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Biocultural heritage construction and community-based tourism in an important indigenous agricultural heritage system of the southern Andes

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ABSTRACT

Traditional agricultural systems reflect the close relationship between human communities and local ecosystems. The inheritance of knowledge, practices and beliefs, in which this relationship is materialised, or biocultural memory, is key for these systems' conservation and adaptation to social-environmental changes. Heritage construction processes may be used in a bid to conserve and increase awareness of this inheritance. Tourism is one alternative but is not immune to controversy. Through a qualitative methodology and participatory action research, this study examines biocultural heritage construction in an Important Agricultural Heritage System (IAHS) in Mapuche-Pewenche territory in the southern Andes. Based on the community-based tourism experience of two campesino cooperatives, our study points out how local actors understand and interpret their heritage as well as the opportunities and challenges of showcasing it through tourism. We found that the inheritance is understood as the way of life associated with Mapuche rural culture and, particularly, agricultural practices that support local food systems with a strong identity component. In these experiences of community-based tourism, we identify opportunities and challenges for reinforcing biocultural memory and inheritance in an IAHS. We discuss tourism development in IAHS sites, putting the communities that inhabit and maintain them in a central position.

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Biocultural memory; community-based tourism; important agricultural heritage systems; local actors; participatory methodologies

1. Introduction

Around the world, traditional agricultural systems are under threat from rapid modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation as well as social-environmental changes (Altieri 2009; Altieri and Nicholls 2017). The conservation of these systems is vital for the safekeeping of the agrobiodiversity that generations of campesinos have maintained, regenerated and passed on to their descendants (Toledo and Barrera-Bassols 2008; Pulido and Bocco 2003). This has contributed to the creation of cultural landscapes (Martínez Quintana, Sanagustín Fons, and

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Blanco Gregory 2018), that are part of biocultural heritage and memory (Nazarea 2006; Lindholm and Ekblom 2019; Marchant et al. 2020).

Biocultural memory, understood as the bodies of knowledge, practices and collective beliefs that evoke accumulated experiences, emerge in the interaction between local actors and their territories (Nazarea 2006; Ibarra et al. 2022). This has allowed the management of a biological diversity represented by vegetable and animal species and landscapes, with a cultural identity characteristic of each human group (Toledo and Barrera-Bassols 2008). Biocultural memory's importance for the maintenance and functioning of campesino agriculture lies in that it serves both to address agrobiodiversity erosion processes and to strengthen vital local productive practices and beliefs (Laura et al. 2014; Urra and Tomás Ibarra 2018).

Traditional agricultural systems that remain in the world today depend on some 1,400 million indigenous and non-indigenous campesinos, who maintain a productive system characterised by its complexity, diversity and resilience (Koohafkan and Altieri 2011). In these systems, we see the intrinsic link between cultural and biological diversity that has been recognised by different conservation models, opening the way to biocultural designation approaches (Apgar, Ataria, and Allen 2011), that can be understood as external biocultural inheritance construction processes. Globally and/or Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (IAHS), identified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), are one example of biocultural designation (Koohafkan and Altieri 2011; Reyes et al. 2020). Since 2005, FAO, together with different national governments, has declared 62 IAHS sites in 22 countries. These declarations seek to safeguard agrobiodiversity, conserve the territories, protect agricultural heritage and recognise the knowledge, practices and beliefs of their inhabitants. In addition, these declarations have triggered the development of different tourism activities related to biocultural inheritance, entailing a process of heritage construction and the touristification of certain elements that are considered heritage. For example, in Japan's Kunisaki peninsula, local communities are developing a model of sustainable tourism that incorporates the area's silvicultural, agricultural and fishing systems, offering agricultural, religious and cultural experiences (Reyes et al. 2020). Similarly, in the Yucatán peninsula in Mexico, tourism was inserted into the *milpa* agricultural system and now serves to complement the traditional productive structure economically, providing rural families with a monetary income (Jouault, Enseñat-Soberanis, and Balladares-Soberano 2018). In other words, locally inclusive development of an IAHS site may enhance the sustainability of a traditional agricultural system, addressing both its conservation and its development through tourism (Ming et al. 2020).

In heritage construction processes, territories undergo changes and transformations that entail struggles to determine which aspects of the past are considered heritage and are preserved as such (Saintenoy et al. 2019). A range of actors participates in these processes, including the State, the market and civil society, and all have different objectives, which can cause controversies (Matta 2012; Álvarez 2008). It is important to understand heritage declarations as processes that initiate a series of economic, political and cultural processes that may even lead to a deterioration of what is to be protected (Villaseñor and Zolla 2012). It is, therefore, essential to incorporate the perspective of the local communities that maintain these systems, prioritising their perceptions about tourism and their heritage (Tang, Qingwen, and Zhongjun 2010). Similarly, the planning of territorial development in these sites must ensure direct benefits for the people who maintain and protect them (Koohafkan and Altieri 2011).

1.1. Heritage construction processes and tourism in IAHS sites: community-based initiatives

IAHS sites represent human ingenuity harnessed to the task of sustaining life and reflect the evolution of humanity, the diversity of its knowledge and its deep relationship with nature (FAO 2016). For those living in modern, highly urbanised systems, it is attractive to experience rural life and ancient – but surviving – forms of agricultural civilisation, hence the tourism potential of these

territories (Tian et al. 2014). This potential would depend on a series of factors, including the strategic transformation of heritage assets into attractive tourism products (Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher 2010).

