School of Global Studies

The Ontology of Separation in Climate Governance

An Ecofeminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the IPCC AR6 WGIII SPM

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Abstract:

This thesis examines how the IPCC AR6 WGIII Summary for Policymakers constructs the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency, specifically contrasting technological solutions CCS and BECCS with Indigenous and gendered perspectives. Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Val Plumwood's ecofeminist theory on the Logic of Domination, the study reveals that while the report rhetorically includes diverse worldviews, it discursively subordinated them to a dominant Ontology of Separation. The analysis shows that nature is framed as a passive resource and Indigenous Peoples as manageable "stakeholders," systematically erasing their agency to refuse proposed solutions. These findings suggest that the report's consensus-driven structure acts as a filter that neutralizes relational ontologies, reinforcing a technocratic status quo. Ultimately, the study highlights the structural barriers within current climate governance to achieving a just transition that genuinely respects Indigenous sovereignty and epistemic plurality.

Keywords: FCDA, Ecofeminism, Ontology of Separation, Ontology of Relationality, Indigenous sovereignty, IPCC AR6.

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List of Abbreviations

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
AR6	Sixth Assessment Report
BECCS	Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDR	Carbon Dioxide Removal
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
FCDA	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IPCC	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
WG III SPM	Working Group III Summary for Policymakers

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the onset of formal climate policy, global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise (Peters et al., 2019, p. 5). Despite decades of negotiations, the window for limiting global warming to 1,5°C is rapidly closing (Matthews & Wynes, 2022). This gap has led to an increasing reliance on technological solutions, such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), which are increasingly positioned as central components of mitigation pathways (Fressoz, 2025). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) plays a pivotal role in this process, as its assessment reports establish the "terms of debate" for international climate policy, determining which solutions are framed as scientifically viable (Vardy, 2023).

Concurrently, the IPCC's sixth assessment report (AR6) has marked a significant shift by increasing the numerical frequency of references to Indigenous Peoples, social justice, and gender equality (Carmona et al., 2023). This inclusion suggests a potential move away from viewing the climate crisis solely as a technical problem or "carbon management" toward a more holistic understanding of planetary boundaries and social relations. However, the coexistence of these two discourses, the primary technological framing and the increasingly included relational perspectives, raises a critical analytical question: How do these differing frameworks interact within the same text?

1.2 Problem Statement

The reliance on technological solutions, such as CCS and BECCS, is often framed as necessary by the urgency of the climate crisis and the perceived need to maintain current economic systems (Kanitkar et al., 2024). Some scholars argue that this reliance is rooted in a specific ontological foundation: the paradigm of modernity which rests upon a foundation of an Ontology of Separation where humans are distinct from nature (Machado de Oliveria, 2021; Wagner & Hornidge, 2025). Conversely, other scholars suggest that many of the Indigenous knowledge systems and feminist ethics of care articulate an Ontology of Relationality, where humans and nature are interdependent (Sherpa, 2025; Nagel & Lies, 2022).

The theoretical tension arises when these two frameworks appear within the same policy document. If the IPCC's primary technological framing is grounded in an Ontology of Separation, and Indigenous perspectives in an Ontology of Relationality, it remains unclear how these frameworks can coexist within the report's discourse.

1.3 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to examine how the IPCC AR6 WGIII SPM report's technological framing engages with relational perspectives. By analysing the construction of the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency from both technological and relational perspectives, this study seeks to assess the ontological compatibility of these approaches within current climate governance.

1.4 Research Questions

To guide this inquiry, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ 1: How does the discursive framing of mitigation strategies, specifically CCS and BECCS, construct the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency?

RQ 2: How does the report construct the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency when engaging with Indigenous knowledge and relational values?

1.5 Delimitations and Thesis Structure

This thesis is delimited to the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the IPCC AR6 Working Group III report (IPCC, 2022). The SPM is selected as the primary data source because it is the most politically influential document produced by the IPCC, finalized through a consensus process involving 195 governments (Vardy, 2023, p. 157). While the full technical assessment report contains greater nuance, the SPM represents the official "terms of debate" for international climate policy (O'Reilly et al., 2024, p. 62). Consequently, analysing the SPM provides insight into the dominant ontological framework that guides global climate action.

The analysis focuses specifically on sections of the report dealing with Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR), CCS, BECCS, and the representation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and gender. The study does not evaluate the technical efficacy of CCS but rather its discursive construction and ontological implications.

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the IPCC's authority, the critiques of techno-fixes like CCS and BECCS, the material consequences of land-based mitigation, and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and gender in AR6,. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework, introducing the Ontology of Separation versus Relationality, and drawing on Val Plumwood's Logic of Domination and Mastery Identity. Chapter 4 details the methodology, including the researcher's situatedness and the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) coding scheme. Chapter 5 presents the analysis and discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of findings, contributions, and suggestions for further research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The IPCC: Authority and Discursive Power

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is widely recognized as the primary institutional authority on climate science, serving as the global benchmark for climate knowledge. Mainstream perspectives often view the IPCC as a neutral arbiter that synthesizes objective data to guide policy, arguing that its consensus-based approach ensures scientific rigor and political legitimacy. However, a growing body of critical literature challenges this view, arguing that the IPCC's influence extends far beyond the provision of neutral data into the realm of epistemic power (Hughes, 2024, p. 158).

Scholars such as Hughes (2024) argue that rather than merely reporting on the climate, the IPCC performs a critical "naming" function, establishing the specific narratives and categories that global actors use to interpret the crisis (p. 158-159). Hughes (2024) goes on to suggest that this capacity to define the "official" version of reality is a form of power that situates the IPCC as the central site in global attempts to determine the meaning of the problem. Within this critical framework, science is not viewed as separate from action but is a "central and constituent part of collective action or agreement-making" (Hughes, 2024, p. 161). While proponents of the IPCC's current structure may argue that this is a necessary function of global governance, critics contend that it inevitably privileges certain ways of knowing while marginalizing others (Hughes & Paterson, 2017: Wagner & Hornidge, 2025)

A significant portion of this critical literature focuses on the unique production process of the IPCC reports, particularly the Summary for Policymakers (SPM). Unlike the underlying technical assessment reports, which are merely "accepted" by governments, the SPM is finalized through a rigorous "sentence-by-sentence" approval process where government representatives review and approve every line (Vardy, 2023, p. 157). Research indicates that this negotiation process effectively transforms scientific findings into political promises (Vardy, 2023, p. 154). Since the final text requires unanimous agreement from 195 governments, the outcome is often filtered by motivation of national self-interest (Vardy, 2023). Scholars argue that this process ensures the text does not threaten the economic and political interests of powerful states, which can obscure important social and political dynamics of climate change (Vardy, 2023, p. 154). Consequently, while the IPCC presents its consensus as scientific fact, critics suggest it is as much a political compromise as it is a scientific one (Vardy, 2023).

This institutional structure is further critiqued for influencing the internal organization of the reports, favouring Western scientific standards and quantitative knowledge over other epistemologies (Hughes & Paterson, 2017; Wagner & Hornidge, 2025). Beck and Oomen (2021) and Sherpa (2025) argue that this results in "epistemic Eurocentrism," where Indigenous knowledge is included only if it can be made legible through extractive relationships within the IPCC's processes. Sherpa (2025) observes that this institutional design marginalizes Indigenous Peoples by centring Euro-Western climate science and granting the authority to approve summaries to member governments rather than to knowledge holders (p. 469). It is important to note that this critique does not dismiss the value of Western science but rather highlights how its dominance as the sole standard of validity can silence alternative ontological frameworks.

