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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Participatory decision-making in the policy integration process: indigenous consultation and sustainable development in Mexico

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Abstract
This article explores the role of participation by indigenous peoples in Latin America in the political process of Environmental Policy Integration (EPI). Although the benefits of participation have been largely taken for granted, this article shows that participation makes the policy integration process even more complex. By selecting two cases of clean energy infrastructure projects (a wind power plant and a natural gas pipeline) in Mexico, whose policy processes included an indigenous consultation, this article traces the competing problem definitions in public policy debates and the resulting policy frame in relation to sustainable development. The goal is to assess the ways that indigenous consultation functions as a procedural EPI instrument aimed at boosting participation from a public that is largely composed by indigenous communities in the decision-making stage. This article contributes to the existing literature on policy integration in two ways: (1) it explores the role of participation by non-state actors in the policy integration process, especially in highly politicized policy areas such as energy and the environment, and (2) it identifies the limitations of applicability of policy integration literature, particularly in contexts where state–society interactions are radically different compared to Western countries, including Latin American countries inhabited by indigenous groups.

Keywords Policy integration · Indigenous consultation · Environmental Policy Integration · Sustainable development

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Introduction

In the search for solutions to complex policy problems such as climate change, environmental protection, gender equality, and migration, the study of policy integration has captured renewed attention in the policy sciences. This momentum contributed to overcoming the static outcome-centered approach adopted initially by scholars, leading to place greater attention on the political dimension of this process—i.e., processual understanding (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016). This includes scholarly investigation on the ways that processes take place—e.g., policy frames, subsystem involvement, policy goals, and policy instruments (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016), and on different drivers for policy integration—e.g., authority or information (Cejudo & Michel, 2021). This research agenda has focused on the bureaucratic dimension of integration to much success. However, it presents two main shortcomings, which limit its lesson-drawing capacity for public administrations worldwide: 1) its state-centric inclination and 2) its Eurocentric legacy.

Although it is well established that fragmentation of political authority and delegation of powers involves a broad range of public and private actors (Trein et al., 2019), participation is frequently neglected in most research. The policy integration literature has paid scarce attention to the participation of non-government actors in policy-making (Mullally et al., 2018), resulting in a limited understanding on the relation between participation and policy integration. Moreover, policy integration lenses have been conceived in Global North (mainly European) countries, and their transferability to medium- and low-income countries has rarely been questioned. This is especially true for the most developed area in this agenda: Environmental Policy Integration (EPI). Empirical research on policy integration in developing countries is scant (Garcia & Bolwig, 2021) despite the fact that these countries face insurmountable challenges related to complex policy problems.

This article explores the role of participation by indigenous peoples in Latin America in the political process of EPI, a particularly relevant topic considering that indigenous peoples are at the forefront of many environmental and climate policies. Governments of the region face pressing economic, societal, and environmental challenges at the time that they must deal with cultural tensions produced by globalization and the rise of ethnic claims (Sierra, 2004). This has placed developmental and extractivist projects and their impacts at the center of the regional debate (López & Vértiz, 2015; Svampa, 2015), particularly in relation to indigenous territories (Bastos, 2020). The implementation challenges posed by EPI in multicultural societies is pressing, indeed.

In this article, we focus on the integration of energy and environmental sectors in Mexico—an area where previous research has found an important degree of integration (von Lüpke & Well, 2020; Garcia & Lucatello, 2022). Although the benefits of participation have been largely taken for granted in the existing literature, (Humphreys, 2016), this article shows that participation makes the policy integration process even more complex. By selecting two cases of clean energy infrastructure projects (a wind power plant and a natural gas pipeline), whose policy processes included an indigenous consultation, this article traces the competing problem definitions in public policy debates and the resulting policy frame. The goal is to assess the ways that indigenous consultation functions as a procedural EPI instrument aimed at boosting participation from a public that is largely composed by indigenous communities in the decision-making stage. In doing so, this article also contributes to the emerging research on expanding non-Western perspectives in the dominant vision of sustainability (Velasco-Herrejón et al., 2022).

The next section of this article presents the applied analytical framework and identifies shortcomings in the existing EPI literature, particularly its Eurocentric and state-centric orientation. It goes on to discuss the Advocacy Coalition Framework as a tool to assess competition in participative processes, as well as indigenous consultations as a procedural EPI instrument. It then explains the applied methodology involving the frame analysis to two case studies: Eólica del Sur wind park in Oaxaca (case 1) and the Sonora pipeline in Yaqui's lands (case 2). Finally, the empirical findings and conclusions are presented.

EPI and the Global South

As noted by Candel and Biesbroek (2016), the 1980 study of Arild Undertal on integrated marine policy was the first to employ the concept of 'policy integration.' Yet, it was not until the 1990s that it gained popularity, mainly due to the support received from international governmental organizations (Tosun & Lang, 2017). It was in this context, and in response to the perceived lag of policy response to sustainable development challenges, that the European Union (EU) adopted EPI as a first order principle to guide the transition toward sustainability (Jordan & Lenshow, 2010). Whereas recently this discussion has focused on the challenges of Climate Policy Integration (CPI), the lessons from the former resonate in climate affairs (Adelle & Russel, 2013) and many of the instruments conceived for the case of the environmental protection are employed to explore CPI practices today (Dupont, 2016; Tosun & Solorio, 2011).

As noted above, EPI research with a focus on developing countries is rather limited (Garcia & Bolwig, 2021). For example, the most comprehensive study on the implementation of EPI's toolbox was limited to 29 OECD countries (Jacob & Volkery, 2004; Jacob et al., 2008). Despite existing sustainable development challenges, very little is known about the institutional and political arrangements that can produce EPI in low- and middle-income countries. Similarly, part of EPI's Eurocentric problem is its conception of the environment, which is premised on an outdated human/nature dichotomy (Biermann, 2020). This conception has been criticized for decades by scholars from the Global South who argue that environmental degradation is a symptom of a civilizational crisis characterized by the supremacy of development and technological reasoning over the organization of nature (Leff, 1998).