At present, there are different forms of heritage activation (Prats 2011). Activations are not only the result of macro-scale initiatives (by, for example, State agencies) but can also occur at the micro-level through local and community initiatives. They include the community-based tourism (CBT) approach, which is defined as ‘all forms of entrepreneurial organisation sustained by the ownership and self-management of community heritage resources in accordance with democratic and solidarity practices, in the work and distribution of the benefits generated by the provision of tourism services, with a view to fostering high-quality intercultural encounters with visitors’ (Maldonado 2005, 5). This territorial development and heritage construction strategy has acquired importance in rural areas of different Latin American countries, as it attempts to position local communities themselves as the protagonists of their territory’s tourism management (Ballesteros 2007). In addition, it proposes the combination of three fundamental dimensions: sensitivity to the natural and cultural environment, control of tourism by local communities and the quest for social and environmental sustainability (Ballesteros 2007). Experiences of this type have been documented in Ecuador (López and Sánchez 2009; Ballesteros 2007; Gascón 2014), Chile (Pilquimán 2016; Skewes, Zuñiga, and Pilquimán 2015), Peru (Pastor, Jurado, and Domingo 2011; Matta 2012), Brazil (Flores, Cunha, and Christoffoli 2016) and Colombia (Rosalía 2016). In these countries, CBT has contributed to endogenous territorial development processes by fostering awareness of local biocultural heritage and providing small-scale work opportunities that complement the traditional economic structure (López and Sánchez 2009).

It is argued that CBT is a way to promote processes that enable communities to play an active role in decision-making alongside the public and private actors who intervene in their territory (Pacheco and Henríquez 2016). It is expected that, in initiatives of this type, the communities themselves will design tourism products, promoting the conservation of nature and maintenance of their ways of life (López and Sánchez 2009). In this context, the host communities’ level of involvement and participation has been identified as an important factor in different types of CBT (Álvarez-García et al. 2018; Blackstock 2005; Ballesteros 2007). The inhabitants of different territories have been reported to be positively predisposed towards tourism, with specific concerns varying from one place to another (Álvarez-García et al. 2018). However, there are gaps in information about the perceptions and dispositions of the inhabitants of IAHS sites about their biocultural inheritance and its relationship with the development of tourism.

CBT has not been without criticism because it often considers the participation of local people in a utilitarian way, and it does not overcome many of the structural disadvantages faced by rural communities when implementing community-based projects (Blackstock 2005). On the other hand, CBT experiences many times avoid the consideration of the social structures of the local community, and thus do not attend aspects such as individualism, different conceptions of community and internal conflicts that may affect the viability of these projects (García Andreu, Aledo Tur, and Ullán de la Rosa 2017). Indeed, one of the main challenges of CBT refers to the social control exercised by the discourses on heritage displayed by actors with greater power (e.g. public institutions, groups of experts, entrepreneurs, media) over indigenous communities (Quezada and Cisneros 2018). In Chile, for example, there is a tendency to consider the “indigenous as heritage” in order to include them in the imaginary of the Nation-State, being a tool of domination that overlooks the historical demands for territorial autonomy and cultural differentiation of these peoples (Boccara and Ayala 2011). In this way, heritage activation processes may unexpectedly favour the arrival of external tourist agents to the territories, appropriating traditions that they adjust and insert in the Market (Matta 2012).

In this paper, we analyse how biocultural heritage construction occurs, taking the example of the CBT experience of two Mapuche Pewenche campesino¹ cooperatives in the Cordillera Pewenche IAHS. We seek to identify how the local actors understand and interpret their heritage, and how this

becomes a central element for implementing community tourism strategies. We critically analyse community-based tourism's suitability as a mechanism for community management of heritage that permits the conservation and adaptive management of traditional agricultural systems. To this end, we ask the following questions: How is biocultural heritage defined from the standpoint of the territory's inhabitants? How can tourism be transformed into a mechanism to foster appreciation of these systems' importance? To answer these questions, we designed and implemented a qualitative methodological approach, including participatory action research (PAR) with both campesino cooperatives.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study area and ethnographic context

This study is located in Mapuche-Pewenche territory of the southern Andes and, specifically, in the Curarrehue municipal district of Chile's La Araucanía Region (Figure 1). The Mapuche, which is Chile's largest indigenous people, has historically inhabited this territory. The Mapuche-Pewenche are characterised by a close relationship with the *pewen* (*Araucaria araucana*), a tree of which the seed (*piñón* or *nglliu*) is the staple of their diet and economy (De Mösbach 1992; Bengoa 2000; Ibarra et al. 2022). Around 70% of Curarrehue's population is rural and 50% identifies as Mapuche (INE 2017). In Curarrehue, more than 58.4% of its population is in a situation of multidimensional poverty, being the third poorest municipal district at the national level (Ministry of Social Development 2017). Much of the municipal district falls within Chile's National System of State-Protected Natural Areas (SNASPE). The district forms part of the tourist destination known as 'Araucanía Lakes' and, in 2017, part of it was declared a Zone of Tourist Interest (ZOIT). Since 2018, FAO and the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture have activated the heritage construction of this territory's traditional agricultural system through a so-called Important Agricultural Heritage System (IAHS) project (Figure 1).

