(RE) MEANINGS OF NATURE IN A NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZED MODERN WORLD: THREE CASES OF COLOMBIAN INDIGENOUS ETHNICITIES (PIJAO, COFAN AND MUISCA-CHIBCHA)

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“Judge your success by what you had to give up, in order to achieve it”

Author unknown

Family, friends, food, sunlight... Colombia
Welcome to this reading

(Cofán language)

We are inhabitants of valleys and mountains, good paths in our territories [through this reading]

(Muisca language)

We brothers and sisters, based on our fraternity, must listen to our grandparents’ wise words, grandparents of our warrior origins as the house of our ancestors, of Mother Earth

(Pijao language)
ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses to what extent, and how, discourses of ‘nature’ held by three Colombian ethnicities have hybridized with those of a growing national adoption of neoliberal, globalized modern foundations. ‘Neo-liberalization’, ‘globalization’ and ‘modernization’ affect all fields of Colombian reality, and have been materialized in indigenous territories. Indigenous struggles are fighting and ‘contesting’ modernity. I demonstrate that modernity and globalization, being ongoing processes, have impacted indigenous realities since the XVI century, and that the neo-liberalization of the Colombian economy during the 1990s implied a deeper penetration in indigenous localities. These political transitions, and the Colombian embrace of multiculturalism, have synergistically permeated indigenous social realities. I present examples of the ruling of neoliberal policies in Colombia across social, cultural, economic, and environmental policies, focussing on three groups: Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao.

I show that these societies have made a ‘territorial defence’, advocating for territorial and cultural autonomy. Territory constitutes something ‘defended’, in indigenous struggles. Constant incursions of the dominant global modernity challenge indigenous people’s worldviews, creating a tension that is expressed in incessant cultural hybridization of subsumed discourses, alongside social practices. This is a political reality that causes indigenous communities to reframe and re-voice what it is they are doing in order to maintain both their socio-cultural knowledge and political lifelines. Hybridization occurs when they harness the law (e.g. rights associated with multiculturalism), and therefore adopt foreign terms (e.g. ‘cabildo’, ‘territory’, ‘resguardo’) and legal mechanisms (e.g. previous consultation), as part of their advocacy.

In this study, I point out that in general terms, at least four –ongoing- cycles of hybridization led by Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao ethnicities have been crucial in contesting the neoliberal globalized modern world. The most influential is the construction of territory as a hybrid term, central in indigenous advocacy. Emergent constructions of territory (territories) encompass material and immaterial meanings of ‘nature’: material or territory itself in the sense of the physical place inhabited and immaterial or ‘Mother Nature’ in regards to the spirituality associated with their existence in that place.
The other three cycles of hybridization are the hybridization in ways of organizing, and the insistence on maintaining collective practices; the hybridization of identities and the strategic moving of these in order to gain benefits; and the hybridization of legal mechanisms to protect spirituality through what I call ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’. Therefore, I propose that hybridization is also a tool of empowerment for indigenous individuals, groups, and even ethnicities in their reaction to the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’, as it affects them.
DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original, unaided work in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text of all other material used. This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit of 100,000 in length, inclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.
Chapter/paper 5 of this thesis comprises the multi-authored publication: “Chaves-Agudelo, J. M., Batterbury, S.P.J, & Beilin, R. (2015). We Live From Mother Nature: neoliberal globalization, commodification, the “war on drugs”, and biodiversity in Colombia since the 1990s. SAGE Open, 5(3), doi:10.1177/2158244015596792”. In this publication I am the first author. I attach to the online submission of the thesis, the ‘Co-author authorisation’ and ‘Declaration for a thesis with publication’ forms, addressing the authorization of the other authors to include the paper in the thesis, and my contribution of over 60% of the content in the publication.

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After taking this journey, I consider myself to be a more complete and reflective person.
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Struggles dealing with territorial autonomy have increased in Latin America over the last few decades. These are due to fundamental conflicts of values over ‘nature’ and territory that have arisen in response to political shifts that States across the region are embracing, accompanied by the neo-liberalization of their economies. Economic neo-liberalization, inscribed formally into governance arrangements since the late 1980s, reinforces Latin America’s position in global trade dynamics that date back to the XIX century. Market-friendly resource exploitation and commercial activity have profited from first, European, and then English and U.S.-centred discourses of modernization and privatization. Struggles against the inevitable fallout resulting from a commitment to free-market policies are manifested in very diverse forms like the popular song quoted above, released by a rap fusion Puerto Rican band in collaboration with iconic singers of traditional music from Peru, Brazil and Colombia. An important struggle, one

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA2FAVRAO2Y
addressed in this thesis, is the people’s dissatisfaction at the subjugation of non-modern worldviews when local territories are exposed to the global market-led economy.

The marketization of economies, and rolling back of the state, has permeated environmental and cultural affairs in most Latin American nations. Even conservation priorities are set in relation to green and environmental markets – the ‘green economy’ is one that appears to sell nature in order to save it. Multicultural policies following international agreements facilitate the connection of the local with the global. The new positioning of the subcontinent in the ‘global village’ imposes changes to international relations, but also, and more importantly for this study, alterations in how the local relates to outsiders, and how they are understood as national and international actors. The speed of neoliberal policymaking since the 1990s has forced urgent decisions about, and actions in, local territories against a background of complex and confusing contexts.

Communities’ responses to the operationalization of neoliberal projects in their localities are in turn constrained by the possibilities, or sometimes lack of possibilities, on offer to them. Resistance to the seizure of land for example can be through legal tools, their physical actions, and creating and promoting strong arguments that challenge such actions. ‘Community’ itself, plus other terms employed today as common sense like ‘indigenous’, ‘cabildo’, and ‘territory’, are representative of particular political agendas since the nineties. In addition, landscape attributes and non-human actors, from rivers to sacred plants, have been incorporated in the political defence of territories and worldviews.

The research presented here demonstrates that Colombian indigenous communities –belonging to about 70 ethnicities- have appropriated elements from the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ as survival strategies to protect their socio-cultural and territorial autonomy. ‘Elements’ refer to discourses and legal tools contained and/or provided by Colombian legislation, reflecting in turn the global position of the country, especially after the 1990s. This advocacy, despite its subordinate position in the political hierarchy, has empowered indigenous identities as individuals and groups. Social cohesion and collectivity challenge neoliberal contexts. This is reflected in strategic negotiations of identities as in the case of the Pijao and in the creation of ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ as in the case of the Muisca-Chibcha and the Cofán where
communities harness the law to protect their spirituality. This is evident in my analysis of their discourses of ‘nature’.

I pose the following research question in order to assess my hypothesis:

To what extent and how have discourses of ‘nature’ held by Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities hybridized with those of the neoliberal globalized modern rationale?

In turn, my research question is composed by the following subsidiary questions, they are addressed in the chapters/papers addressing the case studies:

- What discourses of ‘nature’ do Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities hold? Has the global economy since the 1990s shifted the interpretations of ‘nature’ among these communities? Which other significant transitions (given policy enactments or particular social contexts) have taken place in the construction of current discourses of ‘nature’ in these communities?

- How do the discourses of the Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities reflect the changes occurring in macroeconomic or other policies and their materialization in territories since the nineties? What kinds of hybrid discourses emerge and how are they mediated by the State and by the members of these communities?

I organize this manuscript in a way that two possible readings could be done out of it. First, as a manuscript in which chapters (1–4, 8) and chapters/papers (5-7) follow the normal thesis structure organized by introduction, methodology, chapters exploring the research questions, and conclusions. And second, as a procedure developing the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology proposed by Norman Fairclough (2010).

These two approaches to this thesis require the use of different lenses. This thesis acknowledges that bias is implicit in the subjectivity of social research. For example, despite my effort and that of my supervisors to be very critical about every topic contained here, the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis implies a high risk of leaving aside theories and frameworks that should have been taken into consideration. I did my best to be inclusive, but, of course, it is
difficult to eradicate bias and preferences when examining social, economic, environmental and cultural topics at the same time.

However, the sort of bias I am concerned with here is that when I arranged the presentation of the data, I had in mind the audience I am directing my work to, and this results in the writing of three manuscripts to be submitted to peer-review journals for assessment. The methodology, although implicit, is not well developed in the papers, particularly because of space limitations and the specialization of the target journals. In response, I have added a separate methodology chapter, and charts developing it in each introduction to chapters and chapters/papers.

Therefore, the thesis structure according to the first way of reading it is as follows. Chapter 1: Introduction to the thesis. Chapter 2: ‘Methodology’ explains the implicit methodology contained in the analysis of chapters and chapter/papers. I explore elements of structuralism and post-structuralism in the analysis of discourses, and particularly in the use of Critical Discourse Analysis. Also I take into account some elements of constructivism in order to acknowledge the multiplicity of words and phrases as part of discourse analysis. I focus on one important concept, that of cultural hybridization. I explain as well the methods I employed in conducting interviews, the approach to communities and a brief description of them. This chapter also includes some pictures of territories, and ethics considerations.

Chapter 3: “A neoliberal globalized modern world': ‘the contested' in struggles by indigenous peoples” explores the dominant discourses that have been contested by communities, divided across the three major components of the neoliberal globalized modern world narratives: ‘modernity’, ‘globalization’, and ‘neo-liberalization’.

Chapter 4: “‘Mother Nature' and ‘territory': ‘the defended' in struggles by indigenous peoples". This is a brief, but central chapter which explores the meanings of ‘nature’ among the three ethnicities interviewed. This clarifies the two dimensions of ‘nature’ found in the thesis narratives. Based on interviews’ analysis, I call them the ‘material dimension’ or ‘territory’ and the ‘immaterial/spiritual dimension’ or ‘Mother Nature’.

Chapter/paper 5: “We live from Mother Nature": Neoliberal globalization, the “war on drugs”, and biodiversity in Colombia'. This paper was published in August 2015 in SAGE Open Journal.
It includes an explanation of the operationalization of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ resulting from the Washington Consensus since 1989, the embracing of the certification process in the war on drugs through the US Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act in 1988, and the enactment of biological conservation policies following the Convention of Biological Diversity in 1992. It also explores some of the threats that these policies have on cultural survival of ethnic groups in Colombia with accounts from Muisca-Chibcha, Pijao and Cofán ethnicities.

Chapters/papers 6 and 7 comprise a deep analysis of the interviews among the three indigenous ethnicities. My aim was to analyse the discourses of ‘nature’ that these communities hold, and to understand their emerging hybridizations associated with the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ practice in territories through, for example, natural resource extraction projects.

Chapter/paper 6: “Negotiating neo-liberalization: contesting ethnicity, meanings of ‘nature’ and defence of territories. The case of the Pijao (Colombia)”. This chapter/paper aims to analyse from a socio-historical point of view the negotiations that group members and communities have conducted about their internal identity as indigenous people or campesino-mestizo through a process of self-recognition regarding to the external categorizations of the state. I look at the political opportunities that those categorizations have brought about in these communities, especially in terms of land access and control. This, in turn, allows the better understanding of the contemporary Pijao defence of their territories against the impact of neoliberal policy implementation.

Chapter/paper 7: “The case of Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha ethnicities (Colombia): memory, blood, thinking, anguish and resistance”. This chapter/paper aims to analyse the diverse strategies that communities belonging to these two ethnicities are using to defend their territories, which have at their roots the defence of spirituality. Since the 1990s these communities have adopted different tools that the state has provided to protect multiculturalism in very particular ways. These have empowered their defence against neo-liberalization, but their tactics have varied across localities and between the two ethnic groups.

Chapter 8: “Conclusions”. This chapter draws together the thesis arguments with emphasis on the socio-political and cultural importance of hybridization. I argue that, while controversial, communities have empowered themselves and strengthened their defences for cultural and
territorial autonomy through hybridization of discourses and social practices. I use examples from Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha, and Pijao ethnicities.

The second way of reading this thesis is as a methodology. Critical Discourse Analysis, according to Norman Fairclough (2010), comprises certain stages and steps. In the introductions to each chapter and chapter/paper I explain schematically in boxes how they correspond to the stage and/or steps of the methodology under consideration. The methodology is in itself approached in more detail in Chapter 2. This, however, is only a guide and the analyst can choose what stages and steps to use for her/his analysis, based on the social ‘wrong’ under consideration. Therefore, in Chapter 2, I explore further which steps I am addressing in this research and which ones need further exploration in the future.

Accordingly, following the methodology in Fairclough (2010: 225-242), the Stage 1 “Focus on a social wrong in its semiotic aspect”, comprises two steps. Step 1 “Select a research topic which relates to or points up a social wrong” and step 2 “Construct objects of research”. The steps are implicit in Chapter 1 “Introduction”, but in order to make the thesis as easy as possible to interpret I explain this stage in the introduction to chapter 3.

Stage 2 “Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong” comprises three steps. Step 1 “Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements” is developed in chapter 3 and chapter/paper 5. Step 2 “Select texts and focuses and categories for their analysis” is addressed in chapter 3 and chapters/papers 5 to 7. And, step 3 “Carry out analysis of texts” is developed in chapter 4 and chapters/papers 5 to 7.

Fairclough’s stage 3, “Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong” is addressed in chapters/papers 5 to 7. And, finally, stage 4 “Identify possible ways past the obstacles” is explored in chapter/papers 6 and 7, and in chapter 8 “Conclusions”. As I pointed out before, the relation of chapters and chapter/papers with the methodology is addressed in the corresponding introductions to each chapter, except for Stage 1 which is explained in the introduction of Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

2.1 Introduction

The core concern of my analysis is the negotiation of meanings of ‘nature’ when indigenous communities confront neoliberal public policy and its implementation. In order to understand such relations, I consider the construction of their and policy discourses and their embedded meanings, as well as the negotiations that inform these discourses and possible hybridizations. But also, I analyse the mostly unsaid ideological relations and power structures, behind the construction of discourses to clarify the contexts wherein these discourses are produced.

For this purpose, I analyse discourses according to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework proposed by Fairclough (2010) and Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999), which is based on structural and poststructuralist approaches (see further below). Despite my analysis being grounded in a post-structuralist theoretical framing, I affirm that all knowledge is socially constructed and that as Ayre and MacKenzie (2013:754) describe, it is produced locally (even if it travels widely as western science has done). There are different and multiple constructions of ‘nature’ by the indigenous people interviewed, most of which are intimate and individual. The varying worldviews contribute to the dynamic realities of everyday existence in which even the land that is at core of identity is contested.

Below, I introduce key concepts and the methodology of CDA, which constitute starting points for my analysis of interviews and policies. Then I introduce the methods for gathering the data, ethics considerations, and a short bibliography of myself, in order to explain my position as a researcher in the analysis, and very brief descriptions of the co-authors of chapters/papers.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Discourse, discursive meaning, structuralism and post-structuralism

Cultures can be understood as ‘signifying systems’ (Williams, 1981:209), ‘maps of meaning’ (Jackson, 1989:2), or ‘networks of social practices’ (Fairclough, 2010:172-175). All these conceptualizations understand language as the means through which social constructions (the production of knowledge) are symbolically expressed in practice. The analysis of language, i.e. discourse analysis, permits the understanding of the world by social actors from particular
cultures as “verbal language is the most adequate systemic metaphor by which to understand the organizational level of all social experience” (Gilbert, 2004:para. 21).

Discourse analysis is based on Foucault’s (1972) understanding of the systems of formation of discourses. In the production of knowledge, according to Foucault (1972), different systems of formation take place: objects, statements, concepts and strategies, which constitute interdependent levels, operating together as a ‘system of rules’ in the regular practice of the production of objects, strategies, enunciations and concepts. In his reading, statements constitute the unit of analysis.

According to Foucault (1972:234), discourse analysis allows the study of relations of power behind the construction of statements,

“[T]he analysis of discourse thus understood, does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed rarity, with a fundamental power of affirmation (…); rarity, in the last resort of affirmation – certainly not any continuous outpouring of meaning, and certainly not any monarchy of the signifier.”

Jackson (1989:167) explains that, based on Foucault, the role of the discourse analyst is “to move between individual statements and the social relations of power through which those statements are articulated and given meanings, moving back and forth from ‘text’ to ‘context’”.

Also, the analysis of discourse permits a glimpse that what is said is indicative of what is unsaid. For example, dominant meanings are often naturalized and unspoken, backgrounded in common sense, reflecting in turn, processes of imposition, negotiation, registration and challenging of ideologies. Another example is the adoption and symbolic transformation of elements from dominant cultures by subordinated ones, which can be also analysed in discourses; “language provides a key point of entry into the analysis of social distinctions” (Jackson, 1989:161).