The consequences of this Western-centric focus are visibly embedded in the climate models used to project future scenarios. Kanitkar et al. (2024) conducted an analysis of 556 scenarios in the AR6 and found that current global inequalities in income, energy use, and emissions are frequently projected to continue through 2050 (p. 1129). These models often depict higher per capita fossil fuel use in developed countries compared to developing countries even in 2050, demonstrating a pervasive inequality across variables like GDP and fossil fuel use (Kanitkar et al., 2024, p. 1129). While some scholars may argue that these projections reflect current trends rather than policy descriptions, other scholars argue that by projecting these disparities forward, the models place a disproportionate burden of carbon removal on developing countries while allowing wealthier nations to maintain higher levels of consumption (Kanitkar et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the literature presents a divergence of views. Mainstream policy analysis often accepts the IPCC's prioritization of technological and market-based solutions as a pragmatic necessity for rapid decarbonization (Otto et al., 2021). However, critical scholars argue that by prioritizing these solutions, the IPCC supports mitigation strategies that protect existing economic structures rather than challenging the drivers of the climate crisis (Morgan, 2016, p. 1). Morgan (2016) describes this as a "narrative of maintenance," a discursive strategy that seeks to preserve the current global order rather than addressing its foundational reliance on expansion and extraction. This focus created a narrow "corridor of anticipation" where the discursive space is restricted to pathways deemed technically realistic and cost-efficient (Beck & Oomen, 2021, p. 169). Fressoz (2025) argues that framing climate change primarily as a technical problem reinforces a technocentric bias that fosters false optimism while postponing necessary structural transformation (p. 1).

In synthesis, the literature indicates that the IPCC is a site of significant tension. While it functions as a unifying global authority, critical scholarship suggests it simultaneously reproduces the same societal and economic frameworks that originally caused the climate crisis (Wagner & Hornidge, 2025). By positioning high-tech management and engineering as the main realistic solution, the panel effectively marginalizes deep social and relational transformations advocated by marginalized and Indigenous communities (Beck & Oomen, 2021, p. 160; Klenk & Meehan, 2015). This debate sets the stage for the subsequent analysis on whether the IPCC's discourse is a neutral reflection of scientific consensus or a contested field where specific ontologies of separation are reinforced while relational alternatives are suppressed.

2.2 The Rise of Techno-Fixes

The literature identifies a significant discursive evolution in the role of technological solutions, specifically Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and other Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs) within global climate governance (Otto et al., 2021). CCS refers to a suite of technologies designed to capture carbon dioxide emissions from large point sources, such as power plants and industrial facilities, before they enter the atmosphere (Fressoz, 2025; Morgan, 2016). The process typically involves the capture of CO_2 from industrial flues, transporting it via pipeline or ship, and eventual injection into deep geological formations, such as depleted oil and gas reservoirs, for permanent storage (Fressoz, 2025; Morgan, 2016). A prominent variant in IPCC modelling is Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), which involves cultivating biomass to absorb CO_2 from the atmosphere, burning it for energy, and then capturing and storing the emitted CO_2 (Fressoz, 2025; Otto et al., 2021).

From a mainstream policy perspective, these technologies have shifted from peripheral options to essential components of mitigation models, theoretically enabling the continued use of fossil fuels while meeting temperature targets (Beck & Oomen, 2021; Fressoz, 2025). Proponents argue that without large-scale deployment of NETs, limiting warming to 1,5ºC becomes mathematically improbable within current economic frameworks (Beck & Oomen, 2021, p. 169). However, critical scholars argue that this shift represents more than a technical adjustment, and that it also reflects a discursive evolution where technical fixes are positioned as "backdrops" that allow the underlying drivers of emissions to remain intact.

Despite their prominence in the IPCC scenarios, the actual deployment of CCS has been critiqued for significantly underperforming relative to projected requirements (Fressoz, 2025). Scholars note that the technology remains prohibitively expensive and technologically complex at scale, leading many conclude that it is currently failing to meet the milestones set by earlier policy plans (Fressoz, 2025). While some modelling studies maintain that these technologies are necessary regardless of current deployment rates, critical research suggests these framing functions as a discursive strategy to resolve ecological contradictions through market-oriented technical solutions that do not disrupt capital accumulation (Morgan, 2016; Otto et al., 2021). By positioning CCS as a viable means to offset the negative value of fossil fuel assets, the critical literature argues that the IPCC effectively provides a "green light" for continued extraction, thereby legitimizing the very industry structures responsible for the climate crisis (Morgan, 2016). This perspective challenges the notion that CCS is a neutral tool, suggesting instead that it serves a political function in maintaining the status quo.

The reliance on these large-scale interventions has faced significant social and ecological critiques in the literature. For BECCS in particular, research indicates that the required land-use change could be immense, with some scenarios assuming 25% to 46% of all available arable land globally would be dedicated to bioenergy systems (Hansson et al., 2021). Such a vast expansion is argued to risks direct competition with food production, potentially undermining global food security (Deprez et al., 2024; Hansson et al., 2021). Ecologically, the conversion of land for bioenergy plantations is linked to severe biodiversity loss, habitat disruption, and forest degradation (Hansson et al., 2021). Some research suggests that the terrestrial species losses associated with large-scale BECCS create a fundamental trade-off between temperature mitigation and ecological integrity (Deprez et al., 2024). While mainstream scenarios often treat these trade-offs as manageable trade-offs within a cost-benefit analysis, some scholars raise serious concerns among scholars regarding social equity and land-use conflicts, particularly for Indigenous communities and marginalized groups who may face displacement or the loss of local ecosystem services (Baker et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2026).

This technocentric orientation is rooted in what Fressoz (2025) describes as a deep-seated history of "technophilia" within the IPCC. Analysis of the panel's reports reveals a structural bias where expert authority relies on engineering models that view the planet as a machine to be managed (Fressoz, 2025). This techno-optimism is a hallmark of ecomodernism, an influential worldview that seeks to decouple economic growth from ecological degradation through the *mastery* of nature by technology (Beck & Oomen, 2021; Fressoz, 2025). It is important to note that this worldview is not universally accepted, and that critics argue that within this paradigm, nature is treated primarily as a passive object or a "warehouse for waste," reinforcing a logic where the Earth is subjected to patriarchal and technocratic control (Morgan, 2016). This stands in contrast to alternative ontological frameworks that view nature as a subject with agency.

Scholars argue that this reliance on technocentric mastery is not merely an ideological choice but a form of structural violence that often ignores the rights and lived realities of marginalized groups (Alexander & Stanley, 2022; Resurrección, 2024). By fracturing the relational connection between land and community, Alexander and Stanley (2022) argue that such interventions can act as a "colonial flanking mechanism" that reproduces entitlements to Indigenous

territories in the name of "green" progress (Alexander & Stanley, 2022). While the IPCC frames these technologies as necessary for reaching set temperature goals, critics suggests they may inadvertently reinforce the same structures of domination that caused the climate crisis. As further examined in the next section, the preference for these large-scale, interventionalist technologies are intimately linked to patriarchal values and masculine ideas of mastery, which stand in direct tension with the relational and Indigenous perspectives that offer alternative ways of inhabiting the Earth (Fressoz, 2025; Klenk & Meehan, 2015).