This territory's traditional agricultural systems are safeguarded by Mapuche and non-Mapuche campesinos. They implement different sociocultural and productive practices (Marchant et al. 2020) such as livestock transhumance (the so-called summering-wintering system²), the gathering of wild fruits, medicinal plants and edible mushrooms from native forests, the cultivation of homegardens and the raising of small animals and poultry (Ibarra et al. 2019; Olivares, Marchant, and Ibarra 2022; Figure 2). The homegardens stand out as a delimited production system, located close to the home, for the cultivation of different edible, medicinal and ornamental species (Chehuaicura, Thomet, and Pérez 2010; Galluzzi, Eyzaguirre, and Negri 2010). Homegardens play a fundamental role in protecting threatened agrobiodiversity (Barthel, Crumley, and Svedin 2013) and serve as a space for the transmission of biocultural memory (Nazarea 2006) as well as promoting local food sovereignty (Marchant et al. 2020).

Since 2017, the research team has been working closely with the Zomo Ngen Cooperative (in Mapudungun, *zomo* = woman and *ngen* = protective energy) formed by 33 campesinos (32 women and one man) and the Quiñemawün Cooperative (in Mapudungun, *quiñe* = one and *mawün* = rain) formed by 12 campesinos (eight women and four men). Taking the two cooperatives together, 28.9% of their members are seniors (≥ 60 years), 66.7% are adults (30–59 years) and 4.4% are young people (15–29 years). All the participants in the study self-identify as Mapuche. Together, through different participatory methods, they produce inputs for a community tourist route that offers different types of accommodation (13 initiatives), leisure activities (16 initiatives), gastronomy (11 initiatives), agrotourism (13 initiatives) and the sale of local products (24 initiatives), complemented by the daily activities related to their traditional agricultural systems.

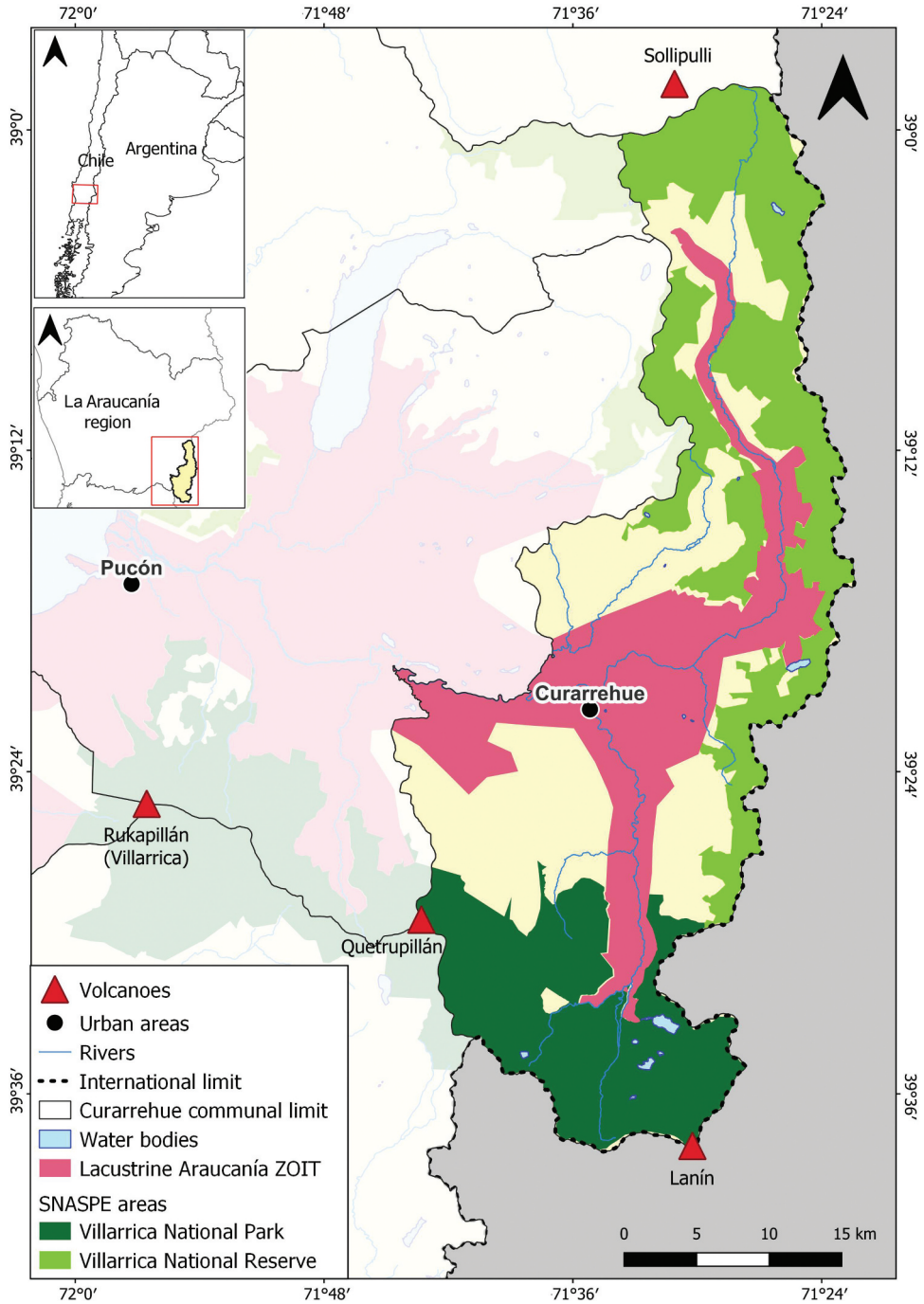


Figure 1. Study area in the mountains of the Cordillera Pehuenche Important Agricultural Heritage System in the southern Andes.