As a social construction, the *environment* concept has multiple meanings and is understood differently across diverse social settings (Caillon et al., 2017). Focusing on Latin America, Gudynas (1999) has discussed the ways that ecological thinking has been inspired by indigenous conceptions of surroundings and territory, which entail a different relationship with the environment (Velasco-Herrejón et al., 2022). Many studies have also demonstrated the ways that socio-environmental conflicts are characterized by distinctive imaginaries of environmental care and environmental harm (Boyer, 2019; Solorio et al., 2021). A problem in the transferability of EPI, therefore, is connected to different ways that non-Western communities understand their relationship with nature. Since the beliefs of any social group represent a way of relating with the environment, these become fundamental in navigating through community conflicts (Povinelli, 2013). Something that is deemed to be positive from the traditional (Western) EPI perspective may be rejected by local communities for its impacts on their environment and way of living. The best-known example of this is the community resistance to wind parks in the Mexican state of Oaxaca (Boyer, 2019; Dunlap, 2019).

Some authors have proposed that because EPI is a political process, it should constitute a space for citizens to develop an integrated approach to sustainability (Mullally et al., 2018: 72). Similarly, Tosun and Lang (2017: 562) contend that "policy integration can help pluralize politics by bringing in more actors and interests". However, to this point, the existing literature presents contradictory findings: some EPI scholars point out that the inclusion of a broader range of actors can contribute to the framing and structuring of new institutional arrangements (Mullally et al., 2018), while others note that policy formation is rarely consensual and derives from competing ideologies and actors (Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2015; Garcia & Bolwig, 2021).

Based on these insights, we hypothesized that the participation of local communities in indigenous consultations had the potential to exacerbate policy integration challenges due to different cosmovisions at play among the proponents and recipients of projects (*hypothesis 1*).

Participation in EPI and the Advocacy Coalition Framework

During policy formation, local participation is fundamental because it can help local actors define priorities and set policy objectives. It could thus be argued that local participation reduces potential conflicts in the implementation of otherwise nonconsensual policy (van Oosten et al., 2018). In EPI, local participation is enhanced by procedural instruments that coordinate subsystem policy efforts (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016: 223). However, as Cora van Osten et al. have pointed out, "stakeholders may not be given sufficient opportunity to put their priorities on the policy agenda, which thus can result in substantive conflicts where policy objectives from sectors and stakeholder interest do not align" (van Oosten et al., 2018: 64).

According to existing literature, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are the most commonly deployed practices internationally (Jacob & Volkery, 2004; Jacob et al., 2008). Scholars agree that procedural EPI instruments might generate additional benefits such as creating new administrative capacities, offering environmentalists new opportunities, enhancing processes of policy learning, and improving the legitimacy of policy interventions (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010). However, it remains to be seen whether participation provides an element of control over decisions for the public or the possibility of qualitatively shaping the output (O'Faircheallaigh, 2010; Humphreys, 2016). Arguably, the functioning of procedural instruments impacts the potential of opening opportunities for the public to define policy problems and solutions through participation exercises (Carvalho et al., 2016).

Drawing on collaborative governance literature (Fischer, 2018), this article contends that competence is a crucial feature of participation, especially in relation to complex issues. Following other studies (Milhorance et al., 2021), we employed Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) analysis to understand the governance of cross-sectoral conflicts and to explore the political process of policy integration. The ACF core theoretical expectation is that actors merge into advocacy coalitions based on their belief systems to influence policy (Jann & Wegrich, 2007). In this framework, the nature of a problem is defined by relatively stable parameters, including the basic attributes of the problem area, the distribution of natural resources, underlying socio-cultural values, and the norms and procedures established for changing the policy (Weible & Sabatier, 2007).

According to ACF theory, policy-making happens in relation to relatively stable networks of actors that constitute a policy subsystem (Feindt, 2010), "a policy area that is geographically bounded and encompasses policy participants from all levels of government, multiple interests groups, research institutions, and the media" (Weible & Sabatier, 2007:124–5). The ACF is grounded on three theoretical principles: (1) actors interact within coalitions to translate their beliefs into policies; (2) policy problems are linked to policy beliefs; and (3) institutions are filters in the process of converting policy beliefs into outputs (Trein et al., 2021). Nevertheless, competing coalitions differ in terms of available resources, time, education, and institutional position. Their capacity and willingness to influence policy formation are thus regularly unequal (Jensen et al., 2020).

The concept of policy frame is key to understanding how coalitions attempt to influence the policy output insofar as it encompasses beliefs about social action objectives, the causes of a problem, and their appropriate solutions (Nilsson, 2005). In the words of Candel and Biesbroek (2016: 218), the policy frame reflects the "competing or dominant problem definitions of societal problems in public policy debates". Policy frames determine the ways that actor coalitions oppose each other in the policy process, a kind of interaction that generates actual policy (Cejudo & Trein, 2021: 11), although decision-making processes are generally dominated by a particular coalition (Feindt, 2010). Following these insights, we hypothesized that subsystem actor coalitions are likely to dominate decision-making processes and determine policy frames (*hypothesis 2*).

Understanding indigenous consultations as an EPI procedural instrument

Procedural EPI instruments are intended to modify policy substance by altering the decision-making procedures to incorporate environmental variables (Jacob et al., 2008:28). The existing literature has shown that procedural EPI instruments are increasingly being used by policy actors around the world (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010). Notable examples of this are green budgets, SEA, EIA, among others (Jacob & Volkery, 2004; Jacob et al., 2008). However, research on the impact of EPI instruments has mostly focused on European countries and their effectiveness has been limited (Russel & Benson, 2014).