In searching the literature for a critical use of discourse analysis and policy, I encountered first Hajer (2007) and then Wagenaar (2011). Wagenaar’s Meaning in Action locates discourse analysis both in the policy arena and as constituted on the ground, in the practices of everyday
life. He argues that discourse analysis focuses on the construction of meanings. He acknowledges that all discursive analysis is interpretative, while distinguishing three major approaches to interpreting meaning in response to public policy. They depend on the analyst’s choice of interpretative frameworks, and he suggests that broadly speaking, there is: ‘hermeneutic meaning’, ‘dialogical meaning’, and ‘discursive meaning’. Nonetheless, while I use the latter in this study, I acknowledge that dialogic meaning is also frequently part of the discursive.

Dialogical and discursive meanings are different from hermeneutic meaning in that the latter is based on the individual self-understanding of reality (i.e. subjective meaning), while the others take into account the frequently “unarticulated background knowledge” behind the production of meaning (Wagenaar, 2011:51). Dialogical meaning acknowledges the individual’s interpretation but emphasizes the sharing of information “between agents and between agents and the world in everyday situations” (Wagenaar, 2011:40). Discursive meaning takes into account the “large linguistic-practical frameworks, unnoticed by individual agents, that constitute the categories and objects of our everyday world” (Wagenaar, 2011:40). Discursive meaning emerges from the everyday practices and beliefs –both material and immaterial (seen and heard, unseen and unsaid).

Discourse analysis elicits these meanings, arguing these elements cannot be neutral but instead are indicative of the powerful structures in which agents live. These structures can determine how meanings are constructed based on the current and historical contexts and that these can be understood through analysis of the structural properties of the text (2011:107). Wagenaar (2011:53) states,

“The emergence of discourse is part happenstance, part purpose, and part convenience. Discourses are makeshift structures, put together by a wide range of social actors dispersed in place and time, who negotiate a particular practical challenge out of the ideational, institutional, and moral material that happens to be available at time. (…) One of the real contributions of discourse theory to social theory and policy analysis is a subtle conception of the dispersed and formative way that power operates in society”
Discursive analysis is framed in the linguistic theories of structuralism and post-structuralism where post structuralism is understood as improving on the shortcomings of structuralism (Wagenaar, 2011:107). Assiter (1984) describes four characteristics of structuralism. These are that elements are dependent on a structure, all systems have structures, structural laws reflect co-existence rather than dynamism, and that structures are as real as any tangible elements in a system, and influence the emergence of meaning from social practice to language. Structuralism encouraged the deconstruction of the text and discourse (the text plus the context of material and non-material experience) to its extension — hence, post-structuralism.

Structuralism maintains “that the source of experience and meaning is not the individual but the architecture of symbolic-linguistic systems” (Wagenaar, 2011:108). Discourse analysis builds on this dialectical approach in the analysis of meaning-formation (Wagenaar, 2011). Nevertheless, Foucault (1972) criticized the association of discourse with structuralism, because of the possibility it was to be linked to more static descriptions of everyday life. He argued that meaning and power in social practice already exist, so they have an historical context, and importantly, they are also dynamic, constantly being reconstituted so they are potentially emergent and relational.

Structuralism suggests that the study of meanings can be conducted in the seemingly objective study of pre-existing symbolic-linguistic structures — the idea that language is fixed. However, it ignores that systems are embedded in social contexts that enable or constrain the production of meanings, and also denies the agency of the subject in the production of language (Wagenaar, 2011). These criticisms led to the affirmation of poststructuralism as a form of improving on structuralism. Discourse, based on poststructuralism, places context and agency, circumstances and intentions at the core of the analysis of the possibilities for meaning-formation; ‘[f]ar from being a static, self-contained, and lawlike formal system of symbolic relations, langue is wide open to human intention and possibility and as a result rife with novelty and indeterminism’ (Wagenaar, 2011:110). Therefore, ‘this conceptualization of discourse offers a range of new insights on key issues in political thought, such as power, freedom, governance, state and public policy’ (Wagenaar, 2011:111).
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) links social and linguistic analysis, taking into account the power relations in language production (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995, 2010). Discourse analysis allows the study of relations of power, conflict, and struggle resulting from policy initiatives (Wagenaar, 2011).

2.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis – CDA, re-contextualization and cultural hybridization

Fairclough’s approach to CDA consists of a dialectical-relational version in transdisciplinary social research (Fairclough, 2010). Discourse, is understood in its semiotic sense (i.e. meaning-making) as an element of the social process which is dialectically related to other semiotic and extra-semiotic elements (Fairclough, 2010; Wagenaar, 2011).

Fairclough (2010) analyses social reality as the interplay among ‘social structures’ (i.e. language in its most abstract level), ‘social practices’ (e.g. institutions, organizations) and ‘social events’ (i.e. ‘strategies’ of social agents embedded in concrete texts). Particularly his version of CDA focuses on the dialectical relation between social structures and social events, and within each between semiosis and other elements. CDA focuses on “the ways in which [social agents] try to achieve outcomes or objectives within existing structures and practices, or to change them in particular ways” (Fairclough, 2010:233). Social practices mediate the relation between social structures and social events.

Following Fairclough’s (2010) proposal, the semiotic aspect of social practices are the ‘orders of discourse’ and the one of social events are ‘texts’. The semiotic or discourse-analytical categories that relate with other elements of social practices and social events are ‘genre’, ‘discourse’, and ‘style’. Genres are the semiotic means of diffusion and communication of discourses; discourse in its semiotic dimension is the way of construing the world; styles are the semiotic aspects of identities. Therefore, the particular configuration and negotiation of genres, discourses and styles are analysed in the interplay of texts (as part of particular events) and orders of discourse (as part of networks of social practices) in which they are embedded. This is called ‘inter-discursive’ analysis.
Interdiscursivity in turn allows the study of re-contextualization of discourses from particular orders of discourse into others. According to Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) and Fairclough (2010), this can be read as a process of ‘colonization’ of some orders of discourse over others, or as the strategic ‘appropriation’ of external discourses by social actors. The concept of discourse’s re-contextualization in CDA is similar to the concept of ‘cycles of hybridization’ (García, 1990; Stross, 1999) or ‘transition discourses’ (Escobar, 2012) in cultural studies.

A ‘cycle of hybridization’ according to Stross (1999:265), refers to “a cycle that goes from ‘hybrid’ form, to ‘pure’ form, to ‘hybrid’ form; from relative heterogeneity, to homogeneity, and then back again to heterogeneity”. Hybridization comprises “socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices”. These cycles of hybridization depend on “individual and collective creativity - not only in the arts, but in everyday life and in technological development” (García, 1990: xxv, xxvii).

But, García’s concept (1990) of hybridization, despite being highly employed in Latin American literature, has important critiques. According to Cornejo (1998) and Kokotovic (2000), cultural hybridization does not take into account the relations of power in the hybridization of practices. This approach, the authors argue, assumes that everyone has the same freedom and possibilities to combine cultural practices, neglecting relations of inequality that force
hybridizations by people in subordinated positions. It is here that post-structuralism is highly relevant. It offers the theoretical platform to investigate hybridity itself, as part of the discourses of the respondents in this study.

I employ hybridization as García (1990) suggests, but with in-depth attention to the possibilities inherent in post-structuralism (i.e. identity, difference, discourse, struggle and power). I deploy hybridity as more than a response to a static system but instead, one that emerges as part of the struggle central to the politics of identity and participation by ethnic people; and one that draws attention to relations of power and ideologies in the analysis of policy and everyday existence.

2.2.3 CDA in this study

CDA departs from the analysis of social ‘wrongs’ and the relations of power in place (Fairclough, 2010; Wagenaar, 2011). Social wrongs are “injustices and inequalities which people experience, but which are not necessarily wrongs in the sense that, given certain social conditions, they could be righted or at least mitigated” (Fairclough, 2010:226). An example of this is ‘poverty’. In most societies it might be assumed that alleviating poverty is a socially just goal, but it is also one that is frequently considered to be endemic and therefore its eradication is frequently assumed to be too difficult to bring about. The critical discourse analysis leads “to a better understanding of the nature and sources of social wrongs, the obstacles to addressing them and possible ways to overcoming those obstacles” (Fairclough, 2010:235). Social wrongs place CDA within critical social research approaches; as explained by Wagenaar (2011:158), “…the critical aspect of critical discourse analysis resides in revealing the covert ideological elements in ordinary discourse”. In this example of poverty, the assumptions in many Western nations that everyone has the ability to work their way out of poverty colours the way media and government respond to social welfare issues and, for example, affirms high-end success stories among the rich by giving them tax cuts.

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) and Fairclough (1995, 2010) demonstrate the reasoning underpinning CDA by breaking it into a set of stages and steps. Their methodological proposal indicates methods and theory cannot be completely separated. Again, this is a particularly important alignment with post structuralism, allowing the researcher/analyst to juxtaposition the text, and the discourse in the context of meaningful action, recognising that these constitute
social practices. The methods, therefore, reflect the theoretical process behind the construction of the research object (Fairclough, 2010); as Chouliairaki & Fairclough (1999:16) state, CDA can be understood,

“…as a method for analysing social practices with particular regard to their discourse moments within the linking of the theoretical and practical concerns and public spheres (...), where the ways of analysing ‘operationalize’ –make practical- theoretical constructions of discourse in (late modern) social life, and the analyses contribute to the development and elaboration of these theoretical constructions”.

In his proposal, Fairclough (2010) divides the analysis into four stages; some of which are subdivided into steps. In Figure 1, I sum up and correlate the chapters and chapter/papers with the stages/steps of the methodology.

But, before continuing, I would like to clarify the use of CDA and post structuralism in this thesis. The analysis of discourses is implicitly developed in the chapters, and particularly in chapters/papers. Therefore, the particular jargon of CDA is not evident in the content of these thesis’ segments, as chapter/papers were structured to be submitted to non-discourse analysis centric journals. Therefore, in order to make the methodology explicit in the thesis I have added a schematic in the introduction to each chapter and chapter/paper. In this way I intend that the reader can explore the content as a part of the CDA methodology.

Also, the ordering of the thesis is based on the structural narrative that is at the core of the thesis, which is the impact of neo-liberalization on policies associated with the territories and realities of the indigenous peoples of three ethnicities. The methodological stages and steps of CDA are elaborated in chapters and chapter/papers at different degrees as indicated in Figure 1. The application of the methodology varies according to the social wrong as Fairclough (2010:234) indicates,

“We can identify ‘stages’ or ‘steps’ in the methodology only on condition that these are not interpreted in a mechanical way: these are essential parts of the methodology (a matter of its ‘theoretical order’), and while it does make partial sense to proceed from one to the next (a matter of the ‘procedural order’), the relationship between them in
doing research is not simply that of sequential order. (...) It is also helpful to distinguish the 'theoretical' and 'procedural' from the 'presentational' order one chooses to follow in, for instance, writing a paper – other generally rhetorical factors will affect the order in which one presents one’s analysis”. 
### STAGE 1. FOCUS ON A SOCIAL WRONG IN ITS SEMIOTIC ASPECT

*Focus on wrongs which can be productively researched in terms of relations between semiotic and extra-semiotic elements*

**Step 1.** Select a research topic which relates to or points up a social wrong and which can productively be approached in a transdisciplinary way with a particular focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other ‘moments’.

**Step 2:** Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorising them in a transdisciplinary way.

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**Step 1.** Chapter 1: Introduction. The social wrong (see Figure 2)

**Step 2:** Chapter 1: Introduction. The objects of research are indicated in the research questions, and they in turn are formulated in a transdisciplinary way (see Figure 2)

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### STAGE 2. IDENTIFY OBSTACLES TO ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL WRONG

*What is it about the nature of the social order in which this wrong exists that makes it difficult to right it?*

**Step 1.** Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements: between orders of discourse and other elements of social practices, between texts and other elements or events.

**Step 2.** Select texts, and focuses and categories for their analysis, in the light of and appropriate to the constitution of the object of research

**Step 3:** Carry out analysis of texts, both inter-discursive analysis and linguistic/semiotic analysis

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This stage is elaborated from chapter 3 to chapter/paper 7. However, the extension to which the steps are elaborated in chapters and chapters/papers varies according to the scope of the latter. This is clarified in the corresponding introductions.

Importantly, in relation to step 3, elements from the methodology related to linguistic/semiotic analysis will need further elaboration in another study than this one; I limit the analysis of texts to inter-discursivity in this study.
The reason for this is that I decided to emphasise in the ‘macro-analysis of texts’ “in order to focus on broader representational practices consisting mainly of ‘events’ and ‘actions’” such as the practicing of neoliberal globalized modern discourses through natural resource extraction projects and the contestation of them led by communities, rather than in the ‘micro-analysis of texts’ of sociolinguistic approaches (Aydin-Düzgit, 2014:356). Sociolinguistic analysis involves the study of tropes, substitutions, metaphors, and metonymies, among others, in discourses and how these systems of signification create subject identities (Aydin-Düzgit, 2014).

**Step 1.** Chapter 3 and chapter/paper 5

**Step 2.** Chapter 4 and chapters/papers 5 to 7

**Step 3:** Chapter 4 and chapters/papers 5 to 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 3: CONSIDER WHETHER THE SOCIAL ORDER ‘NEEDS’ THE SOCIAL WRONG</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Is this social wrong inherent to the social order so that it can’t be righted without changing the social order (though perhaps it can be mitigated), or something that can be righted without such radical change?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a way of linking ‘is’ to ‘ought’: if a social order can be shown to inherently give rise to major social wrongs, then that is a reason for thinking that perhaps it should be changed. It also connects with questions of ideology: discourse is ideological in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter/papers 5 to 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAGE 4. IDENTIFY POSSIBLE WAYS PAST THE OBSTACLES</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>How the obstacles identified in stage 2 might be overcome, and since these obstacles are partly semiotic in character, it focuses on how people actually deal or might deal with the obstacles in part by contesting and changing discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on dialectical relations between semiosis and other elements to identify possibilities within the existing social process for overcoming obstacles to addressing the social wrong in question. A specifically semiotic focus would include ways in which the dominant discourse is reacted to, contested, criticised and opposed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter/papers 6 and 7 and chapter 8 – conclusions</td>
</tr>
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2.3 Methods

2.3.1 Communities and semi-structured interviews

I approached three Colombian indigenous ethnicities: Muisca-Chibcha, Pijao and Cofán. I interviewed one community in the case of Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity in Boyacá department; two Cofán communities in Putumayo department; and, seven communities in Tolima department and some individuals in Bogotá DC, belonging to the Pijao (Map 1).

The choosing of Pijao and Muisca-Chibcha communities responds to a first enquiry I directed to the Colombian Indigenous Nacional Organization (ONIC). I consulted them for an advice about the ethnicities I should turn to given the nature of my research. Therefore, I made the first contacts to some Pijao people on Facebook before my trip to Colombia and they agreed with meetings to talk about the project when I was in the country. For the case of the Muisca-Chibcha, when I was in Colombia, I visited the Archaeological museum (which focuses on Muisca-Chibcha elements) at the Colombian Pedagogical and Technological University located in Tunja city, and they put me in contact with one of the members of the ethnicity.

The ONIC advised me also to contact the Inga-Kamentsá ethnicity in Putumayo department, but it was very difficult. However, one colleague of mine who attended one conference led by the Colombian National Natural Parks Organization about traditional knowledge and national parks, told me about the participation of Cofán ethnicity members who had described their situation, and she told me that they were addressing the topics I was analysing in my thesis. Therefore, I tried to contact them. In order to find their phone numbers I called different offices of Colombian National Natural Parks, and after enquiries they gave me some contact details of Cofán people in Putumayo department. The three ethnicities were at the time of interviews (and still are) leading everyday struggles associated with the contested reality of natural resource extraction projects.
Map 1. Departmental location of communities approached in this study.

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
The number of communities and interviewees varied across cases due to differences in their political organization. Community organization depends on internal cohesion, livelihoods, remoteness to centres of power, land entitlement, and type of settlement, among other variables; organization itself relies in turn on specific socio-historical contexts. These variables and brief ethnographic descriptions are addressed further in the chapter/paper 6 in the case of Pijao ethnicity, and chapter/paper 7 in the case of Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha ethnicities.