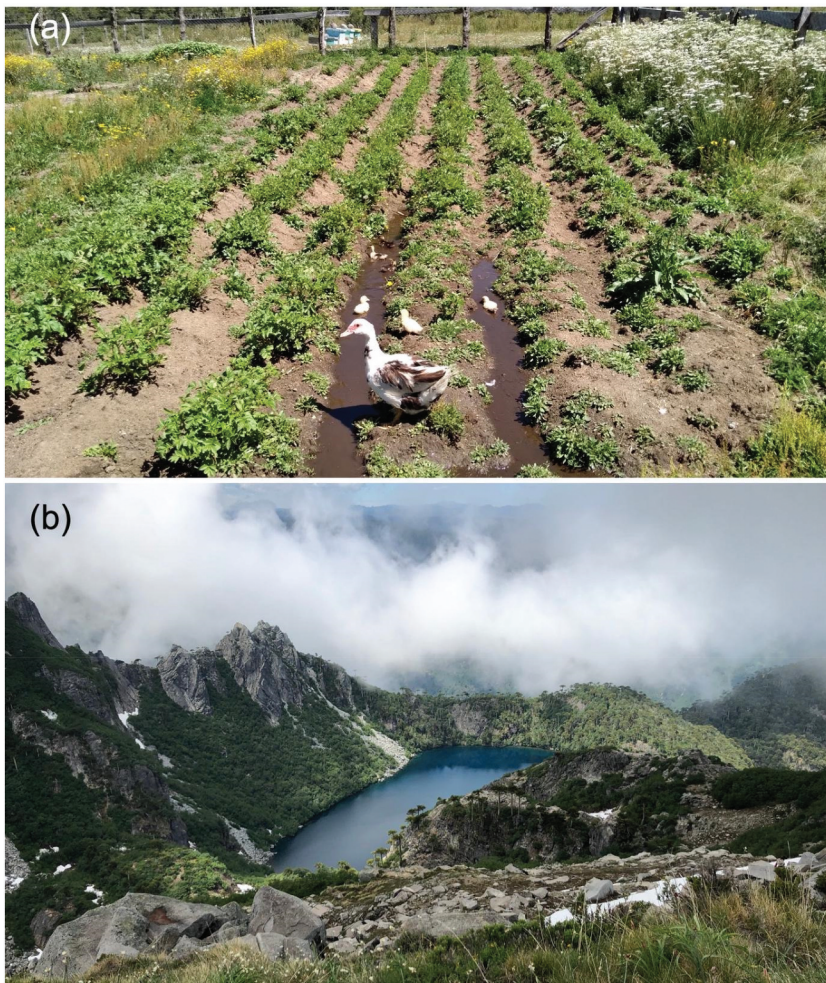


Figure 2. (a) Integrated multi-diverse homegarden agricultural system that includes poultry as a component of the heritage agriculture in the southern Andes. (b) Mapuche-Pewenche territory of IAHS.

2.2. Methodological design and fieldwork (data analysis)

This research started at the request of the cooperatives who wanted us to support their community-based tourism (CBT) initiative, as they had started developing tourism projects associated with the culture and nature of their territory. For this purpose, we used an exploratory and qualitative methodological approach (Bernard 2011), including participatory action research (PAR)³.

During four years of field campaigns (2017–2021), using the PAR approach, a series of focus groups and other activities were organised to identify the heritage present in the territory and examine how it could be incorporated into the CBT activities that the cooperatives wanted to offer. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the planning of activities was flexible, with both face-to-face and virtual activities, implementing an adaptive management approach in order to reorganise activities if unexpected changes in schedules, lockdowns and other health policies occurred. The research included focus groups (N = 4), participatory mapping (n = 2), semi-structured interviews (N = 25), informal interviews (N = 15) and participant observation that totalled six months in the area.

Focus groups resulted in recognition by participants of the elements that constitute their inheritance. Two aspects of the process of biocultural heritage construction were examined in

greater depth: the perceptions of the members of both cooperatives about sharing their ways of life to this heritage construction process and, second, the definition of the ethical and management limits they consider necessary for its implementation. With all this information, we produced a proposed map of the heritage recognised, along with the tourist attractions and services that the cooperatives offer to visitors as a community. This material displayed all the information collected during the research process, facilitating discussion of this tourism development strategy among the cooperatives' members. The resulting information was organised, classified and processed for use in preparing maps of tourist attractions and the location of initiatives implemented by the cooperatives, and were used as technical and marketing inputs for them. Roads, houses and tourism initiatives included in the tourist route were geo-referenced during a tour in the territory, led by the cooperatives' leaders. The services offered by each of these initiatives were recorded on an information sheet to systematise contact information. The initiatives were later classified according to the type of service (accommodation, food and recreation). The focus groups were recorded and transcribed for content analysis using Atlas.ti software. Finally, the data and results obtained from these different sources were triangulated, for their integration and analysis (Denzin 2006). The information obtained during the focus groups was analysed for its use in greater depth in the participatory mapping.