2.3 The Material Consequences

While section 2.2 outlined the ecological and technical critiques of land-based mitigation, this section focuses on the social and political consequences of framing land as a "carbon sink". Proponents of land-based solutions often argue that large-scale interventions are a necessary trade-off to secure global climate stability (Hasegawa et al., 2021). However, critical scholars contend that this framing facilitates a form of "green colonialism," where the urgent need for carbon removal is used to justify the dispossession of Indigenous territories and the erosion of local sovereignty (Alexander & Stanley, 2022; Kolloju et al, 2025).

One of the main critiques of this lies in the ontological reduction of land. When IPCC and policy models treat land primarily as a commodity, they erase the social, cultural, and spiritual relationships that many Indigenous communities and local populations have with that land (Escobar et al., 2024). From a mainstream policy perspective, land is a resource to be optimized for maximum sequestration efficiency. Critics argue, however, that this reductionist view ignores the fact that for many Indigenous Peoples, land is a living relative and the foundation of their identity and governance (Escobar et al., 2024). By prioritizing the "carbon metric" over human rights, mitigation projects can effectively override local consent, treating Indigenous territories as "available" for global climate engineering (Alexander & Stanley, 2022).

While the IPCC frames these interventions as scientifically necessary and policy-relevant, scholars argue they often function as a mechanism to secure access to resources in the Global South for the benefit of the Global North (Resurrección, 2024). For instance, the implementation of large-scale bioenergy or afforestation projects has been linked to the displacement of communities, the restriction of traditional land use, and the criminalization of resistance against "climate-friendly" infrastructure (Esteve-Jordà & Scheidel, 2026). Critics emphasize that this is not an accidental side effect but a structural outcome of an ontology that separates human needs from ecological limits, allowing the "greater good" of carbon removal to supersede the rights of specific communities (Wagner & Hornidge, 2025).

It is important to distinguish between the intent of climate action and its material impact. Mainstream discourse often assumes that the urgency of the climate crisis justifies top-down implementation of mitigation strategies. Conversely, decolonial scholars argue that imposing solutions without free, prior, and informed consent reproduces the very power imbalances rooted in the modernity paradigm with the same logic of expansion and domination that are in large part driving the climate crisis. They posit that a truly just transition cannot rely on the dispossession of those who have historically protected the majority of the world's biodiversity. Scholar argues that this demonstrated proven, lived practices of living within planetary boundaries through

principally a relational stewardship (Reed et al., 2024). This contrast highlights a critical paradox: the IPCC's pathways often seek to "solve" the climate crisis by undermining the very groups that have successfully maintained ecological integrity for millennia (Carmona et al., 2023).

In summary, the literature suggests that the material consequences of land-based mitigation are deeply tied to the Ontology of Separation (Escobar et al., 2024). By viewing land as a resource to be managed rather than a community to be respected, current mitigation pathways risk replication of colonial structures under the guise of sustainability. This sets the stage for the next section which examines how the discursive inclusion of Indigenous voices the IPCC report attempts to address these material realities.

2.4 Inclusion of Indigenous and Gender in AR6

Parallel to the material consequences of land-based mitigation mentioned, literature highlights the significant numerical increase in references to Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous knowledge, social justice, and gender equality in IPCC's latest cycle, the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) (Sherpa, 2025, p. 465). However, critical scholars question whether this quantitative increase translated into substantive epistemic justice (Sherpa, 2025). The central debate is whether these perspectives are genuinely integrated or merely absorbed into the dominant logic of separation, a logic that links the domination of nature with the domination of marginalized groups, such as women and Indigenous Peoples (Vidal et al., 2024).

The drive to include diverse knowledge systems is frequently motivated by a need to bolster the report's legitimacy (Klenk & Meehan, 2015). Critics hypothesize that this inclusion is often "symbolic" or stripped of its political context to make it legible to Western scientific standards (Orlove et al., 2023; Sherpa, 2025). Some scholars specifically argue that when Indigenous knowledge or gender perspectives are included, they are often reduced to "data points" or "vulnerable categories" that must be validated by the "rational" Western expert, who occupies a position of epistemic authority (Ravera et al., 2023, p. 3). This phenomenon, described as "epistemic Eurocentrism," is argued to ensure that these voices are included only where they support existing climate models, potentially neutralizing their capacity to challenge the modernity paradigm (Sherpa, 2025; Wagner & Hornidge, 2025). However, the extent to which this reduction occurs in the final SPM text remains a subject of empirical investigation.

A similar tension exists in the representation of gender. While Nagel & Lies (2022) note that female core authorship has increased, they caution that the perspectives included often follow a "longstanding script" of vulnerability. Scholars suggest that the reports tend to focus on women's injuries rather than recognizing their agency or their role as holders of alternative worldviews and knowledges (Nagel & Lies, 2022; Rainard et al., 2023). From an ecofeminist perspective, this framing is significant because it mirrors the treatment of nature. Just as nature is framed as a passive resource to be managed, women are framed as passive victims to be saved (Plumwood, 1993). The concern is that by reinforcing this dualism of "active male"/Expert vs. Passive Female/victim, the IPCC may inadvertently maintain a hierarchy where the "Master Identity"—the superior side of this hierarchical dualism—remains the sole provider of solutions

(Plumwood, 1993). Yet, whether this specific discursive pattern holds true across the AR6 WGIII SPM requires closer discursive analysis.

Importantly, this analysis does not essentialize all Indigenous Peoples or women as inherently possessing a "relational" worldview. Rather, ecofeminist theory suggests that these groups have been historically positioned on the "subordinated" side of the hierarchical dualism that underpin Western modernity, consequently, their knowledge systems often offer alternative ontologies of relationality that reject these separations (Plumwood, 1993). The literature suggests that if these frameworks are included, they face the risk of being "translated" into the language of management and efficiency, thereby containing their transformative potential (Mantyka-Pringle et al., 2017). The literature further identifies a "double erasure" where both colonial history and gendered power relations are silenced to maintain a "value-neutral" scientific stance (Resurrección, 2024).

In summary, the literature presents a field of tension between how mainstream views see progress in numbers, while ecofeminist views suspect a deeper ontological continuity where the oppression of nature and marginalized groups are linked.

2.5 Summary and research gap

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals a sharp divergence in how the IPCC AR6 is interpreted. Mainstream perspectives often view the report's reliance on technical solutions in the WGIII SPM and its increased numerical inclusion of Indigenous and gendered voices as a pragmatic, necessary evolution toward effective climate governance (Carmona et al., 2023). Conversely, critical scholars argue that these developments mask a deeper ontological conflict between the Ontology of Separation, which foundational to a paradigm of modernity, and the Ontology of Relationality articulated within Indigenous and ecofeminist epistemologies.

It is crucial to note that "ontology" in this context refers not to empirical facts, but to the fundamental assumptions about the nature of being and the relationships that constitute reality. The Ontology of Separation posits humans as distinct managers of a passive nature, framing the climate crisis as a technical problem of "carbon management" (West et al., 2020, p. 309) Critics argue, however, that this view is a cultural construct that ignores interdependence (Carmona et al., 2023). In contrast, the Ontology of Relationality posits that identity is constructed through mutual entanglement, where humans are inseparable parts of a larger living web (Escobar et al., 2024).

While existing literature has critiqued the technical limitations of technological solutions such as CCS and BECCS, or analysed the symbolic nature of Indigenous inclusion separately, the specific discursive interaction between these two ontological approached within the IPCC text remains under-explored. Most studies focus on either the feasibility of the technology or the general representation of diverse voices, but few examine how the report's framing of technological necessity interacts with the inclusion of relational values.

