringing the voice of women to the constituent assembly... The equal participation that we women are going to have in this constituent process was not given to us by the political parties, we won it in the streets. (ANAMURI, 2021a).

Conclusions

The main goal of this article was to analyze the political role of ANAMURI in the context of civilizational crises. A systematic content analysis methodology was used to obtain a deeper understanding of the movement's demands and strategies. A limitation of this methodology is that it emphasizes what has already been published and often hides the processes of reflection and construction that the social movement goes through to arrive at the official text. Therefore, future research on ANAMURI could build on what is proposed in this article and explore the personal experiences and trajectories of ANAMURI members.

The evidence from this study suggests that, although food sovereignty remains the main banner of struggle and claim of the peasant movements in general and ANAMURI's in particular, the demands of this movement are much deeper and more radical as they acknowledge the urgent need to change the capitalist, patriarchal and developmentalist model. In line with post-development approaches, it is evident that there are important social bases with the potential for major socio-cultural transformations to overcome a model that continues to reproduce socio-environmental inequalities at the global level, including the food system.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that, first, ANAMURI has been fighting for over 20 years for popular sovereignty and human rights, for the self-determination of rural and indigenous women, for food sovereignty and for a new constitution to change the regulatory framework inherited from the military dictatorship. The conjunctural moment of multiple crises (socio-ecological, health and political), but especially the social outbreak in 2019,

¹⁰ Ivanna Olivares spent 1,165 USD and Alejandra Flores spent 7,895 USD according to the platform "Quiénes son?" which gathers information on the candidacies (Anon, 2021).

constituted a relevant change in the structure of political opportunities (Tarrow, 2011) for civil society. Social activism and mobilizations managed to push the political agenda towards transformative changes.

Second, in this context, ANAMURI did not waste the change in the structure of political opportunity; quite the contrary, it took advantage and capitalized on its entire trajectory as a movement to position its demands strategically and it succeeded in doing so by gaining two seats on the Constitutional Convention. Among the other 152 members, the two elected candidates from ANAMURI wrote a proposal for a political constitution for Chile and used a privileged position to ensure that the historical demands of the movement were heard and become a permanent reality in the country. In this context, the ideas of popular peasant feminism (Conway & Lebon, 2021b), ecofeminism (Mies & Shiva, 2014) and decoloniality (Infante, 2013; Kiran, 2013) are gaining momentum in the political discussion, offering alternatives toward a more socially and environmentally just future.

Third, the strategy of alliances with the rest of the Convention was fundamental to concretize their demands, and ANAMURI triumphed in at least some fundamental aspects of their struggle, such as the decolonial demand for a Plurinational State, the inclusion of the right to food and the right of peasants and indigenous people to use and exchange traditional seeds, the ecofeminist demand for the recovery of water as a common good for public use, and the feminist demand for gender equality. All these points were effectively approved by a large majority in the proposal of the constitutional convention. ANAMURI has a long experience in using the strategy of alliances to achieve its goals, which was evidenced when analyzing its main strategies which included political training, advocacy, and unionism. Despite that the first proposal was rejected, this experience in building alliances should continue to be used during the upcoming negotiations of the constitutional process. The involvement of ANAMURI in this novel process thus opens a new research agenda relevant to the sociology of social movements and post-development studies and inspires other social movements to keep fighting for their demands collectively.

Finally, I would like to reflect on the relevance and difficulty of studying sociological processes that are currently ongoing, such as the constitutional process in Chile. Of course, ANAMURI's struggle is older than the events that mark the present, but the relevance of this historical moment makes it fundamental to analyze it with the tools at hand. Certainly, time will allow us to gain a greater perspective, gain greater depth in the alliances and achievements reached by the Constitutional Convention, and assess the impact of women in the process. For the time being, rural and indigenous women are fundamental political actors that should undoubtedly be considered when studying the struggles for social change in the 21st century.

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