Participatory mapping is a tool through which it is possible to re-create and strengthen spaces for common action in the territory, consolidating local communities' self-management and political intervention in their spaces of life (Valderrama 2013). In 2018 and 2021, we implemented participatory 'agitpop' mapping (Risler and Ares 2013) to look in greater depth at the subject of tourism from the perspective of the territory's inhabitants. Prior to this exercise in dialogue, the places to be shown to visitors and the activities to be carried out in them were defined by participants. The places of cultural significance that should be protected were also discussed and, as requested by participants, are not specified here. Two satellite images printed in A0 format and scale 1:80,000 were used in these activities. To facilitate participation, the cooperatives' members were divided into two groups, each with the same number of people, and each team worked with an image in which they identified the places they considered a tourist attraction and that could, in their view, be used for this purpose. Finally, focus groups were established to look at the points identified and systematise the results into three broad and interconnected categories: natural tourist attractions, cultural tourist attractions, and places not suitable for tourism. The spatial information was then transferred to a Geographical Information System (GIS). The results obtained were discussed, corrected and revalidated by the members of the cooperatives in subsequent meetings. Finally, we conducted semi-structured interviews, informal interviews and participant observation (Bernard 2011). Semi-structured interviews (n = 25) took place with members of the cooperatives, focusing on the recognition of biocultural inheritance, in a bid to gain deeper insights into practices and trades as well as the services and tourist attractions existing in the study area. The data from the information sheets was systematised and the interviews were recorded and transcribed for content analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), using Atlas.ti software (2018).

3. Results

3.1. Local interpretation of the biocultural heritage concept

In the interviews and focus groups on heritage, we found that, although the participants had heard the word heritage, they had never reflected on its meaning. When discussing this, they agreed on interpreting it as '*what has been conserved over time*'. This reflected the ties between Mapuche-Pewenche and non-indigenous rural cultures, which have maintained their importance as an asset of the territory and reveal a deep relationship between the human and the natural, reinforcing local identity and ways of life.

For the participants, heritage is reflected in their ways of life and constitutes an inheritance that is manifested in a body of knowledge, practices and beliefs that today make up the biocultural memory present in the territory, particularly in its agrosilvopastoral systems, homegardens and traditional trades. The participants underscored the value of orally transmitted traditions. As one of the women put it, *'I believe that my heritage is my traditions, my culture, the way I live and work . . . to rescue all that is ancient wisdom with the knowledge'*. In that order of ideas, it is possible to identify practices through which their biocultural inheritance is expressed: for example, weaving with a *witral* (i.e. traditional Mapuche loom), weaving with vegetal fibres and work in wood. The participants indicated that these trades bear the creativity and identity of the people who have developed them and, for this reason, the results were diverse. In this context, they noted that the territory's older people play a fundamental role in sustaining this biocultural inheritance over time, carrying out ancestral work and orally transmitting traditions and knowledge to new generations. By way of illustration, one of the participants indicated that, *'the most important thing I feel that is a heritage is the ancestral work carried out by the cooperative's members, the experience they put into their enterprises, with what they live currently and ancestrally . . . all the wisdom, they carry customs, they carry [the wisdom] for years, they maintain it, they cultivate it and they also multiply it, because they teach it to the younger people and that remains . . . that is the most important heritage, it is the people, the wisdom, it is the knowledge behind those who are the most adult, the oldest people'*.

Another element of their way of life that the participants identified as fundamental is the supply of food through systems inherited from their ancestors. Among the practices that support the local food system, they emphasise the cultivation of homegardens, the raising of small animals and poultry, beekeeping and gathering from the native forest (Figure 2). Thus, for example, in the focus groups and participatory mappings, it was mentioned that, *'we still have our diet that our ancestors, mothers, fathers, left us, we still consume it . . . working in the homegarden, harvesting mushrooms, using organic fertilizers . . . everything that comes from the earth'*. They also pointed out that local food production gives them autonomy and a sense of belonging to the territory they work, care for and inhabit.

What the cooperatives' members describe demonstrates that knowledge, practices and beliefs about their agriculture, gathering and trades constitute the territory's biocultural inheritance. They are a key asset to be promoted through tourism initiatives managed at the family and community level. For example, the cooperatives' members offer activities related to agrotourism such as walks and horse riding, local food products and preparations and the sale of produce from homegardens or gathered from the forests. Other activities include guided tours of the homegardens, *witral* workshops and visits to historical places during which this biocultural heritage is shared.

Participatory mapping allowed the identification of places considered part of the territory's natural heritage and potential tourist sites not yet recognised in national tourism plans. The participants highlighted the scenic beauty of different places and landscapes from which the territory's volcanoes can be observed. It is also possible to visit lakes high in the Andes, the Maichín and Trankura Rivers (and their tributaries) and some waterfalls. During the mapping activity, it was also agreed that certain areas of the territory should not be exposed to tourism activity since they represent part of the spirituality and cosmovision in the territory and must be respected: *'For example, there are the grasslands used for the nguillatun that tourists cannot enter . . . there are also parts where entry is more sensitive; for example, water springs that one views as sacred and, in other words, must be entered with respect.'* This speaks of a sensitive relationship between the people and their territory. The participants assert that this is a form of wealth, both for those who live in the territory and those who can visit it. As an outcome, a map was obtained, which grouped together the findings that arose from the participatory activities, including local heritage, tourist attractions and services and basic information about the cooperatives' members.