Focusing on interviews, the respondents were community authorities, politically or spiritually. Political leaders, i.e. cabildo representatives, are individuals who are elected by the community as their representatives in different instances. They negotiate with outsiders, and update other members of any political possibilities or constraints associated with state enactments. Spiritual leaders, i.e. chyguys (Muisca-Chibcha), shamans (Pijao), and taitas or curacas (Cofán), comprise usually the elders and most respected members of communities. They hold the memory and spiritual practices. Casual chatting during visits provided me a better comprehension of communities.

With regard to gender, it is significant that approximately half of the respondents are women. Of particular interest is that the views of the women and men on the topics that I interviewed them about and subjects they wanted to talk about with me did not show a particular differentiation by gender. I did not ask the women questions about their lives as women, but I expected from the literature that there would be significant power differentials if I had (see for example Meertens [1995], Molyneux [2010], Tovar-Restrepo and Irazabal [2014], Sierra [2004]). However, because it was not the focus of my research, which was the power relations between the ethnicities and the state, it is clear that I am unable to comment on the meaning of nature or territory from a gendered perspective. In considering why it is that the men and women respondents answered the questions as they did, I have suggested that their positions as elders and community authorities and representatives means that they have a particular position to promote and it is one that is clearly known among this strata of leadership. This is their outward face rather than the one that I might have experienced if I had been embedded in the womens’ lives as a social anthropologist able to carry our deeper ethnographic research.

Semi-structured interviews (see Appendices 1 and 2) were conducted and recorded between April and October of 2014. One Cofán community did not want to be interviewed in this way though. In this case, testimonies were recorded or written down without following any interview structure, rather
indigenous persons talked freely about their situation. Nonetheless, I ticked off the themes and was able to direct the conversation in order to cover the topics of this study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Spanish. In the case of the Cofán, elders mixed Spanish and Cofán, therefore one interpreter was present during interviews in a passive form, and only intervened when interviewees needed assistance with words and ideas in Spanish.

Similarly, during my stay in Colombia, I conducted archival analysis and gathered what amount of texts and policies relevant to this study. Some relevant policies are included in the reference list. Also, additional policies are referenced at the end of the reference list as they were not part of the corresponding chapters/papers for reasons of space. Also, I had some meetings with academics to discuss my topic in Colombia and had the opportunity to debate this work in different conferences and talks in Colombia, Costa Rica and Australia (Appendix 3).

2.3.2 Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed by an assistant and I double checked these transcriptions. In a first attempt to approach the data, I coded interviews conducted with the Pijao ethnicity using the program MAXQDA10. However, I found it very difficult to carry out the analysis based on the coding as I needed to move back and forward continuously between texts and contexts included in different categories. The complexity of the topics required another approach to texts, and the coding system resulted in an impractical fragmentation of information. Thus, I decided to re-aggregate the interviews as a whole body of analysis and critically interpret each of them as a narrative.

For example in the analysis of interview excerpts for chapter/paper 6, I first organized the interviews according to the policies I was addressing in the paper. Therefore, for the case involving the strategy of aerial irrigation with herbicides on coca crops located, after analysis, in the frame of the ‘Omnibus Anti-Drug Act’, I only selected interviews of the Cofán because it only occurred in their territories, and it was their stories about the impact of the policy. Similarly, for the case of the creation of a National Park and the ambiguous implications of property rights on biodiversity when traditional knowledge is also in place, I again turned to the interviews with the Cofán because of the same reasons explained above. The Free Trade Agreements were addressed by the Muisca-Chibcha and the Pijao. And
violence due to natural resource extraction projects like the construction of dams or oil drilling affected the Cofán and the Pijao.

As an example from the Cofán narrative, the aerial irrigation with herbicides topic meant that I selected the interviews that addressed that topic, and I combed the interviews to highlight the different impacts of that practice in the community, which might show better the complexity of the problem. Finally, the narrative that emerges for each of the ethnicities is not a continuous one, but interrupted because the person was explaining further contexts and other phenomena associated with that practice. I moved constantly between text and context in order to get a better explanation. Finally, I presented the narrative in a coordinated way without altering the order of the interview, i.e. the order of the responses.

2.3.3 Communities

2.3.3.1 Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity

Muisca-Chibcha communities are geopolitically divided in two main clusters, one in Cundinamarca department, including Bogota DC, and the other one in Boyacá department. Communities in Cundinamarca department are organized in parcialidades, which means they are recognized by the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs. They live in discrete spaces. Some parcialidades hold collective land titles, constituting resguardos.

In the case of communities in Boyacá department, they are not registered before the Colombian government, and do not hold collective land titles. They are individuals, families or groups of people dispersed in different municipalities in the department, and constitute a community at a departmental level. The major cabildo is their unofficial political instance of representation. They live in rural (Picture 1) and urban (Picture 2) sectors.

The Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity was the most populous one at the arrival of Spanish during the XVI century. It was rapidly subjugated to Spanish crown rule. Tunja, Boyacá’s capital city, was a large Spanish settlement during the XVI and XVII centuries. The early presence of colonizers is evident in the numerous buildings, especially churches, built by the Spanish with local labour; the Cathedral of Tunja is recognized as the oldest in Colombia, dating from 1567 (Pictures 3 and 4). At the same time, the presence of the ethnicity is visible elsewhere in the region (Pictures 5-8), and paintings and other
artistic manifestations in public spaces remind us of their presence (Pictures 9 and 10). These contemporary artworks portray Muisca-Chibcha as something from the past, extinct. This is a characteristic of the society in the region (Boyacá and Cundinamarca); nevertheless, most people in Colombia also currently disown the presence of the Muisca-Chibcha. A more detailed explanation of the ethnicity is in chapter/paper 7.

I approached this community through its major cabildo governor. We travelled to different places and visited other members of the community. We discussed with them the aim of interviews and they consented or did not agree to be part of them. I interviewed 10 people. Only the interviewees and I were present during interviews. Interviews were conducted in respondents’ own houses or very close to them. I accessed their localities by bus or taxi; in some cases, I had to walk between 30 minutes to one hour to reach interviewees’ dwellings, as some of them live rurally and without vehicle access. The people approached live in the municipalities of Villa de Leyva, Motavita, Cómbita and Sogamoso, and in Tunja, the capital city of Boyacá department (see Map 2).
Map 2. Municipalities and cities were interviewees of Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity live

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
Picture 1. Rural landscape, Motavita municipality

Picture 2. View of Tunja city from the archaeological Muisca-Chibcha site “Cojines del Zaque”
Picture 3. Cathedral of Tunja (Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia)

Picture 4. Artwork in the Cathedral of Tunja highlighting the early Spanish settlement in the region. Detail dating from 1593, (Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia)
Picture 5. Replica of Muisca-Chibcha’s dwellings and temples at the “Museo y parque arqueológico de Sogamoso” (Sogamoso, Boyacá, Colombia)

Picture 6. Original monoliths and mythical lake at the archaeological site “Pozo de Donato” (Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia)
Picture 7. Ruins of Muisca-Chibcha astronomical centre I, at the “Parque arqueológico de Monquirá”
(Villa de Leyva, Boyacá, Colombia)

Picture 8. Ruins of Muisca-Chibcha astronomical centre II at the “Parque arqueológico de Monquirá”
(Villa de Leyva, Boyacá, Colombia)
Picture 9. Paintings representing Muisca-Chibcha’s legends (Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia)

Picture 10. Wall paintings representing the Muisca-Chibcha presence prior the Spanish arrival, with gold and ceramic artefacts found in the area (Sogamoso, Boyacá, Colombia)
2.3.3.2 Pijao ethnicity

The Pijao mostly inhabit Tolima department (Map 3). The Pijao today are a very diverse amalgam of communities and people. The communities interviewed in this study are organized in parcialidades and resguardos, all of them registered with the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs. A further explanation is in chapter/paper 6.

I approached this community by contacting one of their political leaders at a departmental level. Then I met several representatives from different communities and they suggested I group the interviews by municipalities, and conduct five interviews in each. I met every community in assemblies and explained the project. Communities collectively decided who the interviewees were to be. The grouping was as follows: 5 people in Saldaña and El Espinal municipalities, and 5 people in the municipalities of Coyaima, Natagaima and Coello each. Also, I interviewed two people in Bogotá DC, they had been displaced by violence from their towns.

In the case of Saldaña and El Espinal municipalities (Picture 11), interviews were conducted in urban areas. The means of transportation were public buses and taxis. In the case of Coello municipality (Picture 12) I took some buses and then private motorbikes as the places were remote. In the case of Natagaima (Picture 13), rural public transport was available. And, in the case of Coyaima (Picture 14 to 16), public transport and a hired car were used. In all cases only the interviewees and I were present at the moment of interviews.

We had the opportunity to visit some places where resource extraction projects were in place, impacting Pijao parcialidades and resguardos. These included the irrigation district “Triángulo del Tolima” (Pictures 17 to 20).
Map 3. Municipalities and cities where the Pijao interviewees live.

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
Picture 11. Meeting held with one community in El Espinal municipality (El Espinal, Tolima, Colombia)

Picture 12. Landscape of the Pijao community settlement in Coello municipality (Coello, Tolima, Colombia)
Picture 13. Meeting with one community in Natagaima municipality (Natagaima, Tolima, Colombia)

Picture 14. Traditional Pijao dwelling I in Coyaima municipality (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)
Picture 15. Traditional Pijao dwelling II in Coyaima municipality (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)

Picture 16. Traditional Pijao dwelling III in Coyaima municipality (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)
Picture 17. Area impacted by the irrigation district “Triángulo del Tolima” I in Pijao territory (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)

Picture 18. Area impacted by the irrigation district “Triángulo del Tolima” II in Pijao territory (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)
Picture 19. Area impacted by the irrigation district “Triángulo del Tolima” III in Pijao territory (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)

Picture 20. Area impacted by the irrigation district “Triángulo del Tolima” IV in Pijao territory (Coyaima, Tolima, Colombia)
2.3.3.3 Cofán ethnicity

The Cofán have historically inhabited the Amazon bioregion, at the current political border between Colombia and Ecuador. The ethnicity is present in both countries. I approached some communities at the Colombian side in the municipalities of San Miguel and La Hormiga (Putumayo department, Map 4).

Communities are in permanent communication and have cultural exchange across the border. However, during fieldwork, according to conversations with indigenous people and my own observations, some distinctions are that on the Colombian side they are “free” from any religious missions, but unprotected by the state, and exposed to illegal armies, drug trafficking, and different sorts of colonization and violence in their territories. The Ecuadorians are losing the practicing of own beliefs more rapidly, as they are all evangelized, but the Ecuadorian state has a greater role in safeguarding their culture. For example, their radio station using Cofán language, and the provision of basic services like electricity. Importantly, Ecuadorians do not experience the same violent situations and pressures, or their Putumayo neighbours.

The communities I approached have been extensively impacted by colonization since the 1970s. They live in resguardos and have made important efforts to remain outside the Colombia’s internal war. This is remarkable as all the armies are present in or close to their territories. Also, they lead ethno-education projects that have recognition by the department, and in several cases even ‘whites’ send their children to pursue their studies in their boarding school. They are also sages of medicinal plants, with their knowledge strongly linked to the yage plant. A deeper socio-cultural and historical account of the Cofán is in chapter/paper 7.

I first contacted leaders of the communities by phone. In all cases communication was difficult as they do not have electricity in their homes, and the mobile reception is poor, especially in one community where only one corner of one of the houses has reception. Then we agreed on my visit. Once in the area, I met with communities to discuss the project and interviews. The community in La Hormiga agreed with interviews and chose the interviewees. The community in San Miguel did not allow semi-structured interviews.
In the latter case, the situation was quite difficult on my arrival. Before the assembly, we were having a communal lunch with the food I provided for all the community before the meeting. Some women cooked, and over lunch I noticed some disquiet. They were internally divided in their opinions over every aspect of the community. This was due to prior experiences with violence, colonization, theft of traditional medicinal knowledge by other researchers, poverty, current threats from oil drilling in their territory, and other factors. Even the need to conduct a yage ceremony to consult the spirits on whether to allow my interviews was debated. The discussion was heated, and elders intervened, talking in their own language and speaking very loudly.

They, however, allowed me to stay in the resguardo, which is rare for most outsiders. I was privileged. My stay for about one week permitted me to see other dynamics in the community, and to get closer to some of them. Also we had informal chats, and I gained insight into their current situation. Some of them, especially the most important spiritual leader of the community, were very interested in talking to me. The spiritual leader consulted the spirits and asked me to meet. He, however, consulted some other members of the community before doing so. I recorded his narrative. Also I took several notes of the narratives of other community members at that time, men and women.

To get to the resguardos I took a domestic flight from Bogotá DC to Puerto Asis (Putumayo, see map 4), then a couple of buses, and then private transportation to get to the resguardo in La Hormiga. For accessing the second resguardo in San Miguel, I went from the previous resguardo to a nearby town, then a bus, and a private canoe. Pictures 21 to 26 show images of the resguardo in La Hormiga; pictures 27 to 32 are images of the resguardo in San Miguel. Pictures 33 to 43 show different social phenomena occurring in the area, affecting both resguardos. There are explained in detail in chapters/papers 6 and 7.
Map 4. Municipalities were interviewees of Cofán ethnicity live

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
Picture 21. Guamuéz river. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 22. Path connecting dwellings. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 23. Plantains and chickens. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 24. Forest garden. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 25. Dwellings. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 26. Boarding school. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 27. Landscape. Resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 28. Canoe on its way to the resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 29. Central part of the resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 30. Dwelling. Resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 31. Cookware. Resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 32. Wall paintings showing hunting practices, the wisdom of elders, and the power of medicinal plants. Resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 33. Opening and improvement of roads in the region (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 34. Terrestrial oil transportation in the resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 35. Pipelines are dangerously exposed in the region I (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 36. Pipelines are dangerously exposed in the region II (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 37. Traces of one attack on pipelines by guerrilla groups in the region (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 38. Oil wells I. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 39. Oil wells II. Resguardo Cofán in La Hormiga municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 40. Oil well closed by the community. Resguardo Cofán in San Miguel municipality (Putumayo, Colombia)
Picture 41. Deforestation and livestock practices inside resguardos I (Putumayo, Colombia)

Picture 42. Deforestation and livestock practices inside resguardos II (Putumayo, Colombia)
2.4 Ethics clearance

The University of Melbourne requires that any post-graduate student interested in conducting research involving human participants must apply for ethics approval. I applied for approval to the Melbourne School of Land and Environment Human Ethics Advisory Group in December 2013. Then the application was resubmitted to the university wide Behavioural and Social Sciences Human Ethics Sub-committee for their review and approval.

Besides permission to conduct interviews, I needed to make some statements about my responsibility in travelling to Colombia. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recommended exercising “a high degree of caution” for people travelling to Colombia generally, with a “do not travel” warning outside urban areas, due to the threat of terrorism and criminal activity. Therefore, I was asked to complete the University’s “Travel to high risk destinations risk assessment”. In my responses I stated that I am from Colombia and I assumed responsibility of my safety during fieldwork. The fieldwork raised no security issues.
The final approval to conduct interviews was given for the period 21st of February 2014 to 31st of December 2014. One important outcome of the permission was the “Plain Language Statement” which explains to interviewees what the project is about and makes clear the confidentiality of their responses. I translated this document into Spanish and delivered it to the leaders first contacted. Also, I identified myself as part of the University and gave out ‘business’ cards. But also, my previous association as a student and researcher of the Colombian National University brought credibility and trust of interviewees. The University is well known for its commitment within society, especially because of the support and engagement with the underprivileged.

During the different meetings in assemblies and others, I answered any questions, and I respected decisions taken by communities. Privacy was crucial among those who agreed to be interviewed. This occurred in two ways. First, interviewees emphasized that their narratives must not be heard by other members of the ethnicity, therefore they could talk with freedom and honesty, as personal opinions about community-sensitive topics like internal organization and leaders’ credibility were sometimes discussed. Second, some extremely sensitive socio-political topics were raised, for example, the involvement of illegal groups in state or private projects, or coca cropping in resguardos. Therefore, they asked for extreme discretion throughout the thesis and its publications. Privacy requirements were respected, which means communities and interviewees are anonymous, and pictures of interviewees are not included.

2.5 The researcher: myself, and chapters/papers co-authors

I attended public universities for my undergraduate and postgraduate studies. During my undergraduate studies in Biology (at the Faculty of Science, Colombian National University in Bogotá DC), my lines of research were Ecology and Conservation, and since very early –despite the absence of the human dimension in my career– I understood that the preservation of the natural environment was impossible if the political, social, economic and cultural dimensions of society, as well as the ecological dimensions, were not taken into consideration. My emphasis in Ecology helped me to understand the complex and inter-dependant world in which we live.