Keeping in mind EPI's Eurocentric legacy, it is not surprising that the procedural instrument of indigenous consultations is largely absent in the existing literature. Unlike other participative procedures, indigenous consultation differs because it is linked to the territorial and cultural rights of indigenous peoples (Leifsen et al., 2017). This instrument enables indigenous people to participate in decisions affecting their territory and their rights, offering them the possibility to define their own development priorities. On paper, this instrument has the potential to alter not only the environmental goals of a given policy, but also the social and economic dimensions at issue (i.e., sustainable development concerns).

Indigenous consultation was established as a basic democratic right after indigenous organizations waged years-long struggles for self-determination (Franco, 2014) and was initially recognized in 1989 in Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2011). Given the socio-demographic characteristics and long-rooted extractive practices in Latin America, indigenous consultation found fertile ground throughout the region (Amparo, 2017; CNDH, 2018a, 2018b; Sanborn et al., 2016). Indigenous consultation must be free, prior, and informed (Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer,

2015). It opens the door for the participation of a broad range of public and private actors (especially affected communities, interested companies, and governmental entities at all levels). Nevertheless, most regional governments have failed to meet international standards for enacting indigenous consultation (Merino, 2018; Torres Wong, 2018) and left the so-called "implementation gap" unresolved (Wright & Tomaselli, 2019).

Overall, the implementation of indigenous consultation has been widely criticized by scholars and indigenous organizations. Rodríguez-Garavito (2011: 275) considers that "[i]t entails the juridification of collective claims of cultural identity, self-determination, and control over territories and resources", thereby constituting a form of neoliberal multiculturalism that recognizes cultural difference and collective rights without entitling territorial autonomy. Indigenous activists have similarly identified indigenous consultation to be a "bureaucratic trap", a procedure that ultimately affirms state and organizational processes and agendas (Dunlap, 2019).

Data and methods

This research consists of two empirical studies of clean energy infrastructure development in Mexico, a country that has been selected for several reasons. First, Mexico provides grounds to confirm or disprove the theory of EPI transferability to low- and medium-income countries (Gerring, 2007). As member of the OECD, Mexico has been included in the analysis of EPI toolbox implementation (Jacob & Volkery, 2004; Jacob et al., 2008) and empirical research shows the existence of effective EPI in the country (von Lüpke & Well, 2020; Garcia & Lucatello, 2021). Furthermore, the Mexican government has committed to ambitious climate and clean energy goals and includes indigenous consultation within the national energy framework (Solorio, 2021).

This research complements the small-N analysis with a within-case comparison (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). Two empirical cases are selected. The first case consists of a project promoted mainly through private and foreign investment with the endorsement of public authorities. The second project is closely tied to the national oil company PEMEX. The cases were selected based on the involvement of a wide array of public and private actors in each project and the cross-sectoral challenges presented by each one.

The within-case analysis is carried out by studying the policy frames put forward by advocacy coalitions. In the strategic interaction approach, frame is defined, in the words of Goffman, as the "'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences within their life space and the world at large" (Goffman, 1974: 21). The success or failure of involved coalitions to influence the policy frame and output is examined using a strategy of pattern matching that involves the comparison of a predicted theoretical pattern with an observed empirical pattern (Mahoney, 2000). To put it simply, we contrast the final policy frame that is used to present infrastructure projects with the frames promoted by different advocacy coalitions during initial participatory exercises.

The analysis recognizes that frames can serve two purposes: (1) the diagnosis or identification of particular aspects of social life as being problematic and in need of change and (2) the prognosis or proposal of solutions to the diagnosed problem (Benford & Snow, 2000). This is carried out in a two-tiered analysis that traces the ways that advocacy coalitions identify sustainable development challenges related to developmental projects (diagnostic framing) and then suggest solutions, identify strategies, and set milestones

(prognostic framing). The research involved inductive coding of collected material in relation to two analytical categories: problem definition and proposed solutions. The research paid attention to particular metaphors, catchphrases, and other symbolic devices to provide reliable coding (Gamson, 1989: 159), considering both explicit and implicit references (Lindekilde, 2014).

The empirical material was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Data gathering included the review of governmental and private websites pertaining to involved actors, such as companies. Press releases and official documents were also included in the analysis. Information concerning social actors was obtained principally from social media platforms. This was complemented with information published by civil society organizations involved in the process. Information employed in Tables 1, 2 and 3 is referred to in Annex 1. Secondary sources consisted of journalistic reports in local, national and international media and information contained in Spanish- and English-language academic publications. The analysis includes political statements made during consultation processes and at the time of decision-making (considered as the opening of the public infrastructure or the presentation of the final agreement).

Empirical material: the 'participatory' implementation of clean energy infrastructure projects in Mexico

The implementation of indigenous consultations in Latin America has received considerable scholarly attention. In general, a consensus exists in the sense that no mediating role from part of the state has existed (Merino, 2018), but instead it has been seen as a "manifestation of the political influence of the extractivist stakeholders on domestic policies" (Torres Wong, 2018:8). Overall, indigenous consultation is understood more as "a forum for communication and negotiation among social actors with distinct and conflicting interests: states, corporations, and indigenous communities" (Falleti & Riofrancos, 2018: 89).

Two positions have headed the advocacy coalitions: the 'interested public' and the 'affected public' (Carvalho et al., 2016). Indeed, conflicts concerning developmental projects in indigenous lands have shown to engender similar advocacy coalitions across different countries and different sectors (Carvalho, 2006; Cisneros, 2015; Akchurin, 2020; Bastos, 2020; MacPhail et al., 2021). On the one hand, there are *pro-development coalitions* that are generally composed by representatives of state agencies and extractive industries (either public or private). On the other hand, there is a *pro-territory coalition* composed by indigenous activists, and supported by environmental or human rights organizations. The compositions of the advocacy coalitions and the summary of policy problems in our two cases are detailed in Table 1.