3.2. Opportunities and challenges in raising awareness of biocultural inheritance through community-based tourism

Thanks to the focus groups, participatory mapping, interviews and participant observation, we identified opportunities and challenges for the activation of a tourism strategy in an IAHS site (Figure 3). Three key opportunities were identified: (a) local participation, (b) conservation and appreciation of biocultural heritage, and (c) emerging economic activity. The challenges were classified into two groups: (a) planning and (b) relations between actors. Research participants noted that, through community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives, the history of the Mapuche people can be made better known and the participants can receive income complementary to that obtained from their traditional productive practices, which they can still maintain. As one interviewee pointed out, *'what our people are, what we are, is made known . . . a value is placed on what has never been given a value. Because we are never going to get the la mg en (sisters), our papay (elders), our mothers, grandmothers . . . we are never going to get them to leave this territory where they live and are protecting every day (. . .) so what better than to add value to what they do, the work in their fields'*. In line with this, they do not aspire to tourism of a mass nature, but one that allows them to continue living in their territory in harmony with the Mapuche cosmovision and way of life, respecting nature and the culture of the territory.

The idea of working associatively in tourism comes to the fore as permitting mutual help and collective creation. Associative initiatives are viewed positively by the cooperatives' members, who also consider them as a strategy for discouraging the rural exodus of new generations in search of job opportunities. The cooperatives' members also argue that the strategy can leave a legacy of care and protection of the territory to new generations. In this way, they delimited the type of tourism in which they are interested, making it clear that they aspire to the construction of a CBT through which they can increase awareness of the territory's traditions, customs and ways of life. Indeed, as a positive aspect of using CBT to draw attention to the importance of heritage, they describe it as an opportunity for people to develop, to value their culture and origins and strengthen their identity.

However, interviewees were also aware that tourism could have negative repercussions for the territory. They look with concern at the mass tourism industry and the unlimited exploitation of natural, cultural and landscape resources that could occur in areas that are their home. They are wary of the arrival of people seeking to obtain knowledge about the Mapuche and non-indigenous rural culture and use it for profit or personal gain. In addition, there is the problem of management of waste, which could increase with the pressure of tourism. As a corollary, fundamental elements related to tourism management and ethics were defined during the strategy construction process, establishing as criteria the Mapuche cosmovision, responsibility and communication. The idea of the Mapuche cosmovision refers to a particular way of understanding life and relating to the territory, including not only people, but also all the other expressions of life present in it. Tourism activity must, therefore, be managed and planned in such a way as to respect this territoriality. Internally, responsibility and individual commitment are seen as essential for the implementation of a community-based tourism strategy since, in practice, those involved must be able to maintain a network and provide the services offered. In other words, the decisions and commitments agreed upon as a group must be fulfilled. Related to this, the cooperatives' members insist that communication among the people involved in the initiative must be clear and transparent, serving as the key mechanism for ensuring real and effective participation in the strategy's construction and implementation. As a result, they consider that all their members must be consulted about any decision or action to be implemented: *'Every step taken, what better than to work with [the women], talk with them, and make decisions together with them'*. Finally, participants highlighted the importance of maintaining the notion of *itrofilmongen* and integrating it throughout the process. This notion refers to the fact that everything in the territory, without exception, has life (hills, forests, rivers, lakes, plants, animals, fungi, among others). This should be materialised