Then I pursued my Master studies in Environment and Development at the Institute of Environmental Studies (Faculty of Economics, Colombian National University, Bogotá DC). My line of research was Ecological Economics where, employing multicriteria analysis, I analysed the environmental
sustainability of paramo ecosystems, considered strategic in Colombia as they are the regulators and providers of water for almost all Colombian cities and municipalities located in the Andean mountains. These studies influenced my understanding of the complexity of socio-environmental conflicts in rural areas at a national scale, and made me reflect on the importance of traditional rural communities’ knowledge, and livelihoods.

After my undergraduate studies and before my moving in Australia to undertake PhD studies thanks to a Colombian scholarship, I had the opportunity to work in the Colombian government (adviser at the National Program of Science, Technology and Innovation in Environment, Biodiversity, and Habitat), the Colombian National University (research at the National History and Paleontological museums, also as a research assistant at the Environmental Studies Institute), and I ran a small NGO where I advocated for the importance of preserving some ecosystems closely related to rural livelihoods that were damaged due to oil explorations. Those experiences helped me to gain a holistic understanding of socio-environmental systems and realities, the important role of international policy in conflicts, and for the first time, I began to consider the importance of discourse in socio-environmental advocacy, as rural communities I approached at the time (campesinos mainly) hybridized their discourses with policy jargon in order to get validation from outsiders to their claims.

Then I moved to Australia to undertake, first English classes as I had not mastered the language (something that I am still learning), and then PhD studies in Human Geography at the School of Geography, at the University of Melbourne. Following somewhat the research line of ecological economics, I decided to explore a sister research line, Political Ecology - in Latin America they are sisters, not so much in other parts of the globe. With this opportunity, my will to approach the defence of local/traditional knowledge against large international market trends, led me to consider under political ecology lenses, the impact of international policy on the local. Also, for the first time I had the courage to approach the knowledge held by indigenous communities, who also were poorly studied in the academy and ignored by governments and society. This was despite their timeless advocacy for cultural and territorial autonomy, as well as for the recognition of their existence. For this purpose I conducted interdisciplinary research approaching topics related to sociology, anthropology, language analysis, international policy, and so many others, in order to conduct the analysis that I present in this manuscript as completely as possible.
Therefore, as a reflexive researcher, I acknowledge my own subjectivity and its influence on my perceptions and ways of analysis. These are in part associated with myself as a well-educated, Colombian woman, empathetic to indigenous knowledge and its threatened position in dominant society. I also can be considered an urban person as I conducted my undergraduate and Master studies in Bogotá DC and, currently, doctorate studies in Melbourne; however, I have been very close to rurality during my life as I grew up in a mainly rural department (Boyacá department), and also my professional and academic interests have revolved around rural socio-cultural environments.

The co-authors of chapter/papers 5, 6 and 7, are my PhD supervisors Simon Batterbury and Ruth Beilin. Professor Simon P. J. Batterbury is the Chair of Political Ecology, Lancaster Environment Center, Lancaster University, United Kingdom, and Principal Fellow, School of Geography, The University of Melbourne, Australia. Ruth Beilin is a Professor of Landscape and Environmental Sociology in the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Australia.
CHAPTER 3. ‘NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZED MODERN WORLD’: ‘THE CONTESTED’ IN STRUGGLES BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the concepts associated with the analysis of ‘the contested’ discourses in indigenous struggles for territorial and cultural autonomies. I address the narratives that emerge from the composite term ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ –and these are: ‘modernization’, ‘globalization’, and ‘neo-liberalization’-, and how I understand them to interact. In Figure 2, I set out how chapter 1 (Introduction) and this chapter are part of the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology according to Fairclough (2010).

Figure 2. Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010) and its use in this thesis – I, chapters 1 and 3

Stage 1. Focus on a social wrong in its semiotic aspect

This stage underpins chapter 1 “Introduction”. I present what constitutes the social wrong, research topic), and objects of research (research questions) below. The analysis of the social wrong links to semiotic aspects (discourses extracted from documentary evidence of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ and indigenous communities interviews) and extra-semiotic elements (the operationalization of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ discourses into, for example, natural resource extraction projects) within the thesis.

The social wrong is in the suppression of indigenous worldviews due to the implementation of economic neo-liberalization and globalization in Colombia in favour of the positioning of the country in the global market. This is a social wrong in that it constrains cultural practices of non-objectivist approaches to ‘nature’, jeopardizing cultural self-determination and territorial autonomy, when modern understandings of being in the world are imposed over other ways of understanding and cosmologies.

• Step 1. Research topic

Colombian indigenous communities –belonging to about 70 ethnicities- have appropriated elements
from the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ as survival strategies to protect their socio-cultural and territorial autonomy. ‘Elements’ refer to discourses and legal tools contained and/or provided by Colombian legislation, reflecting in turn the global position of the country, especially after the 1990s. This advocacy, despite its subordinate position in the political hierarchy, has empowered indigenous identities as individuals and groups. Social cohesion and collectivity challenge neoliberal contexts.

**Step 2. Objects of research (research questions):**

To what extent and how have discourses of ‘nature’ held by Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities hybridized with those of the neoliberal globalized modern rationale?

- What discourses of ‘nature’ do Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities hold?

  Has the global economy since the 1990s shifted the interpretations of ‘nature’ among these communities? Which other significant transitions (given policy enactments or particular social contexts) have taken place in the construction of current discourses of ‘nature’ in these communities?

- How do the discourses of the Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities reflect the changes occurring in macroeconomic or other policies and their materialization in territories since the nineties? What kinds of hybrid discourses emerge and how are they mediated by the State and by the members of these communities?

**Stage 2. Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong**

This stage underpins chapter 3 and chapter/papers 4 to 6. I introduce the reading of this chapter 3 in terms of the step 1 of this stage.

- **Step 1. Dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements**

  The ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ narratives describe in this chapter can be also read as semiotic ‘orders of discourses’ which induce particular social orderings. According to my binding together of the different narratives, the order of discourse of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ can be read as the dominant one, which in turn comprises several orders of discourses brought about by modernization, globalization and neo-liberalization.
In this chapter I explore briefly the ‘ontological implications’ of the spreading of this dominant order of discourse in the globe, in Latin America, and particularly in Colombia; some consequences of the practicing of the orders of discourses in Colombian economic policy; the relevant positioning of Colombia in the global market; the understanding of peoples and spaces out of Europe and USA – which are portrayed as developed modern states-as periphery or incomplete projects; among other implications, which can be read as extra-semiotic elements associated to these orders of discourses.

Therefore, this chapter explores the dialectical relations between semiosis (the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ as a set of narratives constituting ‘orders of discourses’) with extra-semiotic aspects (like the consequences on ontological practices or the economic impact of those orderings at a national scale) which make it difficult to right the social wrong (i.e. the suppression of indigenous worldviews, and the general subjugation of the Colombian economy to the world market).

3.2 ‘Neoliberal globalized modern world discourses’

The composite term ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ constitutes the discourse contested by the indigenous communities approached in this study. I address this composite concept as a singular form, although it incorporates several powerful narratives with particular understandings of peoples and spaces. Narratives related to ‘modernity’, ‘globalization’, and ‘neo-liberalization’, involving socio-economic and geopolitical orderings at a global scale which have arisen in different historical moments. The temporal occurrence of each one was necessary, however, for the others to take place, and this is the reason why I bind them together in the composite term ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’. Despite different timeframes, they remain linked. I introduce each group of narratives as follows.

3.2.1 Modernity

The modernity narrative as I understand it is a world-view that reflects the location or role of man as different from previous times. This implies the evolution of mankind understood as the ontological subject (subject-space) into the epistemological subject (subject-of-knowledge) in his reflection of and on the world. In modernity, the reflection of ‘being’ is determined by its physical positioning on a particular space, which makes mankind physically present and permits his/her objective study of the surroundings: all I see. Arguably, at other times, ‘man’ has understood ‘himself’ to be more overtly
aware of self as unseparated from the surroundings (Ceceña, 2011). Human agency permits relational thought and judgement.

If man became a subject, the world became a picture (Heidegger, 2002 [1938]). Heidegger (2002 [1938]:71) described modernity as ‘the age of the world picture’;

“The fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as picture. From now on the word “picture” means: the collective image of representing production. Within this, man fights for the position in which he can be that being who gives to every being the measure and draws up the guidelines. Because this position secures, organizes, and articulates itself as world view, the decisive unfolding of the modern relationship to beings becomes a confrontation of world views; not, indeed, any old set of world views, but only those which have already taken hold of man’s most fundamental stance with the utmost decisiveness. For the sake of this battle of world views, and according to its meaning, humanity sets in motion, with respect to everything, the unlimited process of calculation, planning, and breeding. Science as research is the indispensable form taken by this self-establishment in the world; it is one of the pathways along which, with a speed unrecognized by those who are involved, modernity races towards the fulfilment of its essence. With this battle of world views modernity first enters the decisive period of its history, and probably the one most capable of enduring”

‘Man’s’ knowledge, given independence through relational thought and scientific advance, was free to ‘manage’ nature and society, and objectified other entities (human and non-human). ‘Man’s’ explanation of the other, using the scientific method, becomes the rule of interaction and reflection. The representation of the world as physical (i.e. the Earth) was a new, more holistic representation, filled in over the centuries of exploration and discovery, largely but not only by Europeans. Earth planet integrates all the landmasses and the waters of the world by the first time, and this is thereafter represented as a unique globe (Ceceña, 2011).

European colonising expeditions ventured beyond traditional European borders in North Africa and Middle East. Christopher Columbus used the assumption of possible undiscovered landmasses and islands beyond the sea, the former Roman border, in order to gain funding and permission to explore
further afield. This allowed the re-'encountering' of the East Indies (the Icelandic Viking Leif Ericson had explored the continent during the XI century), and the creation of America, alongside European expansionism since 1492 (Ceceña, 2011). Dussel (1995:65) points out that 1492 marked the (geopolitical) beginning of Western modernity given the encounter of 'worlds' led by Columbus,

“Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the “centre” of a World History that it inaugurates; the “periphery” that surrounds this centre is consequently part of its self-definition”.

This is a narrow definition of ‘modernity’ given the actions of the Greeks, Romans and other empires much earlier, but in this form, it was accelerated in the XVIII century. This was facilitated by the ‘crystallization of modernity with Enlightenment’, and the expansion of scientific investigation of the universe (Quijano, 1995).

Georg Hegel (1770-1831) was a German philosopher and an important figure during late Enlightenment in promoting the segregationist categorization of countries and continents given the new ordering of the world. He argued that the globe could be understood by dichotomies like centre/periphery and old/new worlds, with the aim to prove the supremacy of Europe over the rest of the world, and of Germany over the rest of Europe. In his words,

“The world is divided into the Old World and the New World. The name of the New World comes from the fact that America (...) has only recently come to be known by Europeans. But it should not be thought for that reason that the distinction is purely external. It is essential. This world is new not only relatively but also absolutely; it is so in all of its aspects, physical and political. (...) The inferiority of these individuals in all respects is manifest” (Hegel [1955:199-200], translated in Dussel [1995:69])

These dichotomies presume that the ‘History’ of the world took an evolutionary course. It goes from East (i.e. Asia) towards West (i.e. Europe, in particular Western Europe); Africa and America were assumed to be younger or immature in that ‘History’,

“For Hegel, the child represents only the “real potential” of reason. The “immediacy” of the child’s consciousness allows it to be, therefore, only the periphery (or possibility) of
experience but not its centre. “Only the adult [i.e. Europe] has intelligence (...) and is the centre of everything” (Hegel [1955:16], translated in Dussel [1995:70])

Hegel even employed biological determinism to explain immaturity when talking about “rivers that have not yet found their course”, or “primitive, brutal, monstrous, or simply weaker or degenerate [nature]” (Hegel [1955] in Dussel [1995]). Hegel's work is only one example of the narratives at the time, but nonetheless, a new configuration of global political power was established since the ‘new’ continents had to be westernized (i.e. made European, tending eventually towards similar geopolitical and ideological configurations). But also, assimilation implied demographic whitening. This further plays out as the neglect of non-white to the decision centres of the west, where the alternative paths for development of the rest of the world were to be initiated. As Dussel (1995:68) points out,

“Europe’s modern development must be followed unilaterally by every other culture. Development is taken here as an ontological, and not simply a sociological or economic category”.

The early colonization of Colombia is full of such accounts. The encounter with America permitted the reproduction of modernity on its shores (Dussel, 1995; Quijano, 1995). New questionings about the place of human beings in the world were opened. However, modern ontology penetrated Latin American territories at different rates, and as we know, its consequences have been ambivalent.

In this study I have seen that there are communities ‘living’ in modernity as an age, but also practicing their own knowledge, e.g. agrarian calendars, therefore they have resisted the entire replacement of time-space beliefs, even after centuries of modernization as a national project. They constitute ‘hybrid cultures’ (García, 1990), rather than pre-modern societies as Giddens (1990) calls them. It may seem obvious, but in Latin America modernity is not ubiquitous today, and many indigenous peoples retain aspects of their ‘pre-modern’ identity and worldviews.
3.2.2 Globalization

The violent² ‘encounter’ of Americans, Africans and Asians, who are cultural ‘others’ with Europeans allowed the forced spreading of the modern world view over the globe. Globalization first occurred to expand the economies of the colonizing countries over the colonized. Economic ordering based on a European control imposed the use of money for trade, the commodification of labour and labourers, and privatization, and capitalist economic attributes. Then, they were reified in the new-born nation-states after independence occurred. Internal economic re-structuring of colonies and then nation-states permitted their incorporation in the global economy. According to Castells (2003:20),

“Global economy includes, in its fundamental core, the globalization of the financial markets, whose behaviour determines the movements of capital, currencies, credit, and therefore the economies in all countries. (…) The globalization of economy also includes the rising importance of the international trade in the economic growth, the considerable rising of direct foreign investment, the globalization of an essential part of the production of goods and services, the formation of a global market of workers of particular qualification (…), and the importance of international migrations of labour displaced due to the economic crisis towards zones with higher opportunities of employment and progress” (own translation)

According to Giddens (1990), globalization took place because of four main factors: the arrival of the ‘nation-state system’, the ‘world military order’, an ‘international division of labour’, and ‘the world capitalist economy’. It is sensible to conclude that these elements of global order allowed nation-states to become the main political actors in an increasing interconnected globe. At the same time, the capitalist economy facilitated trade in goods and services, and later permitted the settlement of transnational corporations as the most successful agents in the market economy. Transnational corporations benefit from the international division of labour and the specialization of countries in terms of industrialization and production of raw materials (Giddens, 1990).

Transnational success due to global interdependence contrasts, however, with growing socio-economic global inequalities over time. According to Castells (2003:21),

² Ontologically violent, but also, though not the purpose of this chapter, the physical brutal violence brought about in the ‘encountering’ of the cultural others since the XVI century is amply documented.
“transnational networks of dynamic components of globalization are created while social and territorial segments at the interior of countries, regions or cities are segregated and excluded; naturally, in proportions highly variable according to the world zones in which competitiveness is operated” (own translation)

Despite globalization being facilitated by modernity, it cannot be considered a western phenomenon, and indeed the participation of other nations and regions, notably China with its huge economic reach, is stronger today. According to Giddens (1990:175) “we are speaking here of emergent forms of world interdependence and planetary consciousness”. As being rooted in modernity, globalization does not recognize cultural others. Therefore, modern assumptions reinforced by globalization, constantly clash with remaining local worldviews and social practices.

Economic globalization, in turn, opens the space for the globalization of science, technology and information; of communication, especially through Internet; and of phenomena like international organized crime (Castells, 2003). According to Castells (2003:19),

“in the last two decades of the XX century a new technological system of information systems, telecommunications and transport has been constituted that has articulated the whole planet in a network of flows in which converge the functions and units strategically dominant of all aspects of human activity” (own translation).

3.2.3 Neo-liberalization

Latin American countries had to decide since the late 1980s whether to promote the neo-liberalization of economies. The term has a particular meaning in Latin America, since it is a recent and quite specific element of ‘globalization’, in favour with North American neighbours. The Washington Consensus of 1989 is a particular manifestation of neo-liberalization; it comprised ten policies proposed by the economist John Williamson (Williamson, 1990). Some of the policies already existed in Latin America; for example, Colombian policies had promoted the export of raw materials and attracted foreign investment since the 1960s (Bonilla, 2011).