This thesis addresses this gap by employing Val Plumwood's Logic of Domination and Master Identity as a theoretical lens, operationalized through Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). By mapping the discursive construction of the relationship between technology,

nature, and human agency, this study seeks to assess the ontological compatibility of these approaches and reveal the mechanisms through which the report navigates the tension between separation and relationality.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 The Ontologies of Separation and Relationality

At the heart of the tension identified in the literature is a fundamental conflict between two distinct ways of understanding the relationship between humans and the natural world. These are not merely different policy preferences, but ontological frameworks which are fundamental assumptions about the nature of being, existence, and the relationship that constitute reality (Azevedo, 2023, p. 6). To analyse how these frameworks interact within the IPCC report, they must first be clearly defined

3.1.1 The Ontology of Separation

The Ontology of Separation is the dominant worldview underpinning Western modernity and, as critical scholars argue, the current paradigm of global climate governance (Machado do Oliveira, 2021; Wagner & Hornidge, 2025). This ontology is characterized by a series of hierarchical dualisms that position humans as distinct from, and superior to, the natural world.

In this framework, nature is constructed as a passive, inert object such as “resource”, that exists independently of human society and is available for management, optimization, and exploitation (Machado de Oliveria, 2021; Plumwood, 1993). Conversely, the human subject is defined by rationality, autonomy, and agency, standing apart from the “wild” or “chaotic” forces of nature (Plumwood, 1993). This separation is not neutral since it established a hierarchy where the rational human has the right and duty to control the non-rational natural world (Plumwood, 1993).

This worldview frames the climate crisis primarily as a technical problem of carbon management. Because nature is viewed as a separate entity to be fixed, the solution is sought in technological interventions, such as CCS and BECCS in this context, that allows human systems to continue functioning while “managing” the external environment. The Ontology of Separation thus legitimizes a logic of mastery, where the goal is to maintain human dominance over a passive nature through engineering and market mechanisms (Machado de Oliveria, 2021; Plumwood, 1993).

3.1.2 The Ontology of Relationality

In contrast, the Ontology of Relationality offers a fundamentally different understanding of existence. Rooted in Indigenous epistemologies, feminist ethics of care, and decolonial thought, this framework posits that identity is not formed in isolation but through mutual interdependence and entanglement (Escobar et al., 2024; West et al., 2020).

In this worldview, humans are not separate managers of nature but are inseparable parts of a living, dynamic web of relationships (Escobar et al., 2024; West et al., 2020). Nature is not a

passive object but a subject with agency, rights, and intrinsic. The relationship between humans and the more-than-human world is characterized by reciprocity, care, and responsibility, rather than control and extraction.

When applied to climate governance, an Ontology of Relationality suggests that the crisis cannot be solved by technological fixes alone, as there fixes often reinforce the very separation that caused the problem. Instead, it calls for a transformation of the human-nature relationship itself, emphasizing sufficiency, equity, and the restoration of kinship with the land. In this thesis, Indigenous knowledge systems and feminist perspectives are treated as primary articulations of this relational worldview, offering alternative ways of knowing and being that reject the dualisms of the modernist paradigm. Importantly, this analysis does not essentialize all Indigenous Peoples or women as inherently possessing a "relational" worldview, but rather it recognizes that these knowledge systems have been historically positioned as primary sites of resistance to the Ontology of Separation and thus offer critical articulations of relational alternatives.

3.1.3 The Tension between the two

The coexistence of these two ontologies within the IPCC AR6 report creates the central theoretical tension of this study. If the report's technological framing is grounded in an Ontology of Separation, and its inclusion of Indigenous and gendered perspectives is grounded in the Ontology of Relationality, how do they interact?

Does the report allow these relational perspectives to challenge the dominant logic, or does it attempt to absorb them into the framework of separation? To answer this, it is necessary to move beyond abstract definitions and examine the specific mechanisms of power that allow one ontology to dominate the other. This is where Val Plumwood's Logic of Domination and Mastery Identity provides the critical analytical tool.

3.2 Plumwood's framework: Master Identity and Logic of Domination

Val Plumwood's (1993) theory on the Logic of Domination offers a systematic framework for understanding how the Ontology of Separation is maintained and enforced through power dynamics. Her work explains how the "Master", who is the agent of separation, constructs and sustains its dominance over the "Other", such as the women, Indigenous Peoples, or nature.

In her work Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, Plumwood (1993) argues that dualisms such as culture/nature, human/nature, male/female, and reason/emotion are not neutral distinctions. Instead, they are constructed so that one side, the subject, is defined as superior, rational, and active, while the other is defined as inferior, irrational, and passive. This structure is not merely descriptive but normative, establishing a hierarchy where the subject, the "Master", has the right and duty to control the "Other".

Plumwood's framework is rooted in ecofeminism, which posits that the domination of nature and the domination of women and other marginalized groups such as Indigenous Peoples, are not separate phenomena but are interconnected symptoms of the same patriarchal and anthropocentric worldview (Plumwood, 1993). In the context of climate governance, this theory

suggests that the IPCC's reliance on technological fixes is not just a policy choice, but a manifestation of a deeper ontological commitment to the mastery of nature.

3.2.1 The Master Identity

The Master Identity is the conceptual construct of the dominant subject in this dualistic split. It is characterized by traits such as rationality, autonomy, control, and universality. Crucially, the Master Identity is not just a description of a specific group, e.g., Western men, but a normative ideal, a standard against which all others are measured and found lacking (Plumwood, 1993).

The Master defines itself through denied dependency. While the Master relies heavily on the labour and existence of the "Other" to sustain its own existence, it must discursively deny this dependence to maintain the illusion of autonomy and superiority (Plumwood, 1993). In the context of the IPCC report, this manifests as a "view from nowhere", a universal, neutral scientific voice that claims to manage the planet without acknowledging its own embeddedness in the very system it seeks to control (Plumwood, 1993).

This framework is particularly relevant for analysing the IPCC's presentation of CCS and BECCS, as it allows us to investigate whether these technologies are framed as tools for the Master to maintain control while continuing to deny its dependency on a finite planet, or if the text allows for a recognition of interdependence.

3.2.2 The Logic of Domination

Plumwood argues that the Master Identity uses a Logic of Domination to sustain the hierarchical dualisms, which creates and reinforces an Ontology of Separation. According to Plumwood, the Logic of Domination is characterized by five mechanisms, which will guide the analysis as analytical categories.

The five mechanisms are defined as follows:

1. **Backgrounding**: The process where the "Other" is rendered invisible or treated as a passive backdrop to active projects of the "Master". These services provided by a subordinated "Other", allowing the Master to take full credit.
2. **Hyper-separation**: The Master emphasizes the differences between two sides of the dualism while minimizing any commonality. This creates a sense of radical exclusion where the subject, the Master, is constructed as external and disconnected from the object, the "Other", which prevents the recognition of interdependence.
3. **Incorporation**: The "Other" is not recognized as having an independent identity or intrinsic value. Instead, it is defined only in relation to the Master's need or goals.
4. **Instrumentalism**: The "Other" is viewed purely as a tool or instrument for the Master's ends and for the Master to manage and use as they see fit.
5. **Homogenization**: The diversity and complexity within the subordinated group are ignored and all members are treated as a uniform, interchangeable mass.

Plumwood (1993) argues that these mechanisms work together to justify and naturalize the domination of the "Other," making the exploitation of the "Other" appear as a logical, inevitable necessity. By applying this framework, this thesis seeks to determine how the report constructs

the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency. Specifically, it examines if, or how, these mechanisms are present and therefore enforce an Ontology of Separation, as well as if these mechanisms are disrupted or challenged, allowing for a relational construction within the report.