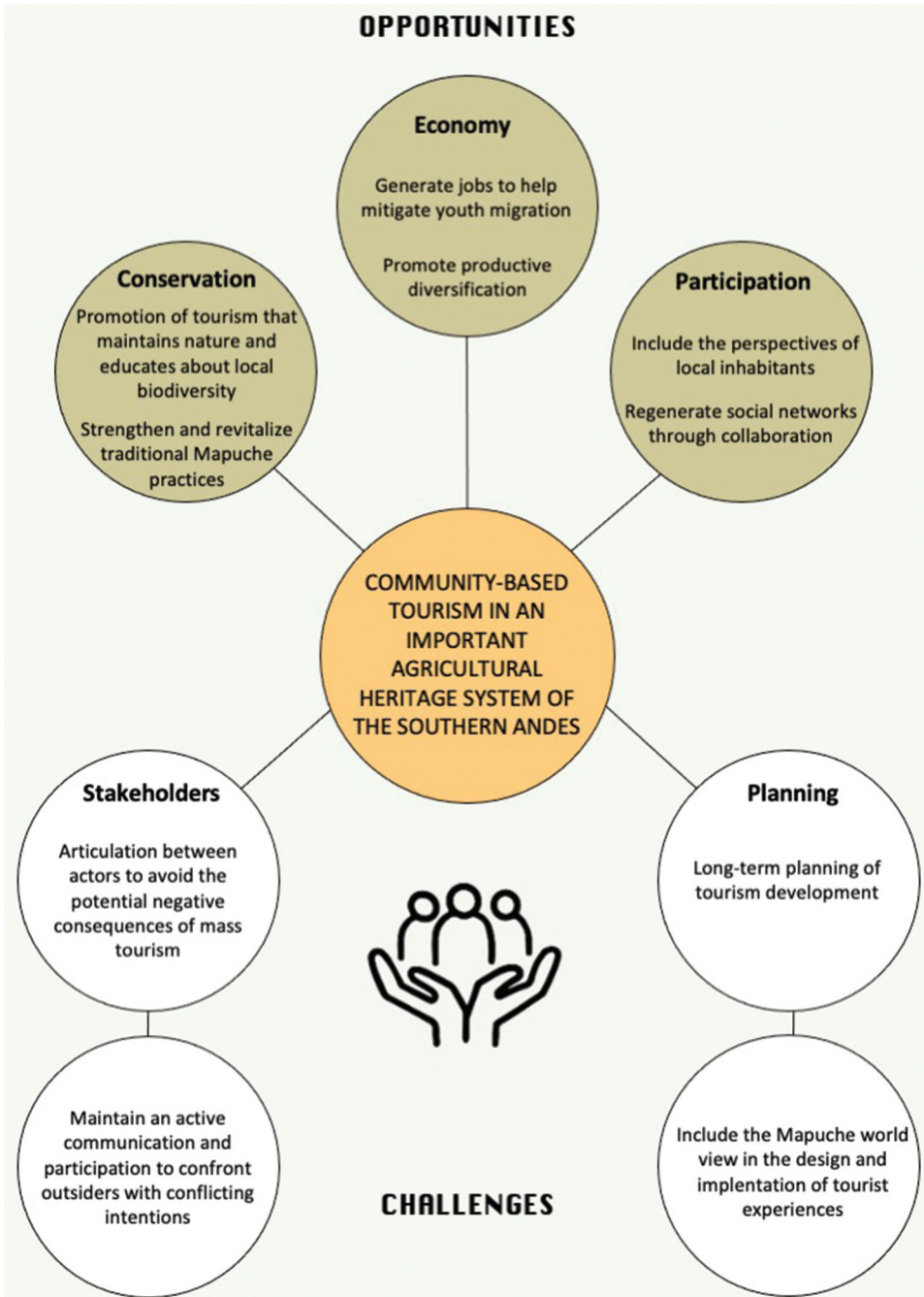


Figure 3. Dimensions and key aspects of the opportunities and challenges in activating a community-based tourism strategy in an important agricultural heritage system of the cordillera pew enche, southern Andes.

through the guidance of *kimches* (wise people) of the territory, as mentioned by a participant : ‘the process has to be closely accompanied by people who have the skills to radiate and protect the Mapuche perspective in this strategy . . . we need one or more *kimches* who have a lot of knowledge’.

4. Discussion

This paper illustrates the main aspects of the process of biocultural heritage construction through tourism undertaken by members of Mapuche-Pewenche indigenous communities in the southern Andes that has recently been declared an Important Agricultural Heritage System (IAHS). To understand this process, it is essential to ascertain what 'heritage' means for the local inhabitants and how they want to manage it and make it known, in this case, through tourism. The biocultural inheritance that research participants view as heritage is materialised in the trades, landscapes, practices, knowledge and beliefs present in the territory (Ibarra et al. 2022; Olivares, Marchant, and Ibarra 2022). This is consistent with Reyes and Valdebenito (2019), who suggest that heritage activations are not only the work of international and national organisations, but can also be the result of local or community initiatives. In this way, it was possible to gain a better understanding of community-based tourism (CBT) as a mechanism for the inheritance's regeneration, recognition and local development. The accounts of research participants show that they view heritage as the legacy of their ancestors and related mainly to understanding nature in order to sustain the life/lives of those who (co)inhabit the Mapuche-Pewenche mountains. This inheritance is expressed in a way of life, containing elements that forge identity and a sense of belonging to the territory (Fernández 2012; Ballart and Tresserras 2003). In other words, as indicated by Dormaels (2011), heritage is understood more broadly than the traditional conception related to historical monuments or works of architecture, and emphasis is placed on its natural-cultural and intangible dimension. Moreover, our findings indicate that heritage is understood as a practical lived and shared experience associated with emotions that shape the past, present and future of the territory (Nazarea 2006; Ibarra et al. 2022).

Special attention should be paid to the fact that the Curarrehue municipal district, a mountainous territory in the southern Andes, is located within a tourism matrix of national importance that seeks to position the destination internationally. In this context, it is vital to increase awareness of the territory's cultural and natural heritage, albeit running the risk of generating an unequal heritage (Matta 2012). The CBT strategy gives the local inhabitants power over their cultural and natural heritage, trying to ensure that they, rather than external agents from the tourism industry, control it and reap the benefits (Quezada and Cisneros 2018). For example, indigenous communities of central Mexico are developing tourism activities to increase awareness of their biocultural inheritance related to fungi (Jimenez, Thoméz, and Burrola 2016). The CBT initiative described here is directly associated with the objectives proposed for the development of IAHS territories (Koochafkan and Altieri 2011), as it aims to empower local inhabitants to make decisions and have both the material and symbolic control over their ancestral territory. The above is materialised through local committees that constitute the main space for local representativeness, whose purpose is to guide and validate the activities and services that the inhabitants want to carry out in their territory (SIPAN 2022). In our study, for example, the delimitation of places suitable for tourism constitute an act of control and organisation of the territory according to the specificities of Mapuche-Pewenche cosmology of the land.

