The global political economy of adaptation funding: the case of indigenous peoples

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Introduction

The finance of climate-related actions responded to the mainstreaming of global climate goals in international policy. Consequently, a climate funding structure was developed and orchestrated by international organisations. The initiation of a climate funding structure dates back to 1991 with the creation of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) that aimed at funding environmental and sustainable development projects, amongst which climate change actions were included. The World Bank established this funding mechanism with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The GEF strategies embraced only mitigation objectives until 2003 when the adaptation strategy was incorporated (Mace, 2005). The UNFCCC named the GEF as its financial mechanism in 1998 (Report of the Conference of the Parties on Its Fourth Session, 1999). Under the guidance of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, other mechanisms have been established. For instance, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Adaptation Fund (AF) - all coordinated by the GEF, and focused on funding adaptation (Mace, 2005; Stadelmann et al., 2014).

Moreover, the 2015 Paris Agreement represented a benchmark for the adaptation strategy in general and adaptation funding in particular. After this agreement, adaptation was acknowledged as a global political goal, and not only as a localised technical process (Persson, 2019; Persson & Dzebo, 2019), amid the evident effects of climate change and the deepening inequality exacerbated by this phenomenon. Whilst global adaptation funding originated in 2011, this architecture only maintained a supporting role in climate change alleviation until 2015. After the Paris agreement, there were two important expectations from global climate institutions concerning adaptation: a) to foster more transnational participation (including NGOs, and civil

society, but also, business groups); and, b) to increase funding for adaptation (Chan & Amling, 2019; Persson, 2019; Persson & Dzebo, 2019). This latter strategy aims at reinforcing actions in Least Developed Countries (LDC) and other vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples. Novel research is tracking these changes in global climate politics. Although, there is still limited knowledge as to whether participation has been incorporated into the adaptation funding architecture and whether adaptation funding has increased for the so-called "vulnerable populations" (Bäckstrand & Kuyper, 2017; Chan & Amling, 2019; Persson & Dzebo, 2019).

Drawing on critical studies of global political economy in adaptation funding and distributive justice, the aim of this paper is two-fold. First, I map the architecture of the indigenous peoples' adaptation funding. This architecture includes the International Organisations and other actors participating in the policy-making and distribution of indigenous-related adaptation funds, and funding patterns. Second, I analyse whether orchestrators of adaptation funding have lived up to the adaptation commitments to increase participation and funding.

Empirically, I centre on the case of indigenous peoples' adaptation. By taking indigenous as the focal point, I state that indigenous interests compete with dominant economic and political interests. Those dominant interests, such as funding infrastructure or profitable projects, overpower indigenous peoples' interests in adaptation policy-making processes. In contrast, indigenous interests are based on environmental values, which means indigenous peoples understand and respect their natural environments from where they learn and obtain resources for their nourishment, health care and spiritual guidance (McGregor et al., 2020; Whyte, 2020). Considering that indigenous environments are at stake, there is still a lot of room for funding orchestrators to improve how adaptation funding decisions and allocation occurs.

The paper uses a mixed-methods approach, including statistical analysis, secondary data review and small-*n* semi-structured interviews. Concretely, I analysed the 2018 dataset of the *climate-related* OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - External Development Finance Statistics database. Whilst this dataset is useful to inform about the general picture of climate-related funding flows, it also has shortcomings that are critically reviewed alongside the analysis. I thus complement

the analysis using other funding-related literature and official documents of the revised institutions.

In all, the paper, first, provides an overview of the adaptation funding architecture. In this section, I discussed the actors implicated at both the orchestration and distribution levels, along with the patterns and dynamics of funding allocation. Further, I analyse funding allocated to indigenous communities comparing mitigation and adaptation funds and how significant are these funds for enhancing indigenous peoples' adaptation. I close the paper by drawing conclusions from the previous analysis and making suggestions about how to improve the architecture of adaptation funding for indigenous communities.

The architecture of adaptation funding for indigenous peoples.

The orchestration of climate funding flows has generated financial-based networks where different actors intervene with specific roles to achieve agreed climate goals. Many climate funding commitments made by public actors (states) have been agreed upon within the UNFCCC system (Persson, 2019). The UNFCCC distributes funds to other IOs such as the GEF (GEF, 2016), which also channels financial resources to other actors like IOs and NGOs (Graham & Thompson, 2014; Mace, 2005). Graham & Thompson (2014, p. 114) argues that the GEF is the main *funding orchestrator* for steering adaptation funding distribution assisted by intermediaries or implementing agencies such as the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP.