3.3 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as Theory

To operationalize Plumwood's framework, this thesis employs a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). FCDA extends the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), rooted in Norman Fairclough's work, by centring feminist critiques of power and ideology (Fairclough, 2018; Lazar, 2018).

Fairclough (2018) posits that discourse is a form of social practice that both reflects and constructs social reality. He argues that language is not neutral but naturalizes ideology, making the interests of dominant groups appear as "common sense." While Fairclough's CDA provides the tools to analyse how power is reproduced in text, it does not inherently prioritize gender as the primary axis of domination.

This is where FCDA, as articulated by Michelle M. Lazar (2018), is essential. Lazar (2018) argues that FCDA specifically investigates the intersection of gender and power, viewing discourse as a site where gendered ideologies are produced and resisted. Crucially, ecofeminist theory posits that the mechanisms used to dominate women are the same structural logic used to dominate nature and other marginalized groups, such as Indigenous Peoples. The "Feminist" lens in FCDA is therefore not limited to analysing gender alone but rather provides the theoretical tools to uncover the Logic of Domination that sustains all subordinated "Others" in relation to a dominant "Master".

The combination of Plumwood's framework and FCDA creates an integrated analytical lens. Plumwood provides the ontological map by identifying the Master, the "Other," and the five mechanisms of domination, while FCDA provides the linguistic toolkit to locate these patterns in the text. For example, where Plumwood identifies the mechanism of Instrumentalism, FCDA identifies linguistic markers, such as nominalization or economic verbs. By applying FCDA, this thesis moves from abstract theory to concrete analysis, tracing how the IPCC report constructs the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency through specific discursive strategies that reinforce, or challenge, the Logic of Domination.

3.4 Synthesis: The Integrated Analytical Framework

This thesis integrates the ontological frameworks of separation and relationality, Plumwood's Logic of Domination, and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis into a single, cohesive analytical framework. The Ontology of Separation and the Ontology of Relationality provide the contrasting worldviews that the analysis seeks to identify. Plumwood's five mechanisms serve as the specific theoretical categories that define how the "Master" enforces the Ontology of Separation against the "Other". FCDA provides the methodological lens to detect these mechanisms through concrete linguistic markers.

By combining these elements, this framework allows the analysis to move beyond abstract theorizing to a systematic examination of the IPCC text. This integrated framework directly informs the coding scheme developed in Chapter 4, ensuring that the empirical analysis is rigorously grounded in both ontological theory and discursive methodology.

4 Methodology

4.1 Researcher Position and Reflexivity

This study is grounded in Donna Haraway's (1988) concept of "situated knowledges," the idea that all knowledge is produced from a specific, partial perspective shaped by the person's context. I acknowledge my situatedness as a while, Western-educated researcher deeply embedded in the paradigm of modernity and the Ontology of Separation examined in this thesis. My background in climate justice activism drives a conviction that current governance is failing to address root causes of the climate crisis, yet I recognize that my own worldview and daily life are shaped by the very structures I critique. I approach this analysis not as an outsider with a solution in mind, but as an insider exploring what an alternative ontology, one of relationality might look like in practice at a global scale. A central ethical challenge involves the analysis of Indigenous perspectives as a non-Indigenous researcher. Following Linda Tuhiwai Smith's warning against the "imperial eye," I adhere to a reflexive research model that avoids speaking for Indigenous Peoples, directing the critical gaze inward instead. Operationalizing Michelle M. Lazar's (2018) principle of "critical reflexivity as praxis," the analysis functions as a form of "analytical activism" grounded in a process of unlearning the "universal" lens to avoid unconsciously reproducing the Logic of Domination. By making these mechanisms visible, this thesis hopes to provide evidence needed for stakeholders to critically evaluate whether current ontological foundations can foster the transformative change requires for a just and sustainable future.

Generative AI was used initially to help me compose all that I wanted to do into more specific research questions, however those have changed many times since, and the focus has shifted slightly since too, so there in no to little trace of those initial generated research questions.

4.2 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as Method

This study employs a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) as its primary methodological framework. While the analytical procedure follows Norman Fairclough's (2018) dialectical reasoning, the theoretical lens is explicitly ecofeminist, drawing on Michelle M. Lazar's (2018) definition of FCDA and Val Plumwood's (1993) Logic of Domination.

Unlike traditional textual analysis or Fairclough's CDA, which often focuses on general power dynamics, FCDA explicitly centres gender as a primary axis of domination (Lazar, 2018). While standard CDA may identify that "science" is privileged over "tradition," FCDA helps to identify specific patriarchal logics that associates "reason" and "mastery" with masculinity, while framing "nature" and "emotions" as feminine and subordinate.

Methodologically, this study adapts Fairclough's (2018) four-step dialectical process to the specific framework of Plumwood's Logic of Domination and FCDA:

1. Normative Critique of Discourse: The analysis identifies discursive patterns that reinforce or challenge the normative hierarchical dualisms by looking at technology, nature, and human agency through the coding scheme of the five mechanisms identified by Plumwood.
2. Explanation of Discourse: These code patterns are then interpreted to explain how the text constructs specific relationships between technology, nature, and human agency.
3. Explanatory Critique of Social Reality: Moving beyond the text and linguistics, the analysis critiques the underlying social reality reflected within the framing of the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency. This step will look at how the two different ontologies are present or presented in the report.
4. Advocating Action: Finally, by making the underlying ontologies visible and how they are constructed, it provides stakeholders with evidence needed to critically evaluate whether the current construction can foster a just future, or if there needs to be a change in the foundation of the report's mitigation strategies.

By integrating Fairclough's dialectical method with Lazar's feminist lens and Plumwood's ecofeminist theory, this study ensures that the analysis does not just describe power. But specifically illuminated the ontological foundations of how technology, nature, and human agency are linked.

4.3 The Coding Scheme/Analytical Procedure

To operationalize on the theoretical framework, this study employs a coding scheme (Table 4.1) designed to map the discursive constructions of technology, nature, and human agency.

The analysis applied this coding scheme to two distinct themes of the text, to analyse and answer the two research questions.

For RQ1, the parts of the report that mentions "CCS," "BECCS," or "CDR" will be analysed following the coding scheme to identify how technology, nature, and human agency are constructed. Thereafter, following the four-step dialectical process mentioned in Section 4.2.

For RQ2, the parts of the report that mentions "Indigenous," "women," or "gender" will similarly be analysed following the coding scheme followed by the rest of the four-step dialectical process.

Following this will be a discussion on the findings of the analysis of both research questions.

4.3.1 Table of Coding Scheme

Table 4.1

The coding scheme is organized into five analytical categories derived from Plumwood's mechanisms. For each category, the scheme identifies indicators of Separation through linguistic markers that construct an Ontology of Separation, such as passive voice for nature, or nominalization of technology. As well as indicators of relationality through linguistic markers that construct an Ontology of Relationality, such as active voice for nature, or relational verbs for human agency.