CBT goals include conserving and revaluing biocultural inheritance, avoiding the development of conventional tourism that does not include the local inhabitants (Cervantes and Serrano 2017). For example, in China's Longji agroecosystem (rice terraces), local residents are dissatisfied with certain aspects of conventional tourism, such as unequal distribution of its benefits, limited right to participate in decision-making, the environmental pollution generated and a deterioration of social relations within the community (Tang, Qingwen, and Zhongjun 2010). Likewise, proposing strict territory management strategies under the 'principles' of Market-based community conservation could generate unexpected consequences, as has been documented in Oaxaca, Mexico, where the local community has experienced losses of traditional agricultural practices negatively impacting their biocultural heritage and memory (Ibarra et al. 2011). This latter experience underscores the importance of designing a type CBT initiatives that are endogenous and suited to these systems since they could, otherwise, pose a threat to local

livelihoods (Le and Qingwen 2013). Similarly, CBT could provide new employment opportunities, permitting not only the maintenance of the territory's biocultural inheritance, but also its regeneration over time. This is feasible because CBT is envisaged as an activity complementary to traditional economic and productive activities (Henríquez, Zechner, and Sampaio 2010). Instead of replacing these activities, it should strengthen and take advantage of them as a resource for tourism whilst generating job opportunities for local inhabitants, (re)activating their intangible and material biocultural inheritance and memory (Pilquimán 2016).

In heritage declarations such as those of IAHS sites, endogenous processes with active community participation play a fundamental role in conserving and showcasing biocultural inheritance (Apgar, Ataria, and Allen 2011). In our case, the active participation of the members of both communities was possible thanks to the use of methodologies such as participatory action research (PAR), which permitted reflection about biocultural heritage construction processes. This, in turn, facilitated commitment and a proactive attitude from the cooperatives with respect to the model of tourism development they want for their territory. They are interested in autonomous processes that not only focus on economic production, but also seek to rebuild and maintain the traditional ways of life that constitute the identity of this indigenous territory.

This tourism experience contributes to global discussion on IAHS development and conservation. Differences are observed with the rural tourism model documented in some Chinese IAHS sites known as 'Duotian Agrosystem'. These family hotels use the agricultural landscape and lifestyle as a key attraction, but do not emphasise the leading role of local communities (Ming et al. 2020). We believe that the experiences of the Zomo Ngen and Quiñemawün cooperatives contribute knowledge and a singular experience for the implementation of a rural tourism that supports the conservation of heritage and local development. The initiative described here is like that of the Kunisaki Peninsula IAHS in Japan, where local inhabitants provide tourist services based on their traditional agriculture, religion and culture (Reyes et al. 2020).

Our findings in Curarrehue highlight the lack of tools and technical knowledge associated with tourism management. This could respond to the structural disadvantages that, often, local people face in running CBT businesses (Blackstock 2005). We have revealed that there is no direct relationship between CBT in Curarrehue and some of the national and international agendas present in the territory, showing that these external agendas and designations many times arrive with vertical implementation frameworks and methodologies, lacking local participation. Participatory Action Research (PAR) and education (Ibarra et al. 2020), is critical to empower communities to discuss with different actors -who develop political agendas in their territories- about their heritage (Whyte 1989). PAR can allow projecting CBT initiatives with active participation of communities, which favours the viability and accountability of these initiatives in IAHS (Ming et al. 2020).

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the restrictions on movement introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected rural tourism's conservation and development by reducing the number of visitors to IAHS sites (FAO, 2020). This had particularly negative consequences for those who live in rural areas and depend on visitors for their livelihoods (Bravo, Plaza, and Medina 2021). However, the pandemic has also favoured a return from cities of some young people of the families of the cooperatives' members, enabling them to reconnect with their biocultural inheritance while supporting different community tourism initiatives. In this way, the pandemic has provided time for the planning of a more sustainable and just form of tourism that promotes less conventional destinations and creates more resilient livelihoods for the inhabitants of the IAHS.

5. Conclusions

This study reaffirms the capacity of the inhabitants of the Cordillera Mapuche-Pewenche IAHS to identify, interpret and activate the territory's biocultural inheritance and memory. It highlights the importance of participation as a central pillar of heritage declarations, territorial processes and research. These findings contribute to discussion about the origin and significance of biocultural

inheritance as well as the ties between identity and territory. They indicate that it is crucial to incorporate the territory's cosmovision and ways of life into strategies for enhancing the value of its biocultural inheritance, which must be central to any declaration of biocultural conservation.

The experiences of community-based tourism (CBT) described here represent a process of endogenous development that is managed and coordinated by the inhabitants themselves, permitting the development of economic activities and the conservation and reinforcement of the biocultural inheritance of an IAHS site. In addition, locally-led CBT permits the proper planning of tourism activity and development in the territory, including elementary aspects related to biocultural inheritance and its conservation. In this way, sustainable and equitable tourism activity can be developed in territories declared an IAHS site in a global context of social-environmental changes. Finally, the use of participatory action research (PAR), as a key part of the methodology, facilitates the creation of a fertile space for dialogue and mutual learning, both for the inhabitants of the Cordillera Mapuche-Pewenche IAHS and from the standpoint of heritage studies. This positions PAR as a key tool for the coherent design of heritage policies in IAHS territories, giving their inhabitants a leading role in the management of their biocultural inheritance.

Notes

1. People who cultivate the land to produce food, fishermen, pastoralists, agricultural workers, the landless, migrant workers, indigenous rural workers, of diverse identities, genders and age groups. <https://viacampe.sina.org/en>.
2. One of the territory's traditional sociocultural practices consists in the movement of families and livestock between "winter" and "summer" spaces in line with climate variations between the two seasons (Marchant, 2019).
3. PAR allowed us to work closely with the people involved, designing and implementing coherent actions to achieve a practical objective while, at the same time, contributing to the advance of scientific knowledge (Whyte, 1989; Ander-Egg, 2003; Balcazar, 2003).

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