Annexe 1 showcases the actors and dynamics involved in climate funding processes (providers, intermediaries and beneficiaries) for the adaptation of indigenous peoples. Patterns are also traceable according to where funded projects are implemented (i.e. region, recipient country, and benefited cities or communities). About the funding sources, the literature on funding mentions two primary types: bilateral and multilateral. The main difference is that bilateral funds are directly delivered to developing countries, whereas multilateral funds are allocated to developing countries through intermediaries. These two types of funds also have distinct levels of legitimacy concerning funding allocation principles. For instance, multilateral organisations have been called into question for following elite-driven voting (Graham & Thompson, 2014); and, for failing to apply relevant criteria when allocating adaptation projects

(e.g. a thorough guideline of how to target must-needed countries) (Khan et al., 2020; Weikmans et al., 2017).

Both, bilateral and multilateral sources intervene in adaptation funding for indigenous communities. Concerning multilateral sources, there is the Green Climate Fund (GCF) that was agreed in the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 and operationalised in the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17) (Ciplet et al., 2013, Green Climate Fund, 2020). This is the largest fund of the UNFCCC system, and it funds both mitigation-related and adaptation-related projects (Green Climate Fund, 2020). The other multilateral source is the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The other sixteen providers are either bilateral or private sources.

Remarkably, amongst the thirteen bilateral sources, there are six high-income countries with indigenous populations: Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Australia, and the United States. Except for Australia and the United States, those high-income countries belong to the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum where states, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic settlers discuss issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic region (Arctic Council, n.d.).

Notably, the GEF is not amongst the sources of adaptation funding for indigenous peoples. A revision of its official documents showed that some GEF projects reported for 2018 include indigenous peoples, although those projects are not specifically designed to target indigenous communities. Instead, GEF projects specifically targeting indigenous peoples (amongst other local populations) are part of the Small Grants Programme (SGP), which has a considerably more limited budget. Even when adaptation is one of the components of these projects, they are not primarily targeting climate change. Instead, the SGP funds sustainable development and conservation projects (GEF SGP, n.d.).

To operationalise indigenous-related adaptation projects, there are extending agencies and channels of delivery. The channels of delivery are NGOs, United Nations agencies, two epistemic organisations (think tanks, one multilateral development bank and the national government of recipient countries. Some of these are large-size organisations managing indigenous-related projects. These *intermediaries* are in charge of leading the funded projects or allocating the resources in the field. Recipient countries are located in different regions of America, Asia and Africa, where most low-

income countries are situated. However, this geographical distribution has not responded to most affected populations' needs and values but rather to benefiting private actors and political elites (Islam et al., 2021; Sovacool et al., 2017).

The analysis of the 2018 climate-related OECD DAC also exposed some shortfalls of the adaptation funding architecture. First, all funds in the dataset are tagged as "climate-related development finance", indicating that there is no distinction between funding provided to fulfil ODA or climate-related commitments. Climate justice and climate funding literature suggest that aid and climate funding ought to be considered as two separate commitments in attention to new accords and agreements stated in the 2009 Copenhagen Accords (Khan et al., 2020). This is to avoid diverting funds or using the same funding information to fulfil reports on those two different commitments (Füssel et al., 2012; Horstmann & Abeysinghe, 2011; Mace, 2005). This practice is known as "double counting" (Mostafa et al., 2016; Weikmans et al., 2017; Weikmans & Roberts, 2019), and the OECD dataset is a potential example of it.

Besides, the funding information is generated using two types of methodologies and possibly more approaches according to the interpretation of each reporting institution or state. The first recognised approach is the *Rio markers*. Since 1998, countries need to inform whether their contributions are mainstreaming objectives of the Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate change (regarding mitigation) and desertification; these tags are known as the Rio markers. Adaptation was introduced into the climate change marker until 2010.

Notwithstanding, the Rio markers have been criticised for their limited capacity to effectively and transparently account for climate commitments (Weikmans et al., 2017; Weikmans & Roberts, 2019). In essence, there is no independent assessment of the funding but rather self-assessments of "developed countries" that mould the Rio Markers to cover funding quotas (Khan et al., 2020).