Analytical category	Indication of Separation and Mastery	Linguistic Markers for Separation and Mastery	Indication of relationality	Linguistic Markers for Relationality
Backgrounding	The "Other" treated as a passive backdrop	**Passive Voice:** "… was used for"	The "Other" as active, sovereign subjects with their own agency and authority	**Active Voice:** "The … use"
Hyper-separation	Maintaining a divide between the Master (modern/scientific/Western) and the "Other" (natural/knowledge/Indigenous)	**Binary Oppositions:** Science vs. knowledge, technical vs. natural	Ontological connection between the "Others" and between the Master and the "Others".	**Relational Nouns:** Words that link humans to the non-human: "kin", "living systems"
Incorporation	Defining the "Other" only by their utility to the Master's goals	**Subordination:** "high" or "low" confidence in non-technical solutions	The "Other's" knowledge and authority as autonomous, self-validating systems	**Sovereign Epistemology:** Treating the "Other's" goals as declared and valid
Instrumentalism	Treating the "Other" as a resource/tool for the Master's goals	**Nominalization:** Turning living entities or processes into objects, "we utilize," "we manage"	Reciprocity and responsibility to the "Other" as living entities, not resources	**Relational Verbs:** "we listen to," "we reciprocate,"
Homogenization	Uniforming the "Other" into a "faceless" unified mass	**Generic Naming:** Grouping the "Other" into single categories	Recognizing the specific, diverse identities, and knowledges of the "Other"	**Specific Naming:** Identifying the "Others" by their specific and actual name

By applying this scheme to both research questions, the analysis ensures a systematic examination of how technology, nature, and human agency is discursively constructed under different framings within the same report.

4.4 Data Selection and Material

The primary data for this study is the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group III: Mitigation of Climate Change (IPCC, 2022).

This specific document was selected as the primary object of analysis due to the political authority of the IPCC and its reports. The WG III SPM report more specifically, is the one summarized specifically for policymakers who have the power to make political changes to mitigate climate change, according to the recommendations of the report. Analysing this specific report by the IPCC means looking at the official, sanctioned discourse that guides real-world decision-making in how to solve the climate crisis.

The analysis focuses on specific segments of the report, this means the paragraphs or figures where the words of abbreviations "CCS," "BECCS," "CDR," "Indigenous," "women," and "gender" are present. This includes one paragraph in A. Introduction and Framing, B.7.2, C.3, C.3.2, Figure SPM.5, C.4.1, C.4.4, C.4.6, C.5.2, C.5.4, C.9.2, C.9.4, C.9.5, C.11.2, D.1.2, D.1.4, D.3.2, E.3, E.3.3, and E.5.4.

4.5 Methodological Reflexivity and Limitations

While FCDA offers a robust framework for unmasking the Logic of Domination, this study is bounded by specific methodological constraints inherent to its data source and the researcher's position. The primary limitation lies in the exclusive focus on the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the IPCC AR6 Working Group III report, rather than the full technical assessment. The SPM is not a neutral summary but the product of a rigorous, multi-stage approval process involving governmental delegates and scientists, designed to reach a political consensus. Consequently, any ontological alternatives to separation, Indigenous knowledge systems, or radical relational perspectives that may have existed in the underlying technical chapters were likely diluted or "washed away" during these negotiations. The SPM represents the lowest common denominator of acceptable discourse, meaning this analysis captures the most sanitized version of climate policy, potentially overstating the coherence of the "Master Identity" by excluding the friction and diversity present in the full report.

Furthermore, the structural requirement for the SPM to remain concise creates a "tyranny of brevity" that inherently hinders nuance and specificity. Complex, context-dependent relational ontologies cannot be easily compressed into the declarative sentences required for a policy summary, leading to a discursive homogenization that flattens not only the "Other" but the problems and solutions themselves. A significant methodological difficulty encountered during analysis was distinguishing between discursive strategy and structural constraint. For instance, when the report uses generic terms like "stakeholders" instead of specific Indigenous nation names, it remains ambiguous whether this is an intentional act of epistemic erasure or a structural inevitability forced by the need for brevity. The coding scheme required careful judgment to navigate this tension, acknowledging that the absence of relational markers may stem from the bureaucratic machinery of the IPCC as much as a form of deliberate ideological stance.

These limitations and the researcher's situatedness will kept in mind when conducting the analysis.

5 Analysis & Discussion

5.1 RQ1

RQ1 asks: How does the discursive framing of mitigation strategies, specifically CCS and BECCS, construct the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency?

5.1.1 The construction of Technology

The report constructs CCS as mature, modular, and controllable instruments:

"CCS is an option to reduce emissions from large-scale fossil-based energy and industry sources, provided geological storage is available." (IPCC, 2022, p. 28).

"CO2 capture and subsurface injection is a mature technology for gas processing and enhanced oil recovery.," (IPCC, 2022, p. 28).

"CDR methods vary in terms of their maturity, removal process, time scale of carbon storage, storage medium, mitigation potential, cost, co-benefits, impacts and risks, and governance requirements" (IPCC, 2022, p. 36).

These are examples of how, throughout the analysis with the coding scheme, technology is consistently constructed through the linguistic marker of nominalization, which turns complex, contested processes into stable, bounded object. "CCS" and "CDR" in these examples are presented as things that exist rather than practices enacted with specific political an ecological context. This adjectival construction "mature technology" frames CCS as something that has already been proven and is ready for deployment, foregrounding readiness and backgrounding the actual failure of CCS to meet projected milestones in practice (Fressoz, 2025). Technology is constructed as an autonomous domain of expertise, something the "Master" commands, rather than a set of practices embedded in social and ecological relations.

5.1.2 The Construction of Nature

Nature, in the sections addressing CCS and CDR, is constructed primarily as a passive container:

"CDR refers to anthropogenic activities that remove CO2 from the atmosphere and store it durably in geological, terrestrial, or ocean reservoirs […]" (IPCC, 2022, p. 36).

"The technical geological CO2 storage capacity is estimated to be on the order of 1000 GtCO2, which is more than the CO2 storage requirements through 2100 to limit global warming to 1.5°C […] " (IPCC, 2022, p. 28).

"In modelled pathways that limit warming to 1.5°C (>50%) with no or limited overshoot, global cumulative CDR during 2020–2100 from bioenergy with carbon dioxide capture and storage (BECCS) and direct air carbon dioxide capture and storage (DACCS) is 30–780 GtCO2 […] In these modelled pathways, the AFOLU sector contributes 20–400 GtCO2 net negative emissions." (IPCC, 2022, p. 25).

Throughout the analysis through the coding scheme, the dominant linguistic marker is passive voice and nominalization for nature. The Earth's geological formations are referred to as "reservoirs" and "storage capacity". These are terms drawn from engineering and logistics, not from ecology or geology as living systems. The phrase "permanently isolated from the atmosphere" constructs the planet's atmosphere as a problem to be engineered and fixed, rather than a dynamic living system in which carbon circulates. Nature has no agency in this construction and is instead defined by its capacity to serve human ends. This corresponds directly to the coding scheme's indicator of instrumentalism, where nature is a resource or tool for the Master's goals. Nature is often quantified in metrics, such as "$GtCO_2$". The phrase "contributes […] net negative emissions" reduces the complex, living systems of forestry and land use to a mere metric: a carbon sink. This is a clear example of instrumentalization where land is a resource to be managed for the "Master's" carbon budget.

5.1.3 The Construction of Human Agency

Human agency in the CCS, BECCS, and CDR framing is constructed as abstract, universal, and disembodied:

"All global modelled pathways that limit warming to 1,5°C […] involve rapid and deep and in most cases immediate GHG emission reduction in all sectors. Modelled mitigation strategies […] include […] deploying carbon dioxide removal (CDR) methods to counterbalance residual GHG emissions." (IPCC, 2022, p. 24).

"Upscaling the deployment of CDR depends on developing effective approaches to address feasibility and sustainability constraints especially at large scales." (IPCC, 2022, p. 36).