Clean energy infrastructure projects in the Mexican context

Case 1 involves the Mexican power sector, which has expanded in terms of participants and sources of energy in recent years (Viscidi et al., 2020; Rousseau, 2021). Although the state has traditionally played a central role (particularly through the country's Federal Electricity Commission [CFE]), private actors have been the key protagonists in the renewable energy 'boom' in Mexico, with wind and solar energy being crucial drivers of the Mexican energy transition. Here, almost all development investors are global companies that specialize in renewable energy production and their subsidiaries. The conflict over the Eólica del Sur

Table 1 Relatively stable parameters and policy subsystems of cases 1 and 2

		Case 1: The Eólica del Sur consultation	Case 2: The Sonora pipeline consultation
Relatively stable parameters	Basic attributes of the problem area	The Tehuantepec Isthmus is a region in the southern state of Oaxaca which has the major wind power potential in the country	The Yaqui territory is an arid zone located in front of the Gulf of California, being part of the northern state of Sonora. The Yaqui River borns in the neighboring state of Chihuahua and crosses Sonora up to the Gulf of California
	Basic distribution of natural resources	The Tehuantepec Isthmus' lands are considered as social property, including ejido and communal lands. The decision over these lands depend on the community consensus	By means of a presidential decree, since 1940 the Yaqui Tribe was granted about 400,000 hectares of land and the right to 50% of the water coming from La Angostura dam
	Underlying social-cultural values	The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is mainly populated by two ethnic groups: the Zapotecs and the Ikoots. The right to self-determination is central for the inhabitants of this region	The 8 traditional peoples are Loma de Guamúchil, Loma de Bácum, Tórim, Vicam, Pótam, Ráhum, Huirivis and Belem. Their territorial organization is considered sacred. The right to self-government is central for the inhabitants of this region
	Norms and procedures	Land policy in the Tehuantepec Isthmus is nested both in the Mexican federal constitution and in the Oaxaca state constitution	Land and water policy in the Yaqui territory is nested both in the Mexican federal constitution and in the Sonora state constitution

Table 1 (continued)

		Case 1: The Eólica del Sur consultation		Case 2: The Sonora pipeline consultation	
Policy subsystem	Policy area (geographically bounded)	The area encompassing the wind corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec includes the municipalities of Asunción Ixtaltepec, El Espinal, Ciudad Ixtepec, Santo Domingo Ingenio, Unión Hidalgo and Juchitán de Zaragoza. The Eólica del Sur project extends over 5 thousand 332 hectare, located in the municipalities of Juchitán and El Espinal		The area is defined by the Yaqui territory, affecting the municipalities of Guaymas, Cajeme, Empalme and Bácum in Sonora. The Sonora pipeline directly affects the lands from the people of Loma Bácum and Loma Guamúchil	
		Coalition a	Coalition b	Coalition a	Coalition b
	Policy participants	Federal government: Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Environment Regional government of Oaxaca Local governments (municipalities): The municipality of Juchitán de Zaragoza and El Espinal Private companies: Almost 40% of the invested capital in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec comes from Spain, with companies such as Acciona Energía, Iberdrola Renovables, Gamesa and Naturgy Eólica del Sur private funds: Mitsubishi, Balam Fund, FEMSA, Cuauhtémoc Moctezuma, and Crown Eólica del Sur public funds: Mexican Development Bank Banobras, Government of Oaxaca, the UN Clean Development Mechanism and Inter-American Development Bank	Local actors: Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Defense of Land and Territory (APIIDTT) Civil society organizations: Fundar, Center of Analysis and Research; Mexican Center for Environmental Law(CEMDA), Educa Oaxaca, Services for an Alternative Education Academia: Union of Scientists Committed to Society	Federal government: Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Mexican Oil Company (PEMEX) and the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) Regional government of Sonora Private actors: IEnova, Sempra Energy and the Mexican Natural Gas Association (AMGN)	Local actors: The eight peoples of the Yaqui Tribe, mainly their traditional authorities and the peoples of Loma Bácum and Loma Guamúchil Civil society organizations and actors: SERAPAZ and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of the former president Lázaro Cárdenas and a prominent figure of the Mexican left

Source: Own elaboration based on Reports from ProDESC, (2015); Smart Energy Sonora, (2017), SENER, (2017); CNDH, (2018a); Wind Power, (2018); Navarro, (2021)

Wind Park, located along the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in the southern state of Oaxaca (Sothern Mexico), is a long history of community resistance as well as its counterpart, project developer insistence (Ávila-Calero, 2017; Dunlap, 2019). Incidentally, this project is representative of the government's commitment to decarbonization.

With the Energy Reforms in 2013, Mexico adopted indigenous consultation as a mechanism to safeguard the interests and rights of the communities and indigenous peoples affected by energy projects. In the case of the Eólica del Sur Wind Park, private investors argued that the new participatory process could be an obstacle to investors (Gerber, 2015: 3). In contrast with this, local communities demanded that their participation rights be respected, and civil organizations committed support to help the indigenous people of Juchitán in their defense of their collective human rights. The consultation process took place between November 2014 and July 2015 due to the judicialization of the process, with the Ministry of Energy (SENER) overseeing its implementation.

Case 2 involves the Sonora Gas Pipeline project, which is related to the hydrocarbon subsector. Since the decrease in oil production in the early 2000s, Mexico has wagered on natural gas as a transition fuel (Melgar, 2010). Moreover, the breaking-up of the PEMEX monopoly was justified on the grounds that investments were needed for updating gas transmission networks, a process that led to the creation of PEMEX Gas and Basic Petrochemicals. Private actors were allowed to participate in gas transportation projects, facilitating the emergence of public–private partnerships involving Mexican actors and foreign counterparts. This project was conceived as part of the modernization of Mexico's near-obsolete pipeline network and depended on the importation of natural gas from the state of Arizona in the USA (Hernández, 2017).