Further, on the Rio markers, there is a scoring system that defines each flow as *principal* (the mitigation or adaptation objective is explicitly stated as fundamental in the design), *significant* (the mitigation or adaptation objective is expressly stated but it is not the main project's driver) or *not targeted*. This scoring system is intended to prevent overlaps when quantifying climate funds. Yet, adaptation funding scholars have outlined several drawbacks: projects mark as principal or significant with only

part of the project including adaptation in reality; divergent scoring for the same project funded by different organisations; and, varying definitions of adaptation that allows for overreporting (Weikmans et al., 2017; Weikmans & Roberts, 2019).

In contrast, the second recognised methodology - the *Climate Components* implemented by multilateral development banks - is believed to be more efficient in terms of reporting as it allows recipients and third-parties assessments (Donner et al., 2016; Micale et al., 2018). Yet, there is also a risk of double-counting in regards to these components because all funds provided by multilateral sources that were reported on the OECD dataset, which are the ones using the climate components methodology, are marked as both mitigation and adaptation-related.

Drawbacks are not only existent in funding allocation but also during decision-making processes. For instance, there is no indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making processes regarding funding. This information is not evident from the OECD dataset, but other sources were useful for this part of the analysis. In this respect, indigenous peoples have participation in funding-related matters at the level of consultancy in but a couple of funding institutions, within which their degree of participation varies. For example, the GEF has a self-proclaimed long-standing history calling for collaboration with indigenous peoples in "engagement, consultation and *policy review*" (GEF IEO, 2017, p. ix).

However, according to an interview with an indigenous person who formerly advised the GEF, indigenous peoples' participation is very specific (MECUADOR20-2). They provide consultancy that *does not influence policy*. The role of indigenous advisors in the GEF, which was formalised in 2012 and known as the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) (GEF, 2016b), is limited to providing input on indigenous-related GEF guidelines and monitoring that implementation agencies consider those guidelines during project planning and implementation. The indigenous advisor also highlighted the fact that indigenous peoples are usually entitled only to the Small Grants Programme, which has limited funds and thus limited impact.

As per the GCF, this organisation has only recently formalised indigenous participation during projects implementation through an Indigenous Peoples Policy (Green Climate Fund, 2018). Contrary to the GEF, the GCF figures as a funding source

of adaptation projects for indigenous peoples, although the impact of this collaboration is yet to be evident when this policy has been operationalised.

Funding allocation: living up to adaptation commitments.

About the number of funds, the literature on funding has investigated the inclusion of the adaptation objective in the funding commitments (e.g. Brown et al., n.d.; Füssel et al., 2012; Horstmann, 2011; Horstmann & Abeysinghe, 2011; Mace, 2005; Mostafa et al., 2016; Persson & Dzebo, 2019; Remling & Persson, 2015; Smith et al., 2011), some of which have related the need of raising adaptation funds to remediate environmental injustice.

The OECD dataset shows a total of 14053 records, 10520 were unique projects. There are 113 projects related to indigenous peoples, corresponding to 1.07 per cent out of the total projects. From the indigenous projects, 33 are specifically adaptation-related, 47 are specifically mitigation-related, and 33 are cross-cutting projects targeting both adaptation and mitigation objectives. When analysing the amount exclusively assigned to each objective (excluding overlapping objectives), from the total USD 231 million allocated to indigenous-related projects, adaptation received USD 98 million and mitigation received USD 58 million (**Figure 1**).

According to the analysis above, adaptation funding for specifically indigenous-related projects surpasses mitigation funding. Conversely, when focusing on indigenous-related projects with a principal rather than a significant score, the number of adaptation projects significantly drops to 6, which represent only USD 3 million (**Figure 2**). Meanwhile, there are 19 indigenous-related mitigation projects which translate to USD 32 million. Paying attention to principal rather than significant scores provides a more legitimate picture of indigenous-related funding allocation, although the principal scores ensure neither effective distribution nor the meaningful impact on indigenous communities.