Human agency is not attributed to any specific actor, instead it resides in "modelled pathways" and "mitigation strategies". These are impersonal, rational constructions that appear to govern themselves. The coding scheme identifies this as the Master Identity. There is no situated human in this text, no acknowledgement that the models are produced by specific institutions, embedded in specific economic paradigms, and serving specific interests. The "view from nowhere" is sustained. The Master acts without being named, managing the planet while denying its own dependency on the very systems it seeks to control.

5.1.4 The Construction of the Relationship Between Technology, Nature, and Human Agency

The relationship between these three elements is constructed through a logic of compensation and control:

"In modelled pathways that reach global net zero CO2 emissions: at the point they reach net zero, 5–16 GtCO2 of emissions from some sectors are compensated for by net negative CO2 emissions in other sectors." (IPCC, 2022, p. 25).

The key discursive construction here is the word "counterbalance" and "compensate." Technology is positioned as the mechanism through which the Master offsets its continued emissions into nature, the passive reservoir. The relationship is one-directional: human agency produced emissions, technology compensates for it, and nature receives. There is no reciprocity, no

dependency acknowledged, no feedback loop recognised. The coding scheme identifies this as hyper-separation.

5.1.5 Ontological Findings

The analysis reveals that the discursive construction of CCS and CDR is not a neutral reflection of scientific necessity but a manifestation of a specific social and economic order. The construction of CDR as "unavoidable" and nature as a "reservoir" reflects and reinforces a social reality in which the current economic system, which is premised on continued fossil fuel extraction and consumption, is treated as non-negotiable (Asayama, 2021). The "necessity" of CDR arises only because the models assume that gross emissions cannot be reduced fast enough within existing economic frameworks (Kanitkar et al., 2024). The discursive construction thus performs a narrative of maintenance (Morgan, 2016) where it preserves the current global order by positioning technological intervention as the solution, rather than questioning the structures that produce the emissions in the first place. The Logic of Domination operates here by making the Master's continued dominance appear as the only rational, scientifically valid option.

The discursive framing of CCS and BECCS in the report is firmly grounded in an Ontology of Separation. Technology is an autonomous instrument of control, nature is a passive reservoir, and human agency is a universal, disembodied manager. The relationship between them is one of extraction and compensation, not interdependence. The five mechanisms of Plumwood's Logic of Domination are all operative.

Backgrounding: Ecological complexity is peripheral to the main narrative of technological necessity

Hyper-separation: The Master and nature exist in binary opposition.

Incorporation: Nature is defined only by its utility as storage, for example.

Instrumentalism: Land and geology are resources to be managed.

Homogenization: Diverse ecosystems are reduced to the singular metric of GtCO2 storage capacity, to name one example.

No evidence of an Ontology of Relationality is present in the CCS and BECCS framing.

5.2 RQ2

RQ 2 asks: How does the report construct the relationship between technology, nature, and human agency when engaging with Indigenous knowledge and relational values?

5.2.1 Construction of Technology

When the report engages with Indigenous and local communities, technology is still constructed as the primary domain of the Master, but now with an additional layer of "governance" to manage social impacts:

"Deploying land-based mitigation can draw on lessons from experience with regulations, policies, economic incentives, payments […] and from diverse forms of knowledge such as Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge and scientific knowledge." (IPCC, 2022, p. 34).

Indigenous knowledge is listed alongside "scientific knowledge" as one of several "forms of knowledge" that can inform mitigation. Through the coding scheme, this is incorporation: Indigenous knowledge is included, but only within the framework that already privileges the Western scientific paradigm as the standard. The construction of technology itself does not change when Indigenous perspectives are introduced. CCS, BECCS, and CDR remain central solutions. Indigenous knowledge is incorporated as a supplementary input into the existing technological framework, rather than as a challenge to it. The coding scheme's indicator for incorporation is identified as the "Other," in this case Indigenous Peoples and knowledge, defined only by its utility to the Master's goals which in this context is technological solutions to mitigate the climate crisis.

5.2.2 The Construction of Nature

"AFOLU carbon sequestration and GHG emission reduction options have both co-benefits and risks in terms of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, food and water security, wood supply, livelihoods and land tenure and land-use rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and small land owners." (IPCC, 2022, p. 33.)

"[…] afforestation or production of biomass crops for BECCS or biochar, when poorly implemented, can have adverse socio-economic and environmental impacts, including on biodiversity, food and water security, local livelihoods and on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially if implemented at large scales and where land tenure is insecure […]" (IPCC, 2022, p. 36).

Nature here is acknowledged as having connections to human well-being, such as "livelihoods," "food and water security," and "biodiversity." This gestures toward relationality. However, through the coding scheme, the dominant frame remains one of instrumentalism. Nature is still primarily a "carbon sequestration" source, and its connection to Indigenous Peoples is framed in terms of "co-benefits and risks," as a cost-benefit calculus. The relational bond between Indigenous communities and land, where land is a living relative, not a carbon metric, is not articulated. Instead, the relationship is refractures through the language of "risks" to be "managed," keeping nature within the regime of the manager. The coding scheme's linguistic marker for instrumentalism, such as nominalization, persists even in these sections, while the relational marker of "relational verbs" is entirely absent.

5.2.3 The Construction of Human Agency

The construction of Indigenous and gendered human agency in the report is defined by an absence of sovereignty. While the text frequently mentions "participation" and "engagement," it never constructs these groups as agents capable of rejecting the proposed technical solutions:

"Indigenous Peoples, private forest owners, local farmers and communities manage a significant share of global forests and agricultural land and play a central role in land-based mitigation options." (IPCC, 2022, p. 34).

"Trade-offs can be evaluated and minimised by giving emphasis to capacity building, finance, governance, technology transfer, investments, and development and social equity

considerations with meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable populations." (IPCC, 2022, p. 40).

"Effective and equitable climate governance builds on engagement with civil society actors, political actors, businesses, youth, labour, media, Indigenous Peoples and local communities" (IPCC, 2022, p. 45).

Through the coding scheme, the dominant linguistic marker is generic naming, homogenization, but more critically, the absence of negation or refusal or challenging. Indigenous Peoples and women are listed as "stakeholders" to be "engaged," "participated with," or "managed, but never as subjects who possesses the agency to say "no".

While the homogenization may be a result or the "tyranny of brevity," it is a discursive strategy that silences the possibility of resistance. In a document claiming to be inclusive, the total lack of any phrase like "Indigenous Peoples may oppose," "communities might reject," or "gender perspectives could challenge" is telling. It constructs a reality where the "Master's" solution (e.g., CCS and BECCS) are universally accepted or at least universally negotiable, never possibly rejected. The coding scheme's indicator for sovereign epistemology, where treating the "Other's" goals as declared and valid," is entirely absent. Instead, the text implies that the "Other's" only valid role is to assist the Master in achieving the Master's goals. This reinforces the Logic of Domination by denying the "Other" the very agency required to challenge the Master's authority.

While the extent to which this homogenization is due to the "tyranny of brevity" is impossible to conclude in this thesis, the cause of the flattening does not negate its material consequences.

5.2.4 The Construction of the Relationship Between Technology, Nature, and Human Agency

The relationship constructed between technology, nature, and Indigenous or gendered human agency is one of conditional inclusion and functional utility. The "Other" is brought into the fold only to serve the existing framework, never to reshape or challenge it:

"Deploying land-based mitigation can draw on lessons from experience with regulations, policies, economic incentives, payments […] and from diverse forms of knowledge such as Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge and scientific knowledge." (IPCC, 2022, p. 34).

"Context specific policies and measures have been effective in demonstrating the delivery of AFOLU carbon sequestration and GHG emission reduction options but the above-mentioned constraints hinder large scale implementation" (IPCC, 2022, p. 34).