The immediate aim of the Consensus was to reform Latin American countries’ institutions in order to facilitate some social and economic structural changes to ‘develop’ the economy of the region. This in
turn was intended to assist with its insertion in the global market-led economy. Neo-liberalization, as well as ‘modernization’ and ‘globalization’, is an ongoing process (Castree, 2010) that,

“...prioritises the idea of individual, corporate and collective freedom of choice. The [s]tate, in this reading, obstructs liberties, fails in guaranteeing welfare in society. The market, by rewarding “success” and through competition, may take its place. This worldview is programmed, Castree [2010] argues, through government policies, and is operationalized when these are translated into practices, whose impacts affect diverse geographies separated in space and time”. (Chaves-Agudelo et al., 2015:1-2).

Colombia joined the neo-liberalization of the economy with the economic openness in policies like the ‘Colombian economy modernization program’ (CONPES, 1990). Some of the main structural changes according to Bonilla (2011) were the elimination of policies aimed to protect the internal market, the liberation of import duties of more than 90% of the goods and services traded within the country, and the simplification of the structure of tariffs and tariff reduction.

The economic growth of Colombia post-reform, however, has not been reflected in an improvement of the national economy. Bonilla (2011) points out that in economic terms since 1992 the external trade has grown more than the national production (5.5% vs. 3.4%). Before the reform, the long-term average national production was of 4.5%. According to Bonilla (2011), Colombia links to the global market in two main forms, the import of industrial and some agricultural goods and services, and the consolidation of mining and hydrocarbon exports. As for 1995, 70% of the oil and coal produced in the country was exported, and for 2009, 93% of the production goes out of the country. Despite Colombian economy’s reliance on export of these products, reserves are estimated to last for other 8 years in the case of oil, and 91 years in the case of coal (2011 projected) according to the same author.

The economic openness of the country since the 1990s has destabilized the existing national production structure. It accelerated the deindustrialization process and dealt a strong hit to the agricultural sector, leading to de-agrarianization, and, at the same time, systems of transport are biased towards serving mining and tourism (Bonilla, 2011). Bonilla also shows that economic openness has meant a slow growth in a narrow range of exports, only 5% per year made up largely of
oil, coal, and coffee. On the other hand, imports have grown at an average of 6% per year. There is a chronic unemployment rate of 10.6% (2010 projected) and the Gini index is high, 0.58%. These are among the worst in Latin America, and the ‘developing’ countries of the world. According to the author, economic inequality is severe, despite the attainment of some stability over time.

To sum up, Bonilla (2011) highlights the specialization of the country in the export of non-value-added commodities like oil and coal, while importing value-added goods, has weakened the national industry, and contributed to the rise of unemployment and inequality. This behaviour may be read as the reinstating primary production within the Colombian economy rather than any more sophisticated approach to a ‘development model’, and it is this raw material production that underpins Colombia’s contribution to neo-liberalization. As we will see, this has had major effects on indigenous people of the country because it has concrete effects on territory and land uses.

Similar to Colombia, while the mantra of participation in primary production export is couched in terms of productivity and competition values, most Latin American countries have failed to achieve endlessly increasing productivity or maintain short or long term competition edges (it is argued in literature that Chile could be an exception to this). Ortuño & Pinc (2003) point out that inequality has been the major obstacle. According to them, a lack of interest in distributive economic policies, reflected in the absence of civic and political reform, stifles the trickling down of economic globalization to poorer members of society,

“The basic argument can be developed as follows. Inequality might affect the adaptation capacity of society in two ways: (i) to the extent that it makes difficult or does not allow that large sectors of society take full advantage of new economic opportunities generated by the openness, the technological development and the higher economic interdependence, and (ii) to the extent that it generates social conflict, which limits options for any reform, increase their cost and obstructs timely reactions to crisis. In this context, to build institutions who manage the conflict seems a central element for the future development agenda of the region, besides more efficient actions to improve distribution levels of some critic actives for the poorest (land, education, etc.)” (Ortuño & Pinc, 2003:156-157).
Ortuño & Pinc state that another element that affected the success of Latin American states in neoliberal globalization was the rise of Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan in the global market during the 1980s and 1990s. The population of these countries comprises half of the world’s population. Their exports increased in almost 400% between 1987 and 1993, while Latin American countries’ exports increased only 50%. Ortuño & Pinc (2003) highlight that, therefore, the poor choice of openness and economic liberalization, and the historical global economic context in which the region decided to neo-liberalize, pre-determined irrevocable failures in its insertion in the global market and the increasing of inequality is not unexpected within these parameters.
CHAPTER 4. ‘MOTHER NATURE’ AND ‘TERRITORY’: ‘THE DEFENDED’ IN THE STRUGGLES BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the idea of ‘the defended’, a term to represent core values of indigenous communities. Sometimes it seems that these material and non-material elements are only known by outsiders when indigenous people are contesting the materialization of neoliberal globalized modern policies in their localities. Today, indigenous communities’ struggles are often portrayed as the defence of cultural and territorial autonomies. But in accordance with Ayre and Mackenzie (2013) I will argue that culture cannot be separated from our understanding of their understanding of self, identity and the modern world. Indigenous peoples approached in this study unite the reification of their knowledge systems as part of their territories. They did not regard these as separated, and so both can be assumed to be present in terms of territorial defence.

In anticipation of the next chapters/papers’ analysis, I found that among the indigenous interviewees, territory is therefore, part of their meanings of ‘nature’, as well as it is the spirituality associated with their existence in that territory and how they know either. They are dialectically related, and as it was pointed out in the methodology, language is a social construction; however, social constructions are not only structured by language, for example feelings associated to spirituality which are not always said in discourses. Here, territory and spirituality are part of the meanings of nature I gathered in interviews, though they may not comprise the entire dimensions of meaning. As a result, and based on the narratives gathered, the Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and most of the Pijao refer to ‘territory’ as the material dimension of ‘nature’, but also ideas that I translate as ‘Mother Nature’ correspond to the immaterial or spiritual dimension of that same meaning of ‘nature’, and are also part of territorial defence.

Nonetheless, this is a generalization. As subsequent chapters/papers show, the concepts used by respondents vary according to individual and collective contexts. I intend, however, to make a first attempt to conceptualize territory from the voices of the indigenous peoples interviewed. This is in order to differentiate it from other approaches to territory, but also to highlight the distance this
concept takes from other concepts found in the literature which reflect on that same ‘space’. This elucidation will assist in reading the next chapters/papers.

I first introduce the concept of territory as ‘the defended’ material and immaterial place and people, and in relation to ‘the contested’ as it is conceived in neoliberal globalized modern narratives. Then I present a brief overview of concepts including territory, place, rethinking of space, socio-ecological landscapes and hybrid geographies. I point out some similarities and differences between these concepts and the use I make of territory as it emerges in this study. And, I close this chapter with a first conceptualization of territory, Mother Nature and ‘nature’, as it emerges in the analysis of interviews. In figure 3 I explore the understanding of the content of this chapter in relation to CDA (Fairclough, 2010).

Figure 3. Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010) and its use in this thesis – II, chapter 4

Stage 2. Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong

This chapter can be interpreted in terms of steps 2 and 3 of stage 2

• Step 2. Selection of texts

This chapter involves an initial unpacking of the meanings of ‘territory’ emerging in the interviewee’s discourses. I analyse the narratives of interviewees regarding their meaning-formation process.

• Step 3. Carry out the analysis of texts

This chapter is the initial approach to the re-contextualization of discourses in regard to meanings of ‘territory’ and ‘nature’, where they are sometimes constructed as one, and sometimes separately. The meanings of ‘nature’ and ‘territory’ are social constructions that are dynamic and evolving so it is not possible to say definitely this is ‘nature’ or ‘territory’ is only ‘x’. Also it is important to bear in mind that neither ‘nature’ is completely constructed in semiotic constructions of ‘territory’, nor ‘territory’ always refers to constructions of ‘nature’.

The analysis of the re-contextualization of texts shows that interviewees have adopted political terms corresponding to the changes that occurred in policies affecting them after the political constitution of 1991 -such as ‘territory’-, and they strategically used them in order to obtain benefits from this use. Discourses of ‘territory’, despite being a political strategy of resistance, combines foreign meanings of being in the world with indigenous relational worldviews (where nature is not seen apart from people and culture for these communities), and they constitute hybrid constructs. Constructions of ‘territory’ however depend upon individuals and groups of people’s everyday practices, socio-historical
4.2 ‘The defended’

I frame ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ in this study around certain narratives which however heterogeneous are rooted in modern understandings of being in the world. Socio-economic trade under this ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ logic has impacted Latin American societies as I have briefly argued in Chapter 3. Particularly in Colombia, numerous groups of people, organized for different reasons, have contested interventions by the state and transnational corporations in terms of making a ‘territorial defence’ and in different ways.

Furthermore, the transformation of territories inhabited by peoples with indigenous inheritance has a particular difference or quality, as their worldviews and social practices mean they often understand ‘nature’ and the place they live in, differently to how modern capitalist societies –the majority of Colombians– do (Escobar, 2008). Modernity, as described 3.2, understands space as the physical world without the human (Ceceña, 2011; Giddens, 1990; Heidegger, 2002 [1938]; Quijano, 1995). The supposition that people see their surroundings as something physical and without further intangible attachment is mirrored in the presumption that the impact of neoliberal projects on particular spaces will be minimal –or about compensating for a particular place or thing rather than the wider context of ‘being’. This idea of space assumes that people impacted by, for example the operationalization of resource extraction projects, can easily migrate to other spaces without this process implying major societal disruptions. This ignores that “culture is carried into places by bodies – bodies are encultured and, conversely, enact cultural practices” (Escobar, 2001:143).

This leads to a reflection on the social constructions of ‘that space’, to which communities approached in this study refer to, as territory. I decided to conduct the discourse analysis employing indigenous persons’ voices, which means their own wording. So I was interested in conceptualize territory from the interviewees’ points of view. Therefore, it is their concept of territory that emerges.

‘Nature’ in a western scientific understanding has a meaning associated with landscape attributes (e.g. mountains, rivers), elements (e.g. air, water, fire, earth), fauna, flora, non-human actors, the cosmos, as separate from self. This is an understanding of nature apart from culture. I was expecting that interviewees would talk about these attributes employing the word ‘nature’ at certain points, too.
But I realized they referred to the elements I listed in this interpretation of ‘nature’ as ‘territory’, and the word ‘nature’ only appeared in the construction of ‘Mother Nature’.

I therefore argue, based on the analysis of narratives, that territory is the material representation of ‘nature’. Territory was often employed in narratives, had some collective consensus, and was shared internally in communities. ‘Mother Nature’ or what I name the immaterial/spiritual representation of ‘nature’ was not a commonplace in narratives; rather this animist view of ‘nature’ is a private, intimate and individualized construction. Nonetheless, territory as a concept became popular among indigenous communities only after the political constitution of 1991 when the state recognized particular rights for indigenous and black communities and the ancestral territories associated to them.

Indigenous communities have increased the use of the term territory in their discourses to facilitate the communication with outsiders. But, its construction varies among communities as we will see in chapters/papers 5 to 7. I argue, however, that the imposition of territory as a political term has neglected the structuring of discourses from animist perspectives, or at least, has denied interlocution; and this is why indigenous communities are hybridizing this term with their own interpretations of the word. It again shows the power and privilege of some ideologies over others. Animist constructions of territory become invisible, while contemporary impositions, although hybrids, are gaining more space in indigenous narratives.

Therefore, an important question arises: what do communities refer to as territory – ‘the contested’ when they defend it against the impact of the neoliberal globalized modern operationalization? This is explored in subsequent chapters/papers. I also need to position myself when referring to territory using interviewees’ lenses to better develop my position as a reflexive researcher/practitioner. I introduce some similarities and differences of meanings of territory gathered in this study and other approaches to similar social constructions of ‘that same space’.

The concepts I briefly explore are territory (Ballve, 2013; Escobar, 2001, 2008), place (Escobar, 2008; Giddens, 1990; Ingold, 2011), socio-ecological landscapes (Beilin & Reid, 2015; Parrott & Meyer, 2012), rethinking of space (Massey, 1999, 2005) and hybrid geographies (Whatmore, 1999). All of them critique the modern understandings of space. I conclude this section with my own approach to
defining territory, in order to trace the particularities of the concept that distinguish it from the array of concepts.

4.2.1 Territory

Escobar (2001, 2008) analysed the narratives of social movements led by Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities on the southern Pacific coast of Colombia. His analysis, highly cited worldwide, precipitated great interest in Colombian identity politics and social movements. These movements were created during the 1990s as a reaction to government initiatives for the ‘development’ of the region, though this form of development ignored local contexts (Escobar, 2008:62).

According to Escobar (2001, 2008), communities defined territory from a political basis as “the space of effective appropriation of the ecosystem by a given community. (...) The territory embodies the life project of the community” (Escobar, 2008:62). In this reading, “[t]he struggle for territory is thus a cultural struggle for autonomy and self-determination” (Escobar, 2001:162). For Escobar (1998, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2009), territorial defence also implies the defence of non-human beings and elements of nature as a part of communities’ life projects.

Similarly, Ballve (2013:240) in studying Afro-Colombian communities in the northwest Pacific region, points out that, communities define territory as the ‘centrepiece of political project’ (my italics) for the defence of collective property where the ‘constitutive integrity of life, land, and livelihood’ takes place. According to the communities interviewed by Ballve (2013), territory is life.

4.2.2 Place

Escobar (2008:30) states that place is the potential and promise of difference, in contrast to the cultural homogenization that has occurred with globalization,

“If anything has characterized social science debates since the 1990s it is the concern with globalization. These debates have been characterized by a pervasive asymmetry by which the global is equated with space, capital, and the capacity to transform while the local is associated with place, labour, tradition, and hence with what will inevitably give way to more powerful forces (...). This marginalization of place has had profound consequences for our understanding of culture, nature, and economy, all of which are now seen as determined
almost exclusively by global forces. It is time to reverse this asymmetry by focusing anew on the continued vitality of place in the creation of culture, nature, and economy. Place continues to be important in the lives of most people, if by place we mean the engagement with and experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), boundaries (however permeable), and connections to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed and never fixed.”

‘Place’ for Giddens (1990:18) reflects on the “idea of locale, which refers to the physical setting of social activity as situated geographically”. The ‘locale’ is structured by what is visible and invisible in the scene, e.g. connections with the absent in globalization (Giddens, 1990).

Ingold (2011:148) in turn talks in terms of the ‘inhabitants’ rather than ‘locales’ in the construction of place. He criticizes the idea of localizing people within place rather than seeing the constant movement that is the production of place. He proposes the term ‘wayfaring’ (Whatmore, 1999) to refer to the “embodied experience” in which “lives are led not inside place but through, around, to and from the, from and to places elsewhere”. Therefore human existence “unfolds not in places but along paths” (Ingold, 2011:148). In the encounters between inhabitants, paths are interwoven, bind together and place is constructed.

But, place is also augmented and analysis is extended by approaches like socio-ecological landscapes, the rethinking of space, and hybrid geographies. I consider these approaches below.

4.2.3 Socio-ecological landscapes

Parrott & Meyer (2012:382) define landscape as a complex socio-ecological system characterized by uncertainty and emergence. In their reading, landscape analysis considers that “human and biophysical processes are intricately linked across multiple scales of space and time”. Socio-ecological landscapes authors like Beilin & Reid (2015), pose that approaches to place take into account people’s social constructions when they interact directly with some elements of the landscape, but some other elements that are not explicitly referred to in these discourses of place, are also important in its construction. Some landscape attributes are part of place by their mere presence and the constant, and somehow incidental, people’s interaction with them, e.g. aesthetic and recreating values. Further, with regard to the social-ecological imagination (Beiling & Bohnet, 2015),
the material and immaterial elements of the landscape provide the potential for place to be constantly redefined.

Socio-ecological landscapes framework, therefore, aims to highlight the importance of both ecosystem attributes and ecological interactions, and the social constructions of place (Beilin & Bohnet, 2015; Beilin & Reid, 2015).