In 2012, the construction contract for the Sonora Gas Pipeline was granted to IEnova, a subsidiary of the American firm Sempra Energy (Navarro, 2016). The project was divided into two sections: pipeline Sásabe–Guaymas and pipeline Guaymas–El Oro. However, construction was delayed due to opposition from the Yaqui Tribe. With the government seeking to obtain the community's approval, an indigenous consultation was carried out between July 2014 and August 2015 through governmental SENER mandate (CNDH, 2018a).

Local community participation and policy integration challenges

Our first empirical finding is that, in both cases, coalitions were formed as expected. Relevant here is the fact that governmental actors did not carry out mediation roles and instead advocated for the development of the projects. In both cases, federal- and regional-level governmental authorities (the governments of Oaxaca and Sonora) presented the clean infrastructure projects as being linked to the country's energy transition challenges; without them, they contended the country could not meet its climate goals without hampering the economy. They framed sustainability challenges as matters pertaining to regional development, investment growth, job creation, social benefits, and climate mitigation goals.

In case 1, the Ministry of Energy has been a fierce advocate of wind energy exploitation in the Tehuantepec Isthmus (SENER, 2013a), and the regional government of Oaxaca made it clear which side it supported (stating that the governmental position is to have full respect for international standards related to the carrying out of indigenous consultation in Juchitán so as to obtain their approval for the installation of the wind park (Rodríguez, 2015). In case 2, the Ministry of Energy championed gas as a transition fuel that is cleaner than other fossil fuels, contending that that the Sonora Pipeline would guarantee

the availability of gas at competitive prices for the states of Sonora and Sinaloa, thereby promoting the development of different communities in the region (SENER, 2013b).

Table 2 contains the integrative frames employed by advocacy coalitions in relation to sustainability problems and their appropriate solutions. Different frames have been divided into two sub-themes: (i) clean energy projects and the environment, and (ii) clean energy projects and public interests. As can be seen, the empirical material supports hypothesis 1: the participation of local communities in indigenous consultations exacerbates policy integration challenges due to different cosmovisions that are at play among the proponents and recipients of projects.

In regard to sub-theme i, pro-development coalitions in cases 1 and 2 advocated mainly for clean energy infrastructure based on concerns for the climate and the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. These coalitions' utilitarian conception of nature—where environmental impacts are reduced to landscape issues—is remarkable. In it, project impacts on biodiversity are held to be fixeable with the simple application of technical mitigation measures. As with previous research (Backhouse & Lehmann, 2020), our findings also show that these coalitions' vision of sustainability is tantamount to low-carbon economic growth and nothing more. In stark contrast with this, the frames enacted by members of pro-territory coalitions reflect a more integrated vision of sustainability that involves relational views that do not set society apart from nature (Velasco-Herrejón et al., 2022). In both cases, the pro-territory coalitions considered clean energy infrastructure projects to be part of a larger plan to plunder indigenous territories without considering the negative impacts of these interventions on their way of life, organization, and identity. Furthermore, while coalition a employed technical arguments to explain the minimization of environmental impacts, coalition b repeatedly made accusations about deliberately fake or hidden information that prevented a proper assessment of possible environmental impacts by local communities.

In regard to sub-theme ii, pro-development coalitions in cases 1 and 2 advocated mainly for the need to create well-paying jobs, increase competitiveness, and enhance the quality of life and social conditions of local communities through the sustainable and efficient use of fuels. Meanwhile, pro-territory coalitions emphasized the fact that economic benefits would not be equitably distributed and the negative effects of the projects on social cohesion and local economies. In both cases, coalition b claimed that land dispossession impacted the social and cultural fabrics of their communities. They also explained how their community-centered cosmovision (or *comunalidad*) plays a central role in their use of resources (Velasco-Herrejón et al., 2022).

Policy frames and control of decision-making processes

In both cases, the positive outcome of the indigenous consultation was contested. In case 1, the contestation took place on legal basis and centered on whether international standards had been met. The judicial battle caused a four-year delay in the development of the project (Torres, 2020), and Eólica del Sur wind park was not inaugurated until May 2019 under the new government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, whose term commenced in 2018). In case 2, the contestation took radical forms, including direct action tactics by the Yaqui people against the pipeline. The infrastructure project continued in June 2021 only after president López Obrador covered the expenses for a new route for the pipeline and created an ancestral land restitution plan for the Yaqui Tribe. As of today, the project is yet

Table 2 Integrative frames of cases 1 and 2

		Clean energy projects and the environment		Clean energy projects and public interests	
		Problem definition	Proposed solutions	Problem definition	Proposed solutions
Case 1	Coalition a	FEMSA, 2012: "[…] its construction […] will provide us with the opportunity to cover up to 85% of our energy needs in Mexico with clean and renewable energy" SEMARNAT, 2014: "The main impacts are on the flora, on the fauna, mainly of avian species: birds, chiropteran or bats"	Eólica del Sur, 2014: "With the project will prevent the emission of 879,000 tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, by avoiding the equivalent consumption of fossil fuels" SEMARNAT, 2014: "[…] the Promoting Party has to purchase insurance or acquire insurance or a bond with which to guarantee all compliance with its conditions, that is, if it were to generate more environmental impacts than those indicated in its environmental impact study, it will have to pay for the ecological damages it could generate"	SENER, 2014: "[…] from the federal government we would like to achieve a much greater economic development in the state, this is part of what has been proposed in the National Infrastructure Program […]" SENER, 2019: "In terms of energy and electricity, we are going to contribute, because only in this way are we going to detonate development, growth and generating jobs"	Eólica del Sur, 2014: "The investments during the entire construction process translate afterwards into local economic spill overs, the payments that go directly to the municipality that will be reflected in works for Juchitán, the payments that are made to the owners or holders at the end of the day they invest in Juchitán and in the end it is a chain of development, a chain of investment that translates into profits for Juchitán" SENER, 2015: "[…] will have an estimated total of 14,454 million pesos, which represents one of the most important wind industry investments in the state of Oaxaca in recent years"