The relationship is constructed as a one-way flow of utility where Indigenous knowledge is "drawn on" to make the "deployment" of mitigation options more effective. The "diverse forms of knowledge" are not presented as alternative ontologies or solutions that might question the premise of "carbon sequestration" itself. Instead, they are incorporated as tools to optimize the existing technological path. The coding scheme identifies this as incorporation, where the "Other" is defined only in relation to the Master's goals or needs.

Crucially, the relationship lacks reciprocity. There is no suggestion that the "Master" should need to change its approach to nature, or Indigenous communities, regarding its proposed solutions. The "constraints" mentioned in C.9.5 are framed as obstacles to "large scale implementation" of the existing options, not as ethical or ontological barriers that might require abandoning or rethink those options. The absence of any possibility to say "no" in the text confirms the relationship is not a dialogue between equals, but a hierarchy where the "Other" is invited to participate only on the condition that they do not disrupt the Master's agenda.

5.2.5 Ontological Findings

The silencing of sovereignty and the functional incorporation of Indigenous knowledge reflect a social reality where epistemic Eurocentrism is the default mode of governance. The report's failure to construct Indigenous Peoples as agents who can say "no" is not an oversight but a structural feature of a global climate regime that prioritizes "feasibility" and "implementation" over justice and sovereignty.

The "tyranny of brevity" may serve as a mask for this deeper power dynamic. By compressing complex, diverse, and often resistant Indigenous perspectives into a single sentence about "participation," the report erases the history of colonial dispossession and the ongoing struggles against "green" projects. The social reality reflected here is one where the "Master" retains the power to define what counts as "valid" knowledge and "acceptable" action. Indigenous knowledge is only valid if it can be translated into the mitigations such as "carbon sequestration" and "mitigation options." The Logic of Domination operated by making the "Other's" silence appear as consent, or as irrelevance. The report constructs a world where the "Other" is always already complicit in the "Master's" project, never a potential opponent.

The discursive framing of Indigenous and gendered perspectives in the report is a complex mixture of superficial inclusion and deep ontological suppression. While the text gestures toward an Ontology of Relationality by mentioning "land tenure," "livelihoods," "land rights," and "diverse forms of knowledge," it ultimately fails to allow this ontology to challenge the dominant Ontology of Separation.

The mechanisms of the Logic of Domination are clearly present:

Backgrounding: The deep, relational and often resistant histories of Indigenous Peoples are backgrounded in favour of the "narrative of implementation." While the text acknowledges "risks" to land rights, the primary narrative foregrounds the necessity of land-based mitigation options. The potential for these communities to oppose the premise is pushed to the periphery, treated as a minor "constraint" to be managed rather than a valid ethical objection that could halt the projects.

Hyper-separation: The report maintains a binary between the scientific and technological domain, and the social and indigenous domain. Indigenous knowledge is listed alongside scientific knowledge but remains distinct and subordinate, never allowed to challenge the separation of human systems from ecological limits. The "Other" is kept at a distance, consulted only on the margins of the "Master's" technical agenda.

Incorporation: Indigenous knowledge and gender perspectives are incorporated only insofar as they serve the "Master's" goals. The text states that mitigation can "draw on" Indigenous knowledge to improve "deployment". This defines the "Other" solely by their utility to the "Master's" project.

Instrumentalization: Nature and Indigenous Peoples are instrumentalized as resources for the "Master's" ends. Land is reduced to "carbon sequestration" potential, and Indigenous communities are reduced to "stakeholder" who "play a central role" in mitigation options. The relational bond between people and land is reframed as a "risk" to "land tenure" or a "co-benefit" to be calculated. The "Other" is not a subject with intrinsic value but an instrument to be used for the success of the "Master's" mitigation strategy.

Homogenization: The profound diversity of Indigenous Peoples, each with unique ontologies and relationships to specific territories is flattened into a generic category of "Indigenous Peoples".

No genuine Ontology of Relationality is present in the sense of a worldview that rejects the separation of humans and nature or challenges the Logic of Domination. Instead, the report attempts to absorb the language of relationality into the framework of separation, neutralizing its transformative potential. The "Other" is invited to the table, but only to help the "Master" in their quest.

5.3 Discussion: The Ontological Conflict and the Logic of Domination

The analysis of RQ1 and RQ2 reveals a stark contradiction within the IPCC AR6 WGIII SPM report. On one hand, the report constructs a rigid Ontology of Separation through the technological framing of CCS and BECCS, where nature is a passive reservoir and human agency is a universal manager. On the other hand, it attempts to include an Ontology of Relationality through references to Indigenous knowledge and gender yet does so in a way that strips these perspectives of their power to challenge the dominant framework.

The tension lies in the fact that the report acknowledges the existence of alternative worldviews but discursively neutralizes them. The "Master Identity" remains the sole architect of the future, while the "Other" is relegated to the role of a managed resource or a consulted stakeholder. The absence of any resistance or alternatives in the text is perhaps the most telling evidence of this dynamic. The report constructs a world where the Logic of Domination is so total that even the possibility of resistance is erased.

This discursive construction has profound implications for the feasibility of a just transition. If the Ontology of Separation is the foundation of the report's mitigation pathways, then any attempt to achieve a truly relational and equitable climate future will be structurally blocked by the very document meant to guide it. The following chapter will explore the implications of these finding, moving from discursive analysis to the material and political consequences of this ontological conflict.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis has analysed the IPCC AR6 WGIII SPM through the lens of FCDA and Plumwood's Logic of Domination. The analysis reveals that while the report rhetorically includes Indigenous knowledge, and relational values, these elements are discursively constructed in a way that subordinates them to the dominant Ontology of Separation

Key findings include:

1. Technological dominance, where CCS and BECCS are framed as "unavoidable" and "mature," constructing nature as a passive resource and human agency as a universal manager.
2. Indigenous and gender perspectives inclusion is superficial and included primarily as "stakeholders" or "risk factors" to be managed, rather than sovereign agents with valid alternative worldviews.
3. The text has been discursively constructed in a way that does not allow for resistance of challenging of the proposed technological solutions.

6.2 Conclusion from Findings

The findings suggest a fundamental structural tension within the IPCC report. The Ontology of Separation and the Ontology of Relationality appear to be incompatible within the current format of the SPM. The analysis indicated that the consensus process and the "tyranny of brevity" act as a filter. Complex, diverse, and potentially resistant Indigenous perspectives are reduced to generic categories. This suggests that the current operational logic of the IPCC prioritizes political consensus and technical manageability over the validation of alternative perspectives and ontologies.

The findings in this thesis raise several critical questions about the equity and justice of current climate governance. If the SPM constructs Indigenous Peoples without agency to refuse or challenge, this discursive framing may translate into policies that prioritize "green solutions" over the sovereignty and land rights of local communities. The report also demonstrated that simply including diverse voices is insufficient if the underlying framework does not allow those voices to challenge the premises of the solution. These findings suggest that the current reliance on technological fixes and the Ontology of Separation may be part of the problem, rather than the solution. It raises the question of whether the IPCC's current framework is capable of facilitating a truly just transition, or if a fundamental rethinking of the governance structure is required.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study is delimited to the IPCC AR6 WGIII SPM text. While the SPM is the most politically influential document, it represents the "flattened" consensus process. Future research could analyse the full technical chapters to see if more nuanced relational perspectives exist there and find where and how those perspectives are filtered or investigate the material consequences of

this discursive framing and what global climate policy could look like, if rooted in an understanding of the deep interconnectedness of life on Earth.

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