4.2.4 Rethinking of space

Massey (1999, 2005) also has a critique of modern understandings of space. Massey (1999:280-82) states that when space became temporal, it assumes,

“…spatial variation but without really imagining co-existing difference (…). It closes down multiplicity and the possibility of alternative voices. It is a kind of geographical imagination which fails to recognize the full import of spatiality. (...) A spatial (rather than temporal) recognition of difference, in contrast, would (...) entertain the possibility of the existence of a multiplicity of narratives”

Massey (2005:185) problematizes the “persistent opposition of place-as-real to space-as-abstract” that some authors use to reify, for example, Escobar’s conceptualization of place included in numeral 4.2.2. For her, the defence of place is often portrayed as a contestation to neoliberal globalization by the South or deindustrialising places in the North. This reading of place denies the voice of “a particular construction of place [which] is not politically defensible as part of a politics against neoliberal globalisation” (Massey, 2005:102) [her italics]. Her proposal is to reflect in the interconnectivity and relationally of space, where space, like place, is also grounded,

“If places pose, in highly variable form, the question of our living together in the sense of juxtaposition (throwntogetherness), there is also the question of the negotiation of those, equally varied, wider relations within which they are constituted” (Massey, 2005:187).

According to her, in contrasting place against space and local against global, it is assumed that local/place is down-to-earth and global/space is non-concrete, and this ignores that global/space is always connected to local/place. Massey’s concept of space (Massey, 2005:195) can be summarized in the next quote,
“[S]pace presents us with the social in the widest sense: the challenge of our constitutive interrelatedness, the radical contemporaneity of an ongoing multiplicity of others, human and non-human; and the ongoing and ever-specific project of the practices through which that sociability is to be configured”.

4.2.5 Hybrid geographies

Hybrid geographies according to Whatmore (1999) “seek to implode the object/subject binary that underlies the modern antinomy between nature and society and [recognizes] the agency of ‘non-human’ actants” (Whatmore, 1999:27). ‘Actants’ are understood to be different from ‘actors’ or ‘locales’ in order to include all kind of interactions. In her words,

“This ‘hybrid’ geographical enterprise (…) is concerned with studying the living rather than abstract spaces of social life, configured by numerous, interconnected agents – variously composed of biological, mechanical and habitual properties and collective capacities – within which people are differently and plurally articulated” (Whatmore, 1999:26).

“Rather than passing judgement on a nature that is always at a distance, such geographies must strive to find ways of exploring and expressing the kinds of sensible and relational knowledge of these hybrid worlds” (Whatmore, 1999:35).

4.3 A first conceptualization of territory, ‘nature’ and Mother Nature according to interviewees’ narratives

The meaning of territory is not univocal among indigenous individuals and groups, even if they belong to the same ethnicity, as it will be explained in the subsequent chapters/papers. Territory is an amalgam of social constructions depending greatly on historical specific contexts and social practices led by individuals and groups. Therefore, it is more appropriate to talk in terms of territories, in the plural, rather than territory as one. In general, most interviewees referred to their territories as something beyond physical spaces, and where time and space are embedded in multiple forms.

In this study, territory has similar traces to that ‘place’, as explained in section 4.2.2. How ‘locals’ in ‘localities’ (Escobar, 2008; Giddens, 1990) as well as ‘inhabitants’ when ‘wayfaring’ (Ingold, 2011) make a ‘place’, is similar to my analysis of how indigenous individuals and groups construct territory in and through everyday practices. Also, the reification of constructions of ‘place’ by ‘locals’ as
antithetical to global space (Escobar, 2008; Giddens, 1990) has similarities to the emerging understanding of multiple territories (the internal and external exposition of the same space and place).

However, the constant negotiation of the ‘local’ as different from the global is absent in these approaches to place, and this distances conceptualizations of place from my understanding of territory as they are permanently negotiated. Similarly, political dimensions of territory explored by Escobar (2001, 2008) and Ballve (2013) are similar to the ones held by the indigenous people I interviewed; nevertheless, territory, while being a concept adopted from political discourses, is also hybridized as it aggregated deeper meanings related to ‘being’ in the place as described by indigenous individuals and groups.

Following Massey (1994, 2005), I strongly agree with the interconnection of global/space and local/place. Territory is in permanent construction as a dynamic reflection, precisely, of the continuous interaction between people in territories with the neoliberal globalized modern world operationalization. However, it is also problematic to analyse the units of space when criticizing modernity in Latin America.

In terms of scale, I agree in that it is important to understand the role played by landscape attributes (socioecological landscapes [Beilin & Reid, 2015]) and actants (hybrid geographies [Whatmore, 1999]) in the construction of place, or territory as is my argument. However, the scale of my analysis is communities’ constructions of discourses, and a broader scale of analysis would need another study than this one.

To sum up, I consider that Cofán, Pijao and Muisca-Chibcha constructions of territory (territories) in this study are quite distinct, despite evolving and adapting to common political discourses. They are negotiated with trans-local and even global discourses in political terms, and at the same time, include ontological –and epistemological- elements in their construction. As well, territory is often referred to in discourses, in contexts that are pragmatic rather than cognisant of political implications. It is nowadays employed as common sense marker to refer to the place lived in by the person and the group. This easily confuses the intention of the speaker, or text.
In this text, and for most interviewees, territories are, firstly, the place of the ancestors and spirits, and contemporary indigenous communities are their guardians. They guard the place in political as well as ontological terms. Therefore, territorial defence may ultimately mean an ambition to guarantee ‘autonomy’ and ‘self-determination’ of communities (Escobar, 2008), and, importantly, their cultural–spiritual survival. Territorial defence for most interviewees is at its core a defence of being, and this might be understood as ‘self-determination’ and ‘autonomy’ under modern ontology, but cannot be limited to those terms. Here it is evident that powerful discourses constructed within modern understandings, for example legal jargon, limit the meaning that communities aim to deliver. As Escobar in his most recent publication points out Escobar (2016:13),

“[M]any contemporary struggles for the defence of territories and difference are best understood as ontological struggles and as struggles over a world where many worlds fit, as the Zapatista put it; they aim to foster the pluriverse”.

Therefore, in my understanding, Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao individuals and communities have constructed multiple territories, one for the political outside (i.e. the physical place inhabited) and the one for inside, and in both there are elements of the immaterial because the recognition of their rights externally requires that there be a recognition of a different cosmology. In the internal sense, the immaterial or ‘Mother Nature’, is more dominant (if now distant for some) and represented through symbolic and relational ways of knowing. ‘Territory’ and ‘Mother Nature’ are beyond dualistic differences in indigenous discourses; rather they are part of their constructions of ‘nature’, where the material and immaterial, and ‘nature’/culture, are intricately related. The contemporary common use of territory in indigenous discourses, though, shows how meanings of ‘nature’ have had to hybridize in order to gain interlocution with the national and the global. Indigenous discourses are subsumed to the hegemonic discourses which made territory a popular term after the 1990s, whereas animist discourses of being in the world have been almost silenced.

Territorial advocacy incorporates the perpetuation of social practices of peoples inhabiting territories, as well as the possibilities of other beings -associated or not to those peoples- to exist, in a multidimensional co-responsibility for the existence of place and space, people and the non-human, the visible and the invisible. Defence is mediated by spirituality but employing modern law for advocacy. Defence is carried out in their direct territories due to the urgency brought about by
capitalist transformation in the neoliberal globalized modern world, but it also aims to defend other non-human worlds and absent territories because each territory is only a piece of the entire picture of Mother Earth.

Finally, different constructions of territory make evident the amalgam of identities that shape the world, and emphasize peoples’ values and expectations in their existence, which vary according to their own beliefs and practices. Constructions are in constant hybridization; they are neither static nor isolated. Hybridization occurs in the everyday practice of individuals, in their interactions with others within communities, in the relations of these communities with others, and with the powerful structures of the neoliberal globalized modern world discourses, including those operationalized by multinational corporations. This is particularly apparent in Latin America and with special emphasis in Colombia, where “traditions have not yet disappeared and modernity has not completely arrived” (García, 1990:1).
CHAPTER/PAPER 5. "WE LIVE FROM MOTHER NATURE":
NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION, COMMODIFICATION, THE 'WAR
ON DRUGS', AND BIODIVERSITY IN COLOMBIA SINCE THE 1990S

5.1 Introduction to the chapter/paper

This chapter/paper contains the article published under the same name in SAGE Open journal on August 2015 (see Appendix 4). In this chapter/paper I further explore discourses regarding the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ explained in the previous chapter; I introduce some policies which provide examples of those global discourses and some examples of their operationalization at a national scale. These discourses, their implementation in policies and materialization in localities, have impacted the Muisca-Chibcha, Pijao and Cofán indigenous communities. These peoples, in turn, express their concerns in these narratives.

I briefly recap how modernity has impacted indigenous communities’ ontologies since the XVI century. I analyse the further implications of the encounters with the other European ‘whites’, but also with Africans and Gypsy communities. Then I introduce the political changes during the 1990s that have facilitated the advance of modernity in the Colombian territory. For this purpose I explore some of the narratives and policies associated with the Washington Consensus in 1989, the embracing of the certification process in the ‘war on drugs’ through the U.S. Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act in 1988, and the enactment of biological conservation policies after the Convention of Biological Diversity in 1992.

These policies mirror the positioning of Colombia in the world markets and the conditions that U.S financial institutions have imposed on the country. Neoliberal rationale has penetrated the economic, social, and environmental political arena, and the Colombian government has adopted that rationale. The operationalization of these policies has in turn affected indigenous communities’ territories in different ways. Interviewees’ reflect the testimonies of indigenous persons in regard to the construction of irrigation districts for agro-exports and their reactions to free trade agreements in the case of neoliberal economic policies; the impact of aerial spraying on illicit crops with herbicides in the case of social policies; the defence of traditional knowledge against property rights agreements; and the creation of conservation (of nature) parks to protect territories in the case of environmental
policies. I explore chapter/paper 5 in relation to the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology according to Fairclough (2010) in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010) and its use in this thesis – III, chapter/paper 5**

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### Stage 2. Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong

This chapter/paper can be interpreted in terms of the steps 1 and 2 of stage 2

- **Step 1. Dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements**

‘Modernity’, ‘neo-liberalization’ and ‘globalization’ as orders of discourses mentioned in chapter 3, are further explored in this chapter/paper, particularly the first two. Also I explore their association with extra-semiotic elements like ontological imposition, socio-economic ordering, and operationalization of policies impacting indigenous communities’ territories.

- **Step 2. Selection of texts**

This stage underpins this chapter in two ways. On one hand, the inclusion of some Cofán, Pijao and Muisca-Chibcha interviews’ excerpts regarding their thinking about, contestation of, and reaction to the operationalization of neoliberal policies. On the other hand, also the policies explored in this chapter/paper constitute texts that are being analysed. They refer to the Washington Consensus (1989), the U.S. Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act (1988), and the Convention of Biological Diversity (1992), among others.

- **Step 3. Carry out the analysis of texts**

This is a more detailed (in comparison with the previous chapter) analysis of ‘genres’, i.e. the ways of acting and interacting between discourses through policies and global political consensus; ‘discourses’ as such, contained in policies and their extra-semiotic implications when they materialize in indigenous territories; and ‘styles’, as policies are creating different subjects based on the population target, as for example, when in the ‘war on drugs’ policies, countries are classified as ‘major drug-producing’ or ‘major drug-transit’.
**Stage 3. Considers whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong**

The analysis of the enactment of agreements and policies in this chapter/paper allows analysing how these orders of discourses are coordinated in networks which reinforce the social wrong (i.e. the subordination of indigenous worldviews), even employing violence or aggravating already-existing violent contexts in indigenous communities’ territories.

This chapter/paper analyses how the semiotic and extra-semiotic dimensions of the networks of social practices associated with the neoliberal globalized modern world contributes to sustaining relations of power and domination over Colombia as a country conditioned by its role in the global village. Further, societies and localities which are already being disadvantaged by the position of the country in the global market are even more suppressed and subordinated to those practices. This constricts the possibilities for the practice of socio-cultural life according to indigenous worldviews.

### 5.2 Abstract

This article explores how macroeconomic and environmental policies instituted since the 1990s have altered meanings, imaginaries, and the human relationship to nature in Colombia. The Colombian nation-state is pluri-ethnic, multilingual, and megabiodiverse. In this context, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, and some peasant communities survive hybridization of their cultures. They have developed their own ways of seeing, understanding, and empowering the world over centuries of European rule. However, threats to relatively discrete cultural meanings have increased since major changes in the 1990s, when Colombia experienced the emergence of new and modern interpretations of nature, like “biodiversity”, and a deepening of globalized neoliberal economic and political management. These policies involve a modern logic of being in the world, the establishment of particular regulatory functions for economies, societies, and the environment, and their spread has been facilitated by webs of political and economic power. We³ trace their local effects with reference to three indigenous groups.

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³ In this chapter/paper, as well as in chapter/papers 6 and 7, the writer’s voice is in plural, chapter/papers are written using ‘we’ rather than ‘I’. This responds to the co-authority of these
5.3 Introduction

The Colombian constitution of 1991 recognized the pluri-ethnic character of this nation-state for the first time. It acknowledged traditional communities including indigenous groups, Afro-Colombians, gypsies, and peasant groups who rely on their own ways of constructing and practicing nature based on their fashions of seeing and understanding, and empowerment in their territories and places. But the 1990s also saw a marked increase in the threats to the cultural survival of all of these groups, with the emergence of globalised forms of neoliberal, market-led economics and a host of new interpretations of nature, including “biodiversity management”. In this article we identify these threats, and the relevant policies, illustrated with accounts from three different Colombian societies, the Pijaos, Muisca-Chibcha and Cofán. Policies resulted from the Washington Consensus in 1989, the embracing of the certification process in the War on Drugs through the US Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act in 1988, and the enactment of biological conservation policies following the Convention of Biological Diversity in 1992. These shaped a decade of important changes to policy, leading to the hybridizations of local discourses of nature with those from “outside” Colombia. This article presents and critiques the deepening of modern ways of knowing in Colombian society with their arrival.

We define the neoliberal globalized project as something that is ongoing - “neo-liberalization” is a worldview with modern values that has been spread globally since the 1980s with particular regulatory functions for economies, societies, and the environment (Castree 2010: 7-13). It prioritises the idea of individual, corporate and collective freedom of choice. The State, in this reading, obstructs liberties, fails in guaranteeing welfare in society. The market, by rewarding “success” and through competition, may take its place. This worldview is programmed, Castree argues, through government policies, and is operationalized when these are translated into practices, whose impacts affect diverse geographies separated in space and time.

The rolling out of neoliberal policies often results in context-specific hybridizations of social practices: old and new, modern and traditional, regional and global. The pluri-ethnic character of Colombia imposes very different rationales across its heterodox geographical space, which also implies that ethnicities may interpret and respond differently to the operationalization of policy.

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manuscripts which are being submitted to peer reviewed journals for publication. A short description of co-authors is in 2.5.
Our theoretical approach is to read these hybridizations based on the understanding of cultures as “signifying systems” (Williams, 1981). In this reading, meanings are expressed through language and therefore may be studied in discourses (Fairclough, 2010). As Wagenaar (2011, p.111) states, from this post-structuralist view, meanings “are actualized in a specific context-in-use, depending on the particular historical circumstances and the specific intentions, challenges, and possibilities the actors face”. We use the analysis of texts and interviews to identify relations of power, conflict, and struggle that may result from certain policy initiatives (Wagenaar, 2011).

Discourse analysis may reveal “cycles of hybridization” (García, 1990; Stross, 1999) or what Escobar (2012) terms “transition discourses.” “Cycles of hybridization” not “pure” or “homogeneous”, but refer to social practices and/or discourses. They are hybrids of cultural inheritance present in daily life, and prior encounters with other social practices and/or discourses from other groups. Hybridization brings about changes in social practices, and here we look at changes in local approaches to the natural world. We are aware, of course, that communities we call “local” and “traditional” have been hybridizing their social practices with the “modern” for centuries, and therefore we cannot talk of “pure traditional” practices (Escobar, 2012). However, the modern objectification of nature, we argue, has been sharply reinforced since the 1990s.

In practical terms, the study involved an extensive review of the literature on neoliberal impact in Latin America and specifically in Colombia, with a focus on the particular break-points of the 1990s brought about by the policies illustrated above. Semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted in the three communities between February and October of 2014 by the first author, and they confirm the emergence of hybridized narratives arising from changing discourses around nature since the 1990s.