Table 2 (continued)

	Clean energy projects and the environment		Clean energy projects and public interests	
	Problem definition	Proposed solutions	Problem definition	Proposed solutions
Coalition b	APIIDTT, 2014: "[…] these are schemes to plunder our wealth, leaving no profit; these are businesses that prey on our natural assets, at the cost of our lives and our forms of organization and identity […]" UCCS, 2015: "[…] we conclude that the development of the "Eólica del Sur" project had to be rejected by the General Directorate of Environmental Impact and Risk (DGIRA) because there are major uncertainties about the project arising from the deliberate misrepresentation and omission of information"	APIIDTT, 2016: "[…] to promote and encourage fishing and planting, which are activities around which we, the Ikoots and Binni'zaa peoples, have been recreating our lives" APIIDTT, 2014: "[…] we demand for this process to comply with international standards […]"	APIIDTT, 2020: "[The eolic investment] does not represent the welfare that these investments have promised, together with the series of irregularities related to land tenure, private control over a public good such as energy"	APIIDTT, 2015: "The mechanisms of such shared use could include, among others, shareholding, fair and equitable, in electricity generation companies; direct or indirect control of certain exploitation rights that oblige companies to negotiate directly with the affected population; the formation of companies with a purely indigenous capital that compete, fairly and equitably, in the production of electricity; or the signing of agreements that guarantee the indigenous community a percentage, fair and equitable, of the benefits of wind projects"

Table 2 (continued)

		Clean energy projects and the environment		Clean energy projects and public interests	
		Problem definition	Proposed solutions	Problem definition	Proposed solutions
Case 2	Coalition a	IEnova, 2014: "Increased consumption of Natural Gas in Mexico is due […] to the search for sustainable growth with the use of clean fuels, as well as to the review and reform of environmental standards that control the emission of pollutants" "[Changes in] the variables visibility, landscape quality and fragility, human presence and landscape uniqueness"	IEnova, 2014: "Priority to realize the materialization of the project […] to contribute […] on the availability of clean energy with less environmental impact" "The infrastructure of the project will be mostly underground, so it will be integrated into an already modified landscape." "[…] the species that will be removed, do not compromise their existence because their distribution areas are larger than the project area […] they will be rescued and relocated"	SENER, 2013: "[…] the gas scenario in the country led us to shortages due to this drop in production and because the gas pipeline network has outdated" IEnova, 2014: "The Northwest region is characterized because it is not connected to the National Gas Pipeline System and therefore does not have access to national production"	SENER, 2013: "[The pipeline] will guarantee availability at commercial and competitive prices for the states of Sonora and Sinaloa, which will promote the development of the various communities in this region […] will be reflected in better electricity rates for the inhabitants of the region"

Table 2 (continued)

	Clean energy projects and the environment		Clean energy projects and public interests	
	Problem definition	Proposed solutions	Problem definition	Proposed solutions
Coalition b	Yaqui Tribe, 2019: "They take the wealth, but they are leaving us the contamination, with these projects us indigenous peoples are the ones who take the losses, of identity, territory, communities and life itself" Yaqui Tribe, 2017: "One of the main risks is the loss of territory, the ravaging of native, healing plants" "They never said the risks, the disadvantages that such work would bring therefore. They only spoke about the nice things, the pleasant things, as they have always done, but they never spoke about the risks" "Given the hazardous nature of that gas, it does not need a match or a lighter to ignite. At the same contact with oxygen, it bursts. In the range of 3 km there would be desolation and destruction" Yaqui Tribe, 2015: The information was very technical and was conveyed, but doubts could not be clarified in depth. The answers were always in a way of knowing how to persuade and give the community long-windedness. A little bit of transparency was lacking because the information remained in what it was, but not in what things implied for the community"	Yaqui Tribe, 2021: "[…] it is a sacred duty of every Yoreme to protect their territory and to carry out the last consequence, and to the last defense for their life because this is practically our life, they take away our land and they take this away from us" "The gas pipeline should not pass through here, nor in any part of the eight towns, either, because the lands are communal, they belong to everyone"	Yaqui Tribe, 2019: "We have had many encroachments: the highway, the railroads, the Pemex pipelines, the mines, and none of these projects have brought us development, to the contrary" Yaqui Tribe, 2017: "We would be handing over our territory, the water, everything that is ours and what is for our grandchildren" Yaqui Tribe, 2016: "If they were to achieve the purpose [the construction of the gas pipeline], that's the end of the Yaqui ethnic group: its identity, uses and customs"	Yaqui Tribe, 2019: "We proposed to them to take the gas pipeline to Ciudad Obregón, into the industrial park, so they don't affect the Yaqui nation" Yaqui Tribe, 2016: "That they abide by the law, that they respect our internal norm, that they don't meddle with us and that they respect the sacredterritory"

Source: The following information was compiled based on data gathered from Arzaba, (2017); Navarro, (2019); Oropeza y Ramírez, (2021); Oropeza, (2019); Olvera, (2017); Vega, (2019); SENER, (2013a, 2013b); IEnova, (2014); Centro de Colaboración Cívica, (2015); Muñoz, (2017); Olvera, (2016); FEMSA, (2012); Eólica del Sur, (2014); Gobierno del estado de Oaxaca, (2019); UCCS, (2015); SENER, (2014); SENER, (2015); APIIDTT, (2014a, 2014b); APIIDTT, (2015); APIIDTT, (2020)

unfinished. Both cases demonstrate the stability of coalitions, which continue to exist today despite changes of government at federal and regional levels.