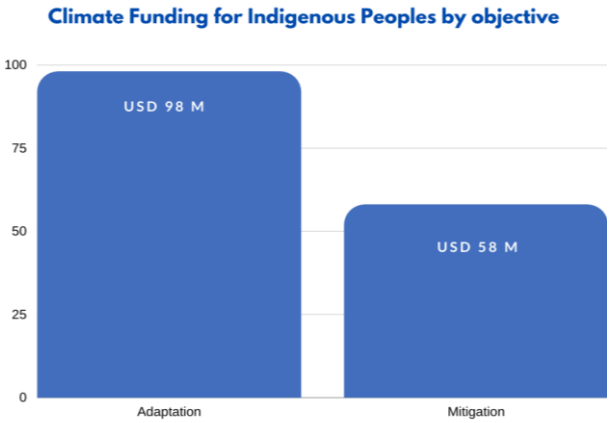

Figure 1. *Climate Funding for Indigenous Peoples by objective.* Created by the author based on the 2018 OECD climate-related funding dataset (OECD, 2018).

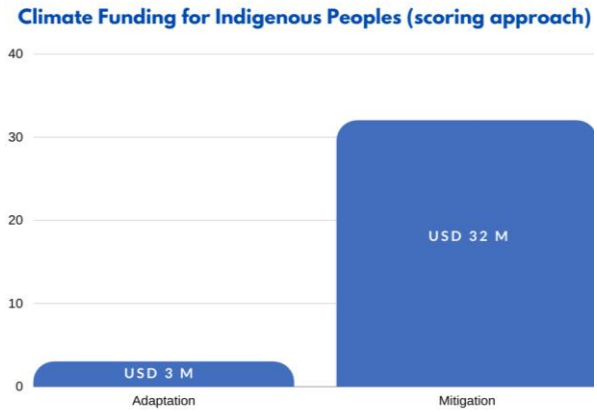

Figure 2. *Climate Funding for Indigenous Peoples (scoring approach).* Created by the author based on the 2018 OECD climate-related funding dataset (OECD, 2018).

Lastly, funding plays an essential role in climate orchestration. However, as the analysis below shows, funding is still a limited tool to effectively and meaningfully steer the adaptation and participation of indigenous peoples. In 33 indigenous-related projects, their description referred to participation and governance-related activities. 6 of these projects are adaptation-related, and 5 of them have a *significant* scoring, meaning that although the adaptation objective is considered, it is not the main driver of those activities.

Yet, the finding that participation is explicitly endorsed in the funding allocation process can be promising for two reasons: enhanced participation promotes more legitimate governance practices (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019) and also, once indigenous peoples get access to spaces of participation, they may influence governance processes to promote more justice-led adaptation. Paradoxically, and as seen in the previous section, there is no significant participation of indigenous peoples in the policy-making of adaptation funding.

Lack of *broadband* participation at the funding decision-making level and limited resources for adaptation and capacity building are still considered shortcomings by indigenous peoples (FNEPAL20; FPERU19; FTANZANIA19; FTHAI19; GEF IEO, 2017; MECUADOR20; MECUADOR20-2; MPERU19). Arguably, these challenges are consequences of the drawbacks in the funding architecture and allocation policies.

Conclusion

The architecture of indigenous peoples' adaptation funding was rhetorically boosted by the 2015 Paris Agreement given the imminent issues that climate change had

already caused, especially in LDCs, and other vulnerable regions where various indigenous populations happened to live.

However, in the praxis, the international organisations mobilising adaptation funding have not accomplished the plea of providing significant amounts of adaptation funding, at least for the case of indigenous peoples. Additionally, there is only marginalised participation of indigenous peoples at levels where it is not possible to influence the status quo of adaptation programmes.

In sum, GPE interests still prevail as drivers of adaptation funding allocation, as shown by the case of indigenous peoples. More efforts need to be focused on: a) developing enhanced methodologies to measure climate projects; b) allowing more meaningful participation that is not limited to consultation at stages where it is not possible to modify the projects that impact indigenous communities; and, c) increasing funding for enhancing indigenous peoples' adaptive capacities. In other words, alternative mechanisms ought to be put in place to avoid that political and economic powers block fair and better-informed funding decisions.

Annexe 1. The Architecture of Adaptation Funding for Indigenous Peoples

This table displays the actors involved in adaptation funding related to projects targeting indigenous peoples. Created by the author based on the 2018 OECD climate-related funding dataset (OECD, 2018).