The article will first show how modern ontology has actually impacted Colombia since the very beginning of the encounter with the Spanish. During the 1990s, the political economy of Colombia changed to permit the adoption of the neoliberal globalized project, based on modern acceptance of the commodification of the natural world. Then, we explain the Washington Consensus of 1989 and its rationale and consequences, as this was an important scenario that ushered Colombia into the neoliberal globalized project. Then we outline the set of policies resulting from the Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act in 1988 and the War on Drugs, and the signature of the Convention of Biological Diversity in 1992. We use segments of interviews conducted with indigenous communities, to illustrate the
hybridizations of discourses of nature in contemporary Colombia among its long term inhabitants. We end with a brief final discussion and conclusion.

5.4 First encounters with modernity and its effects in Colombia

Relatively ‘pure’ local traditional discourses (i.e. non-modern) of indigenous peoples existed prior the encounter with the Spanish in the early 1500s. However, as Giddens (1990, p.37) points out “tradition does not so much resist change as pertain to a context in which there are few separated temporal and spatial markers in terms of which change can have a meaningful form”. In this sense the bringing about of the new modern ontology during Spanish colonization permeated tradition in one way or another, and the more contact a community had with Western society, the more exposed to abrupt cultural changes it became.

At the time of Spanish colonization, Catholic missions were spread throughout the territory, to create “order” and “civilize” “wild-peoples” in remote places (Arango & Sánchez, 2004). Modernity implied the imposition of Christianity as the only manner in which to relate to God, which induced indecision among traditional cultures about gods and God (Heidegger, [1938] 1950a, [1938] 1950b). Also some indigenous peoples were subjected to forced labour to meet tax payments to the Spanish Crown (Arango & Sánchez, 2004). Therefore, traditional cultures were objectified through forms of slavery, and later their need for capital accumulation, leading to their engagement in surplus production and waged labour. Christianity and capitalism imposed new meanings of the ‘other’ in both human and non-human domains, and thus traditional social practices were forced to hybridize in order to adjust themselves to this new order.

The colonization enterprise also induced other novel social encounters. After constant abuses suffered by indigenous peoples, and a subsequent demographic catastrophe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the colonial regime imported slaves from Africa in response to the increasing difficulty in enlisting native workers (Arango & Sánchez, 2004). In addition, the Gypsy community arrived in the country, legally and illegally. They migrated to Colombia fleeing slavery in Eastern Europe (in 1821 and 1851), and later during the First and Second World Wars escaping warfare and persecution (DNP, 2010; PRORROM, 2007). Therefore, indigenous peoples not only encountered Spanish traditions and practices, but also those of Africans and the Rom Gypsy community.
The modern geopolitical entity of the nation-state implied a new territorial relationship. The state acquired administrative capacity to control space and its people (Heidegger, [1938] 1950a, [1938] 1950b; Sakai, 2001). Modernity “cut through the connections between social activity and its “embedding” in the particularities of context of presence” (Giddens, 1990, p.20), introducing greater separation of time and space through calendars and mapping. It allowed the connection of the local with the global, so that societies became more exposed to hybridization of their social practices with those of others more distant from them (Giddens, 1990).

Modern ontology, as a western European phenomenon, was expanded with the idea of subjugating those non-western societies through a particular political, military, and economic apparatus (Sakai, 2001), in the Colombian case under the blessing of Christianity. Modern regimes consider that reason is more truthful than tradition (Giddens, 1990). Reason is acquired through knowledge that is only valid when it is obtained through empirical verification and research (Heidegger, [1938] 1950a, [1938] 1950b). Therefore the practicing and construction of traditional knowledge was diminished greatly as it was forcibly replaced by scientific rationality and Christian cosmogony.

In specific historical moments, particularly from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, some countries become “more effective nation-states” than others (Mann, 2002). According to Mann (2002, p.2) the “most effective nation-states” (i.e. US and the European countries) have a combination of “high infrastructural power” (the “state’s ability to implement decisions through its territories”), and “low despotic power” (the “state elite’s ability to take decisions without routine negotiations with groups in the civil society”). Latin America, however, has had different historical moments that delayed the emergence of “effective” nation-states. Within the scope of this article, only one of them will be emphasized, the fact that ethnic differences have remained important.

According to Mann (2002), the organization of societies according to ethnicity and class has led to persistent racial-ethnic problems. Regional differences were magnified by settlement histories. Some regions became industrialized more than others; related more to global economies; and labour unions were far from universal. Ethnic and class diversity, therefore, cut across the spread of globalisation and modernity.
This is important because as Troyan (2008) points out, during the 1970s and 1980s in Colombia landless peasants were claiming their rights under class-based discourses, without significant success. Then, during the 1980s some members of the movement shifted their claims from class-based to those based on ethnicity, which “allowed the indigenous communities to represent their rights as timeless and as an integral part of their culture” (Troyan, 2008, p.182), gaining more acceptance across Colombian society. The State saw an opportunity to weaken class-based movements and the subversive actions of some of them (e.g. the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia –the FARC guerrilla army, founded in 1964 after the government attacked communist sympathisers during the period known as la Violencia). International pressures at that time influenced the legitimization of the rights of indigenous peoples as well, like the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples No. 169, of 1989.

The rights of some traditional black (Afro-Colombian) communities were also recognized, as they and indigenous groups were working hand by hand in the constituent assembly that eventually ratified the Constitution of 1991 (Troyan, 2008). During the 1990s Gypsy communities and other Afro-Colombians groups obtained their ethnic recognition and gained specific rights to land.

Despite this, other claims still based on class have been ignored and diminished greatly after the Constitution was enacted, particularly land claims by the peasantry (Troyan, 2008). This is an important consideration taking into account that the cultural borders between indigeneity and peasantry are blurred in many local settings. In the most recent Colombian Census conducted in 2005 (DANE, 2010) only 0.01% of Colombians identify as gypsies, 3.4% as indigenous, 10.62% as Afro-Colombians, and the rest (85.94%) do not belong to any ethnicity, although this does not necessarily mean that they forego traditional practices. There are different factors that influence how minority populations choose to identify themselves, a discussion that exceeds our scope in this article.

We argue that in general terms, traditional communities share strong attachments to territory/place that determine their senses of identity and belonging. In terms of discourses and their perpetuation, Colombian indigenous, most Afro-descendants, and some traditional peasant groups hold “relational worldviews” or “relational ontologies” (Escobar, 2012, p.xxii). In the case of indigenous peoples, “relational ontologies” imply that they habitually signify elements of nature as “non-human sentient entities” (Escobar, 2010, 2012). Also, according to Mallarach (2011, p.51), Colombian indigenous
communities, who have ancestral knowledge about the creation of the world, consider that all the components of nature are sacred, and therefore, their relationships with their territories are based on values of respect.

Reflecting this, since the very beginning of the encounters with the Spanish and other groups, the local views of some traditional peasant communities have been “negotiated” with those from outside. This was the pre-existing situation when major changes came about in the 1990s in Colombia. The neoliberal globalized project, adopted by the country with policies in line with the Washington Consensus (1989) entrenched the connection between the local and the modern through its particular economic and environmental policies.

5.5 The Washington Consensus (1989)

The Washington Consensus is a set of ten neoliberal policies, some of them allegedly already practiced in Latin America but brought together by the economist John Williamson (Williamson, 1990, Figure 5). The aim was to provide guidance to the Washington-based international financial institutions and the US Congress, to promote “economic development” in Latin America from the early 1990s. The Consensus emphasized the urgent necessity for these countries to liberalize their economies to become more market-driven. The policies are grouped in two main sets. The first group were issued to correct “Latin-specific maladies”, and the second to lead the pro-market agenda in the region. The former comprised policies geared to “macroeconomic stabilization” and “outward orientation”. The latter informed policies related to “removing the entrepreneurial function of the state”, “freeing and enabling markets”, and “complementing markets” (Birdsall et al., 2010).
**Figure 5. The Decalogue of Washington Consensus Policies (adapted from Williamson, 1990)**

| 1. Better fiscal policy discipline. "...Large and sustained fiscal deficits are a primary source of macroeconomic dislocation in the forms of inflation, payments deficits, and capital flight". |
| 2. Redirection of public spending from "indiscriminate" subsidies toward pro-poor services like primary education, primary health care and public infrastructure. |
| 3. Tax reform, taxing more broadly and using "moderate" marginal tax rates. |
| 4. Interest rates that are determined by the market and sufficient to discourage "capital flight". |
| 5. "Competitive" currency exchange rates. "...sufficiently competitive to promote a rate of export growth that will allow the economy to grow at the maximum rate permitted by its supply-side potential". |
| 6. Trade liberalization; liberalization of imports, with some protection of "infant" industries, and held to an appropriate timetable. |
| 7. Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment, possibly through debt-equity swaps to the favour of foreign investors. |
| 8. Privatization of state enterprises; "...privatization can be very constructive where it results in increased competition, and useful where it eases fiscal pressures". Qualifications exist for public goods like water supply. |
| 9. Deregulation; abolition of regulations that frustrate market forces or restrict economic competition (exceptions for necessary protections) |
| 10. Property rights should be boosted by legal security. |

According to Escobar (2010, p.2), “Latin America was the region that most earnestly embraced neoliberal reforms, where the model was applied most thoroughly, and where the results are most ambiguous at best.” This set of policies has led to the exclusion of some sections of society. Exclusion was carried out through authoritarian and anti-democratic policies led by a social and civilizational regime (Santos, 2002), which according to some critics constitutes a new type of fascism (Escobar, 2005). Escobar (2005) argues that financial fascism has enabled the marginalization of entire regions, and even countries that do not follow the conditions imposed by the multilateral financial institutions.

The social and ethnic dimension of the roll out of neoliberal globalization in Latin America is little understood, and the reactions to it have been different in every nation-state (Escobar, 2005). The
imaginary of the Consensus, particularly its underpinning by free market capitalism, has been resisted by some nation states. Some governments have sought very different economic models and strategies, with far greater state controls (e.g. in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia).

During the 1990s Colombia, following most of the Latin American countries, adopted the neoliberal economic model in alignment with the Washington Consensus. Its benefits have been elusive, and have imperilled its society (Chase, 2002; Escobar, 2002). President César Gaviria Trujillo (1990–94) was responsible for the acceleration of “economic openness” (apertura económica) policies after a recession in 1990 and these have continued, favouring a reduction of import tariffs, deregulation of finance, privatization, and opening up to foreign investment. The immersion of the Colombian nation-state into the global economic village deepened over time, and across the country.

The Colombian Ministry of Culture, MINCULTURA (2010a) states that some of the threats to Colombian ethnic communities that have increased because of the adoption of the neoliberal globalization are: rapid urbanization, and the raised economic integration of regions into the national and international market; the growth of illicit crops to obtain profit and to substitute for failing commodity production; the presence of more illegal armed groups; and poverty, social exclusion, and conflict in regions with forced displacement as a consequence of disputes related to, for example, land appropriation for commercial purposes. The consequences are variable across regions and communities. The 'social fascism' (Escobar, 2005) of the neoliberal globalized project has hit some vulnerable communities displaced by foreign mining companies or land grabs. The spreading of a neoliberal globalized modern model has been a powerful source of a new ontological meaning of being in the world, based on the commodification of the nation's rich natural resources.

One example of these policies is the Irrigation District “Triángulo del Tolima”, categorized as having national strategic importance (CONPES, 2005). This irrigation project is located in the ancestral territory of the Coyaima and Natagaima peoples, today grouped under the broader Pijaos ethnicity. They form 88% of people settled in the project area (some 17,502 people). The project aims to increase productive potential through the promotion of agro-industrial cropping for the international market, replacing subsistence production. Some members of the Pijao ethnicity in the area explained how the construction of the project has been affecting their relation with territory in different ways, including physical displacement and social effects. There has been an increase in family
disintegration as some “workers have broken marriages and have taken wives; even wives have abandoned their children” (Interviewee I, Pijao, Coyaima, 04 May 2014). Cultural impacts include the flooding of areas deemed sacred by the local population. The vulnerability of local communities in the area is aggravated by the presence of illegal armed groups with particular interests in capturing agro-industrial profits. We interviewed Pijao indigenous people who have been directly affected, and some of their comments follow:

“Paramilitaries came…and then four people went missing because as this Triángulo project had already started, the wall was built, the whole project was underway... and so they wanted to take control of all of this. The government wanted all of this, all the way down, to be rice crops like in Saldaña… four people from here, from this resguardo, from Coyaima, many… they [the paramilitary] wanted all this to stay uninhabited so that anyone could come and take ownership of all this... there’s no reason for this, I mean, for them it’s a good reason, but for us there’s no reason for it to be like this… they went on killing some people there, but then the guerrillas occupied a few times ... this zone is very tough, and we get caught up in it” (Interviewee I, Pijao, Coyaima, 04 May 2014)

“You could say the fact is that we’ve lost our language, but until now we haven’t lost our territory, but we are demanding that they recognize that this land is ours because now with this triángulo project, INCODER has given us the resguardos are farms that they have given to us, and where we’ve settled, where we’ve settlement is, the hamlet isn’t recognized, you know what I mean?, so we’re always at risk of someone coming and saying, “you lot, get packing” and how can we defend ourselves?, we’re stuck in this … these are threats because they’re threats of displacement, they gave us land over there far away, at least me, I told them “I’m not leaving, I’m going to stay because this is my territory”, I didn’t even go and look at the farms over there, I’m not going there…” (Interviewee II, Pijao, Coyaima, 04 May 2014)

“Part of the mega project's plan is to grow tropical fruit for the Europe Union, also [biofuels]; and the other is that the whole of South Tolima was already leased to the mining sector [to exploit] copper, gold, baryte [barium sulphate], coal” (Interviewee III, Pijao, Natagaima, 10 May 2014)
The power of the two main armed groups in Colombia opposed to US influence and to the elements of neoliberal reforms, the FARC and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) has now diminished somewhat, but for decades Colombia was host to political conflict driven by a clash of ideology, but economic interests and opposition to neoliberalism were also at its roots. August-September 2013 was the most recent period of intense protests in Colombia, led by a wide constellation of labour unions, students, and citizens supporting the claims of several trade unions, mainly those of potato farmers. They saw the free trade agreements that Colombia has made during recent years with the Europe Union, Canada, the US and other countries, as a serious threat to their local economies. Particular claims involved issues related to the property rights for seeds, and the flooding of local markets with imports at lower prices, whereas the cost of production of local products has increased dramatically.  

Several indigenous communities also participated in these protests. In some cases, they report murders and injuries sustained through attacks on their members during the protests, as some violence occurred in the middle of the confusion (Interviewee II, Pijao, Coyaima, 04 May 2014). An interview with a Muisca-Chibcha indigenous leader in Boyacá Department explained the reasons for the strike, and how negotiations have been somehow controversial as, from their viewpoint, the nation's leaders have failed to consider the attachment of local communities to place:

“Well, the agrarian strike is the culmination of what amounts to a complete abandonment of peasantry, ¿isn’t it?, lack of incentives, debt, one of the most significant triggers was the issue of the FTA, food smuggling, credits affecting peasants without guarantees, where there was nothing left to give, consumable goods, the bad practices amongst those, let’s say, other intermediary powers in the food chains, and right at the end, the person who loses out is the

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small-scale farmer... in our case, the people-nation [Muisca-Chibcha Boyacá], several community members are part of the rurality, then they share that territory, and even are part of Community Action Boards... as peasants ... then there is a double standard there, isn't there?... we have had meddling in several issues, haven't we?... even during the agrarian strike... in August... through the CUPIB, the Coordinating Group of Indigenous Peoples in Boyacá, we organized a forum, before elections, calling the rural people to order, calling the leaders to order... we think that it was very interesting how indigenous people attracted attention because there was great uncertainty about what happened there, those agrarian strike leaders, in negotiations and they left people confused about what was going on, so we couldn't let them talk about seeds, or transgenics, or other things, only about what is really important: territory. (Interviewee IV, Muisca, Tunja, 24 August 2014)

In addition, “modern” strategies have been used to resolve social, economic, and ecological crises associated with neoliberal globalization. But some of these have aggravated the problem. Efforts have been superficial, fighting symptoms instead of causes (Santos, 2002). As a response, multiple local struggles are gaining strength associated with the defence of territories, peoples, and resources (Escobar, 2005). This is the case with the employment of aerial pesticide spraying over geographical spaces where illicit crops are present in Colombia, remote locations often inhabited by communities highly rooted to territory and with little option to develop economically in other ways. Aerial fumigation has been validated through the policies issued in the frame of the Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, which also accords with the Washington Consensus conditions accepted by Colombia. We now explain these policies, the rationale behind them and their consequences.