Our findings on the policy frames employed in the final presentation of both projects affirmed hypothesis 2 (see Table 3). Indeed, there was no difference between the initial frames employed by the pro-development coalition and the final policy frames that were adopted. In case 1, the climate mitigation frame was maintained in relation to the project's environmental challenges, and no signs of a more integrated sustainability vision were detected. The same low-carbon frame was employed to present the final agreement for the pipeline in case 2. The frames on clean energy projects and public interest were similarly maintained. In both cases, the projects were presented as positive contributors to economic growth and regional development. Frames concerning different (community-based) uses of resources or more equitable distribution of economic benefits within regional communities were not introduced.

Discussion

The findings presented above demonstrate that the relationship between participation and EPI is not as straightforward as the existing literature suggests. On the contrary, different cosmovisions at play among the proponents and recipients of projects exacerbate integration challenges, particularly in multicultural contexts such as Latin America. Much in line with findings in related literature, our research indicates that the procedural EPI instrument of indigenous consultation can reinforce the marginalization of indigenous groups as opposed to incorporating indigenous cosmovisions and concerns. Our research also illustrates the ways that advocacy coalitions do not compete on a level playing field, even when interactions involve procedural instruments specifically designed to increase the participation and empowerment of marginalized groups (O'Faircheallaigh, 2010). As our research demonstrates, the inclusion of a broader range of actors does not necessarily mean that their frames will be incorporated into new institutional arrangements (Mullally et al., 2018).

Recent scholarship on complex issues governance has shown that competence is a crucial feature of participation. Our research on the employment of ACF further illustrates a type of "double-trouble" that exists in participatory exercises like indigenous consultations, which have been widely adopted in Latin America to resolve multicultural challenges: first, governments very rarely adopt a mediator role, and, second, the distribution of power is fundamentally unequal. Despite the proliferation of indigenous consultation exercises, decision-making on clean energy (extractivist) projects is regularly nonconsensual and the result of the imposition of the beliefs of one coalition (pro-development) over another (pro-territory). While collaborative governance and policy process theories such as ACF have been helpful for analyzing this participatory paradox, the structural inequalities faced by indigenous groups in policy integration processes require further and more rigorous analysis and discussion. Simply put, Mexico has only advanced the integration of the energy and the environmental sectors (von Lüpke & Well, 2020) thanks to extractivist projects that limit sustainability challenges within the frame of climate mitigation.

Processual analysis has brought attention to the political dynamics of policy integration and the role of policy frames as drivers of integration. Nevertheless, greater scholarly attention must be given to the ways that frames are constructed in the first place. As regards EPI, recent scholarship has shown the limitations of traditional definitions of

Table 3 Policy frames of cases 1 and 2

	Clean energy projects and the environment	Clean energy projects and public interests
Case 1	Government of the State of Oaxaca, 2019: "Oaxaca is consolidated as the undisputed leader in wind energy generation." "Sustainable energy, environmentally friendly, but also cheap energy since here in Oaxaca it is one of the cheapest energies that are generated in the country" Government of the State of Oaxaca, 2017: "The fact that we only have an estimation, with more than 400 megawatts; the saving of more than 170 tons of CO2 […] allows us to send a message to the world that in Oaxaca there are conditions to invest"	Government of the State of Oaxaca, 2019: "[Oaxaca is] a safe place for new investments in this area." "There are conditions to development the state, for there to be investments from companies as important as Mitsubishi" "In the history of Oaxaca, we have never grown at this rate. We are the fourth fastest growing state in the country. According to INEGI data on industrial growth, Oaxaca grew 11.5%. We are the second state with the second highest industrial growth in the country" "Today we inaugurate the largest wind farm in Latin America, with social, economic and environmental benefits" Government of the State of Oaxaca, 2017: "The Governor highlighted that this is an investment made by Mitsubishi Corporation with the Mexican government through the National Infrastructure Fund (Fonadin) to generate more than 1,500 employments" "This project was being negotiated for six years, but for "reasons of lack of governability" the construction was not finalized until this year" SENER, 2019: "Highlighted the importance of this project for the Mexican government, since it represents an investment of $1.2 billion dollars for the country." "The construction of wind farms in Oaxaca has faced social problems and rejection among the inhabitants of the Isthmus; now the plants are installed by mutual consensus between the population and the three levels of government" "We are a serious government that will respect contracts that are in right standing. We are giving legal certainty to investors and social certainty to the inhabitants" Government of the municipality of Juchitán, 2019: "[…] our enormous natural potential, that our riches, must produce benefits into the municipality […] We do not want the treasure of the wind to accumulate in the accounts of large corporations and not produce benefits for our locals"

Table 3 (continued)