The Architecture of Adaptation Funding for Indigenous Peoples				
Provider	**Extending Agency**	**Channel of Delivery**	**Recipient Region**	**Recipient Country**
Australia	Australian Government	Donor Government	Unspecified	Developing countries, unspecified
Austria	Austrian Development Agency	Donor country-based NGO	Caribbean & Central America	Guatemala
Belgium	Directorate General for Co-operation and Development	Donor country-based NGO	South America	Ecuador
Canada	Global Affairs Canada	OXFAM - provider country office	Caribbean & Central America	Guatemala
David & Lucile Packard Foundation	David & Lucile Packard Foundation	University, college or other teaching institution, research institute or think-tank. Developing country-based NGO. Donor country-based NGO. International Fund for Agricultural Development.	Asia and Africa	Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Finland	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Food and Agricultural Organisation. Donor country-based NGO	South of Sahara. Caribbean & Central America.	India, Cambodia, Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras,

			South America. Far East Asia. South & Central Asia	South of Sahara, Other countries in the South American region and unspecified developing countries.
Ford Foundation	Ford Foundation	Developing country-based NGO	Asia	Indonesia
France	French Development Agency	Donor country-based NGO	South America	Bolivia
Green Climate Fund	Green Climate Fund	Central American Bank for Economic Integration. International Union for the Conservation of Nature. United Nations Development Programme. Food and Agricultural Organisation. Central Government. Other public entities in the recipient country	America, Asia and Africa	Paraguay, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Caribbean, Namibia and Other countries in the American region.
Germany	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung and Federal. Min. for the Env., Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety	Donor country-based NGO. University, college or other teaching institution, research institute or think-tank	Caribbean & Central America. South America. South & Central Asia. Far East Asia. Unspecified developing countries.	India, Peru, Philippines, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Other countries in the South American region and other unspecified developing countries.
Inter-American		Recipient Government	America	Panama

Development Bank				
Ireland	Department of Foreign Affairs	Donor country-based NGO	Caribbean & Central America	Guatemala
Luxembourg	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Donor country-based NGO	South & Central Asia and South America	India and Peru
Norway	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation	Donor country-based NGO and Developing country-based NGO	Caribbean & Central America and South America	Colombia and Guatemala
Spain	Municipalities	Donor country-based NGO	Caribbean & Central America	Nicaragua
Sweden	Swedish International Development Authority	Donor country-based NGO, International NGO and Networks	Caribbean & Central America and other unspecified regions	Guatemala and other unspecified developing countries
United States	Department of the Interior	Donor country-based NGO	South America	Peru
Wellcome Trust	Wellcome Trust	Developing country-based NGO	America	Brazil

Annexe 2 – Interviewees' coding

The following list contains relevant features of interviewees that allow their distinction in the text but, at the same time, preserve their anonymity. Codes are composed of the following elements. **F** or **M**, which stands for Female or Male, as there are gender-related variations in interviewees' responses. The code also contains the country of origin and the last two numbers of the year in which the interview took place. Additionally, the codes table includes a short description of the interviewee.

Code	Indigenous Community	Interview mode	Date of interview	Short Description
MECUADOR20	Shuar (Indigenous Amazon group from Ecuador)	Online	22/08/2020	Former LCIPP co-chair representing the Indigenous Peoples caucus
MECUADOR20-2	Kichwa (Indigenous Amazon group from Ecuador)	Online	27/08/2020	Former GEF advisor
FNEPAL20	Sherpa (ethnic group from Nepal)	Online	26/08/2020	Former LCIPP co-chair representing the Indigenous Peoples caucus
FTHAI19	Karen (indigenous group from Thailand)	On-site (COP25)	05/12/2019	Current collaborator of the indigenous organisation Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
FTANZANIA19	Mazai (indigenous group from Tanzania)	On-site (COP25)	05/12/2019	Current collaborator at the Pastoralists Indigenous Non Governmental Organization's Forum (PINGO's Forum)

MPERU19	Shipibo (indigenous group from Peru)	On-site (COP25)	03/12/2019	Current collaborator of Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali y Afluentes - Feconau
FPERU19	Quechua (indigenous group from Peru	On-site (COP25)	04/12/2019	Current collaborator of Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas (ONAMIAP)

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