	Clean energy projects and the environment	Clean energy projects and public interests
Case 2	Federal Electricity Commission (CFE), 2022: "The development of the liquefaction terminal [to which the Sonora pipeline will be connected] will allow the CFE to take advantage of the natural gas surpluses and transportation capacity from the Texas basins to Topolobampo in order to increase the supply of the fuel to the CFE's generation plants in Baja California Sur, in accordance with President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's commitment to supply the state with low-cost electricity and less polluting and more environmentally friendly fuels, promoting economic growth and development in the region, as well as strengthening CFE's presence in global liquefied natural gas markets" "With this new route, CFE will be able to supply natural gas to industrial, commercial and residential markets in the Mexican Pacific states, Baja California Sur, as well as the Topolobampo liquefaction terminal"	Presidency of the Republic, 2020: "For this reason, we have to reach agreements, because Mexico loses. The budget is not the government's money, it is the people's money, public servants are simply administrators of the people's money, and they were very bad and corrupt administrators. So, that is why they are going to help us to reach agreements, it does not mean that the pipeline has to be diverted, but we have to connect it, because otherwise we are paying fines to these companies, many of them foreign companies associated with corrupt Mexican officials and politicians" "[…] in the case of the Yaquis, the proposal being made is to make a new route, something that had not been tried, but instead of resolving the matter with the use of force, there are prisoners, and we want to reach an agreement through dialogue. It is going to cost us more, but we are going to solve the problem; it would cost us tremendously, more if this gas pipeline were to remain unfinished, if it were to go all the way to Guaymas and not from Guaymas to Topolobampo. […] So, I have been saying to all the people, to all the people of Mexico, that Pemex must be rescued, the Federal Electricity Commission must be rescued" Federal Electricity Commission (CFE), 2022: "These projects under development would allow CFE to maximize the potential use of existing pipeline systems, provide additional sources of LNG supply for isolated markets in Mexico and continue to expand the supply of LNG to the global market. The agreements reflect the commitment […] to continue advancing energy infrastructure projects that enhance the region's energy security, promote North American energy integration and foster economic growth and social well-being in the region"

Source: The following information was compiled based on data gathered from Presidencia de la República, (2020a, 2020b); Presidencia de la República, (2020a); CFE, (2022a, 2022b); CFE, (2022a); SENER, (2019); Gobierno del estado de Oaxaca, (2019); Calvo, 2019; SIPAZ, (2019); Manzo y Pérez, (2019); El Financiero, (2017)

sustainable development, and called for the development of more integrated approaches (Biermann, 2020; Seghezzo, 2009). Our study has shown that this relates importantly to the shortcomings of indigenous consultations in terms of communication, participation, and influence over public decisions (e.g., Torres Wong, 2018; Dunlap, 2019), where the missing link to understand these limitations are the structural inequalities affecting indigenous peoples.

In terms of climate policy and (in)justice, this can be observed according to a three-layered explanation: a) a distributive injustice, with indigenous peoples paying the costs of climate change impacts and policies while rarely receiving the direct benefits; b) a procedural injustice, the exclusion of indigenous peoples from the main decision centers; and c) a epistemic injustice, the way in which climate policy overshadows the indigenous people's capacity to communicate its own knowledge and way of relating to the environment. While policy sciences have contributed importantly to explain the *pros* and *cons* of these sort of participatory exercises, practical solutions may require the establishment of a dialogue with other social disciplines and groups. Policy sciences need to better understand the indigenous ways of relating to the environment. With that purpose in mind, and considering the need to tackle the structural inequalities that indigenous peoples face in participation events (Sierra, 2004), policy integration literature has to nurture from anthropology debates on how to dialogue with different cultures. It is not enough to speak about policy frames, but attention must be paid to the related cosmovisions and beliefs.

This research offers two normative implications. First, the need to address the ways that multicultural countries can carry out development projects impacting indigenous lands more responsibly. Second, the need to redesign participatory exercises so that communities are able to influence institutional arrangements. Both concerns touch on the issue of the legitimacy of democratic states in times of collaborative governance, and of the potential to construct more integrated approaches to sustainability in the context of climate crisis. Although the existing literature on EPI has the potential to help to resolve these challenges, future scholarship will need to overcome its Eurocentric and state-centric inclinations to achieve this in a more significant way.

Conclusions

This article contributes to the existing literature on policy integration in two ways: 1) it explores the role of participation by non-state actors in the policy integration process, especially in highly politicized policy areas such as energy and the environment, and 2) it identifies the limitations of applicability of policy integration literature, particularly in contexts where state–society interactions are radically different compared to Western countries, including Latin American countries inhabited by indigenous groups. Although this research is limited to one country, it nonetheless calls for a broad expansion of the scholarly discussion on (environmental) policy integration challenges in multicultural societies.

Indigenous consultation is an important example of the way that certain assumptions about policy integration are uncritically exported from one region to another where they will yield different outcomes. Accordingly, policy integration literature needs to further problematize the concept of participation and carry out more empirical research studies in the Global South. Furthermore, existing policy integration literature must be nourished with scholarly visions from the Global South. Contributions from the field of anthropology

may be particularly fruitful for theorizing policy integration in contexts where the state–society relationship differs from that of European nation-states/Global North societies.

EPI literature has contributed importantly to the generation of policy solutions to the environmental and climate crises the world is facing. However, recent critiques to the own paradigm of environmental policy have called for incorporating indigenous visions and practices. Against this background, this critique to the Euro-centric legacy of the EPI literature might trigger a wider research agenda with the potential of expanding the range of policy options to face environmental and climate crises. To that end, further research should deeply explore policy integration experiences in indigenous contexts, the processes of self-consultation or *auto-consultas* as alternative participatory exercises (Torres Wong, 2018), among other avenues of investigation that arise from considering indigenous practices as a source of inspiration to think about alternative styles of public administration. Finally, this research agenda must avoid epistemic extractivism and be opened to epistemic and methodological plurality.

This special issue has the goal to understand the way in which policies are the result of interactions among actors with different interests, values and preferences (Cejudo & Trein, 2023). In relation to the energy transition in Mexico, this paper has shown that policy subsystems can collaborate for enhancing policy integration only because more integrated (indigenous) views of sustainability are neglected. Politicization and the involvement of a wide array of social actors can complicate the process of policy integration, placing into tension different principles of the public administration functioning: efficiency and effectiveness, on the one hand, and democratic and inclusive decision-making on the other. Following the theoretical expectation posited in the introductory paper, this work has illustrated that complex policy problems are likely to trigger integrated policy proposals, but these may not be enough to deal with integration challenges in multicultural societies. These findings call for the further problematization of the relationship between participation and policy integration in multicultural context such as Latin America, a pending task for the EPI research agenda.

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