5.6 The Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act (1988)

Colombia is a producer of illegal drugs, often controlled by Mafiosi cartels, guerrillas led by the FARC, and paramilitaries. The US is a prime, but not the only consumer. The spraying of illicit crops with herbicides to combat marijuana trafficking - from Colombia to the US - started in the late 1970s when Colombia was the primary producer and exporter of the drug (Crandall, 2008). While other Latin countries like Bolivia and Peru preferred manual drug crop eradication (Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis, 2013), aerial fumigation was used in Colombia, allegedly because of the remoteness and inaccessibility of source regions that were effectively under the control of cartels and anti-state forces (Thoumi, 2005).
According to Crandall (2008), the aerial strategy did not reduce marijuana production sharply, and nor did it lead to a decrease in the amount of drugs exported to the US, because marijuana cultivation shifted spatially across the inaccessible terrain, and then returned when operations ended. This pattern is known as the “balloon effect”; the inelastic demand of drugs that will be satisfied by traffickers in one way or another.

During the 1980s there was a slow expansion in bilateral “cooperation” on the drug issue focused on marijuana eradication; meanwhile Colombia became the world’s main cocaine producer and trafficker. Between 1989 and 1998 deep institutionalization occurred with the adoption of the United States Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act (this altered and expanded the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 between the countries). After permitting a range of US-sponsored anti-drug measures, in 1998 counterinsurgency policies were incorporated, since there was strong evidence to show the involvement of revolutionary groups like FARC in the trade. Colombia now produces over 50% of the heroin sold in US, and the drug business still incorporates illegal drug manufacturing, smuggling, international marketing, and drug money and asset laundering (Crandall, 2008; Guáqueta, 2005; Mann, 2002; Thoumi, 2005).

The War on Drugs strategies and narco-delinquency also intensify the Colombian internal war against its revolutionary opponents, contributing to a reduction of state power as it became clear that it did not control all of the national territory. The internal war consists of confrontations among illegal armed groups, or between them and the Colombian army for the control of geostrategic regions. Coca farmers and businesspeople place themselves under the protection of, or become the unwilling subjects of, illegal armed groups to satisfy the large foreign demand for drugs (Mann, 2002; Soledad & Egea, 2011).

In terms of aerial spraying, little changed with the arrival of the US backed Plan Colombia in the 2000s. Between 2000 and 2008, more than 1 million hectares were sprayed. Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis (2013) analysed the effects of aerial fumigation on drug production itself, on deforestation, health, agriculture, and on human displacements, concluding that all of them are closely related. The tropical forests chosen for spraying are generally remote, with low levels of rural and municipal development; and a majority rural population comprising mainly indigenous, Afro-descendants, or poor peasant households. They have high levels of natural cover and are often areas where violence already exists.
(exacerbated after the arrival of coca crops). The surveillance of the state is low, while poverty is high. This means labour is easily recruited as coca trade wages are slightly higher than the norm, offering some stability in incomes and employment. As a consequence of the “balloon effect”, deforestation has also increased to accommodate the growing of drug crops, especially in the tropical rainforest of the Pacific Corridor. Fumigation then displaces coca production to other territories although it can re-circulate at the end of operations (Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis, 2013.)

Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis (2013) found negative correlations between health and agricultural welfare with anti-drug spraying. Among some indigenous communities of Nariño Department in Colombia, there were deaths of domestic animals, pollution of water, loss of seeds and medicinal plants, and pollution and destruction of crops for local consumption. They also noted cases of infant mortality and abortions, and rare cases of starvation generated by the destruction of crops. There was no previous consultation or warning about the spraying, even though Colombian law demands that there should be.

We collected some testimonials about the effects of agrochemical spraying on Cofán indigenous communities and their territories in Putumayo Department. According to the interviews, coca spraying started in 2000 and is still ongoing in the region, but since 2007 the indigenous territories have been excluded due to multiple human rights claims directed to the government. The statements show indigenous dissatisfaction not only with the effects of spraying on crops, health, and economy, but also with levels of violence and the absence of State support for the affected:

“Then there was the issue of [aerial] fumigation... the hardest one so far... that fumigation was in the year 2000 where [sic] it caused... lots of damage in self-sufficiency crops, water pollution, damage to the jungle, there was even damage to animals, to many species, where it killed off a part of the medicine that was in the jungle because it was very [in]discriminate fumigation, very hard... many people have got sick, children in other communities, from other cultures, for example, the Emberas, they have lost children there because of the fumigation, also some of them have died, then they have stayed sick, because they couldn’t... whoever washed in the polluted creeks got skin allergies and lots of things like that, consequences of those fumigations... we had hard times that, thanks to that some neighbours who have their crops in the river zone... their yucca crops, their plantain crops, they sometimes gave us a
bunch of plantain because everything we planted to sell, to buy the things we needed from the market didn’t grow, know what I mean?, It took us more than one year to start producing again.” (Interviewee V, Cofán, Putumayo, 8 September 2014)

Forced displacement can occur due to aerial fumigations, because of the destruction of land cover. Not all of its victims are involved in drug production. Therefore, forced displacement is one aspect of the physical violence in Colombia resulting from narcotics and the internal war. The latter has some origins in resistance to neoliberal policies; drug production, ironically, exploits international market opportunities. The threats to people when internal war occurs in their territories include among others: intimidation by means of fear and threat; selective murders, especially of targeted community leaders and teachers; rape of women; conscription of children and youth; and the installation of anti-personnel mines around and inside their territories (Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis, 2013; Soledad & Egea, 2011). The next interview segment discusses displacement as an effect of aerial fumigation:

“… well what there was it’s all destroyed, one thing is the government’s interest in fumigating the crops, but then at that moment for us who had already planted peach palm fruit, it wasn’t in our [sic] minds, it was fumigated, some of us who had the famous chagra (forest gardens), the indigenous people who traditionally grow it, it wasn’t well planted, but still, we had chagra, but then the fumigations come and raze everything, after that, I don’t know if they gave us a consignment of food, we got a consignment, we ate it in one week and, the rest of the time?, no one had a wage and that’s hard, we had a time of crisis… I remember that my children borrowed money from another student to bring a kilo of rice, and everyone was like that… it was a critical time… suddenly to begin to work in other dynamics, and they didn’t grow either yucca or plantain, because there were all sprayed, then crops need at least six months, eight months to get a plantain, so that time was really hard, I don’t know what we did then, I don’t remember, but neither, well some people left immediately, but the rest of us have been dumbasses, we just made ourselves stay and eat whatever we could find…” (Interviewee VI, Cofán, Putumayo, 07 September 2014)

Displaced people are uncertain of returning to their original homes. Deterritorialization occurs when victims not only lose their assets and belongings, but also their cultural referents, social networks, and sense of community (Soledad & Egea, 2011). Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are
particularly affected since illicit crops are growing in some of their territories (Rincón-Ruiz & Kallis, 2013). Departments located on the Colombian borders, like Vaupés, Guainía, Amazonas, Nariño, Valle del Cauca, and Chocó, reported the greatest total number of people displaced, but they exist in every Department (Soledad & Egea, 2011).

Corva (2008) maintains that the War on Drugs’ applies “illiberal governance” by “liberal” nation-states. There is a further irony here. It means the employment of coercive powers on subjects in nation-states under supposed “liberal governance” regimes that ostensibly recognise democratic freedoms. The coercive powers are permitted by a hyper-punitive criminal justice system, which requires the establishment of new categories for crime and criminals associated with drug trafficking. It is presumed that illegal drugs and drug trafficking are dangerous threats to individual and general social security; and that drug consumer countries are really victims of the producer and/or distributor nations. In this sense, the unequal balance of the criminal justice system as part of the War on Drugs allocates all the pressure to control drug trafficking to drug-producer/distributor spaces, despite the 1990 Declaration of Cartagena which highlighted that the drug problem is an issue for both suppliers and consumers (Corva, 2008; Crandall, 2008; Guáqueta, 2005; Thoumi, 2005).

Within this context, the 1998 Omnibus Act transnationalized the hyper-punitive criminal justice system. Through the Act, the US has determined which countries should be classified as either major drug-producing or major drug-transit countries. “Major” countries saw direct intervention by the US, through assistance to fight the drug war. But also, every year the US government assesses the anti-narcotic efforts of every “major” country, and classifies it with one of three certification categories: full (a bilateral narcotics agreement with the US), denial (i.e. uncooperative), or allowing “vital national interest” exemption from sanctions (Corva, 2008; Crandall, 2008).

It is in this certification process where the relationship between 1998 Omnibus Act and the Washington Consensus becomes most clear. Nation-states who join these processes are part of a “regime of state citizenship in the global economic village” (Corva, 2008, p.186). And as a demonstration of the highly unilateral, intermestic policy formulation by the US in the crusade against drugs (i.e. US domestic policy decisions about the War on Drugs, forcing reconfigurations on policy making at the international scale), “major” countries who do not meet US expectations (i.e. those who get “denial” certification) receive strong economic sanctions, in addition to suspension of drug war
assistance. These sanctions are not only bilateral, because the US also uses their “voice and vote” in multilateral financial institutions to deny development assistance to the respective country (Corva, 2008; Crandall, 2008). Therefore, Colombia had to meet certain requirements including the aerial fumigation of illicit crops, despite the lack of positive results.

In addition, the fact that Colombia opened its internal market to global trade much more in the 1990s has reinforced two issues: that poor farmers prefer to grow illicit crops for their added value, and the violence that goes along with this decision. For example, in 2002 there was a worldwide overexpansion of coffee production which led to oversupply; then the coffee price declined, aggravated by selective barriers to trade, which produced a significant decrease in the price of Colombian coffee. As a consequence, the livelihoods and living standards of peasants depending on this income were endangered. A lack of support by the Colombian state led many directly into coca production, a business more lucrative and stable in terms of long time employment (Mann, 2002; Messer & Cohen, 2006). There has been a lack of response from several Presidents since the 1990s to the fluctuations in the market price of internal products because of their adherence to neoliberal economic policies and price structures driven by supply and demand, with their attendant prejudicial effects on agriculture.

5.7 The green development discourse

During the 1990s, at the same time, policies based on green development discourses were enacted in Colombia after “Our Common Future” report was published in 1987 (WCED, 1987). This report was released by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), a United Nations initiative. It searched for a global agenda that diminished the degradation of the environment. The report was one of the early sources of the term “sustainable development”, which means the kind of development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, which otherwise might be limited by growing natural resources scarcity. "Meeting needs" became synonymous with economic growth (although allegedly greener than untrammelled capitalism); poverty always leads to ecological and other disasters; and therefore it is necessary to look for more employment, “the most essential human need”, to decrease poverty and to diminish global environment degradation (WCED, 1987, p.16).
The idea of harmonizing development and environment under this new green discourse influenced policymaking all around the world, but it quickly became clear that this would be without major challenges to the neoliberal globalized project, in vogue since the 1980s. On the contrary, it ratified many of Williamson's initial formulations (Table 1). Economic growth was assumed as the only way societies understand and seek development. Diminishing poverty and improved technology were seen as key strategies to lead sustainable development, without questioning the underlying economic paradigm that permits and objectifies previously non-market values.

The first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Brazil in 1992. It had a large impact. This conference permitted the enactment of the Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. These Conventions provided the rationale for environmental policies at the global level, with some regulation of the human and non-human domains based on a dominant logic. For the scope of this article we explain below some of the policies enacted after the Convention of Biological Diversity in Colombia, and the effects of their implementation on existing practices and beliefs.

5.7.1 Biological conservation policies after the Convention of Biological Diversity in 1992

The appearance of “biodiversity” as a concept dates to 1988, when it emerged from a political need to find one useful term to employ in dealing with international conservation problems (Wilson, 1988). Wilson (1988, p.3) defined biodiversity as “the diversity of life forms”, and a “global resource to be indexed, used, and above all, preserved.”

The concept of biodiversity arises in international thinking and policy after the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was agreed in 1992. With the CBD, a new meaning of biodiversity was proposed on the basis of its usefulness to humans, in the sense that protection of biodiversity should be an urgent international task to guarantee human welfare (UN, 1992). According to CBD (UN, 1992:3), biodiversity means;

“the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems”.

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Colombia, as one of the 157 nation-states signatories of the Convention treaty, had to introduce this new logic of understanding nature in its policies, and through Law 165 of 1994 the principles of the CBD were adopted in full. From then on, Colombia has agreed to conserve biological diversity, to use the components of biodiversity sustainably, and to distribute the benefits derived from genetic resources equitably. “Sustainable use” refers to continued use, rather than resource depletion.

Just before the CBD was signed, in 1991, Colombia reformulated its Political Constitution. The new Constitution did not employ the term biodiversity to refer to something related to nature, instead it uses the term “natural richness”, “diversity of the environment”, and “natural resources” as synonymous (riqueza natural, diversidad del ambiente, recursos naturales) (Presidencia, 1991). The Constitution highlighted the value of cultural knowledge about nature, and the right of the holders of such knowledge to have their perspectives considered alongside the dominant one, which was the importance of the appropriate use and conservation of those “natural resources” through scientific knowledge.

Through the Law 99 of 1993, the term biodiversity was introduced for the first time, mirroring the international CBD. In 1996 the first “Biodiversity national policy” was written in Colombia (Política Nacional de Biodiversidad) (Presidencia, 1996). It gave a high importance to use values rather than to intrinsic biodiversity, and traditional knowledge was deemed important only as far as it could provide information for future genetic uses of biological materials.

Later on, two influential categorizations placed Colombia at the forefront of international efforts (and pressures) to protect biodiversity. The country was identified as one of the 17 megadiverse countries of the world (Mittermeier, et al, 1997), and according to a popular article that has generated some controversy, it harbours sections of two of the 25 global biodiversity hotspots: the Tropical Andes, and the Chocó/Darién/Western Ecuador (Myers et al., 2000).

The United Nations “Ecosystems and well-being” report of 2005 introduced further terms and considerations. These included “ecosystem services”, “resilience” and “socio-ecosystems” (MEA, 2005). “Ecosystem services” refer to the benefits that ecosystems provide to people, and which are necessary for their survival. An ecosystem was defined in the report as “a dynamic complex of plant,
animal and microorganism communities and the nonliving environment as a functional unit” (MEA, 2005, p.v).

In 2010 the Colombian legislation on biodiversity was readjusted in line with these new global requirements, and the “National policy for the integral management of biodiversity and its ecosystem services” was issued (Política nacional para la gestión integral de la biodiversidad y sus servicios ecosistémicos) (Presidencia, 2010). In this policy, biodiversity is understood as the expression of the life forms of the planet, and as the basis of welfare because these life forms are essential for human survival. The national policy focuses on the integral management of biodiversity and ecosystem services to maintain and improve the resilience of the latter.

The emergence of concepts like “biodiversity” and “ecosystem services” has articulated a new relation between nature and society, and also, has generated the expansion of a massive institutional apparatus through the creation of policies and conservation strategies (both national and transnational) based on this single way of understanding nature (Escobar, 1998, p.55). Through the elevated emphasis on the importance of biodiversity as supplier of ecosystem services, it has imposed a monetary price on nature, and also a relation of causality that does not necessarily respond to the existing and traditional plural interpretations of nature in Colombia (Victorino, 2012).

The yagé case is a clear example of the struggles that rise from encounters of the “local” in defending ancestral traditional knowledge with the “global” intellectual property system as a part of the institutional apparatus developed from the CBD. Yagé is a sacred plant for several ethnicities in the Amazon basin, among them the Cofán ethnicity. Yagé has been used for centuries to connect with ancestors and with non-human entities to order the world. However, yagé was patented in 1986 by Loren Miller of the International Medicine Corporation (United States Patent and Trademark Office - USPTO No.5752/1986) based on an argument that he discovered a new variety of the plant (Banisteriopsis caapi C.V. Da Vine), which he collected from Ecuador, and he attributed medicinal properties to it. After getting the patent, Miller gained rights to the use of this plant.

Communities were informed about this fact only in 1996 and, under the Coordinating Group of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon Basin (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica – COICA), they started a battle against bio-piracy with the aid of the international
community, and some traditional authorities like the *taita*. Querubín Queta, a Cofán, had to travel from the Amazon jungle in Putumayo Department to the US to defend the indigenous ownership of the plant, and finally, in 1999 the USPTO revoked the patent, paradoxically not under the argument of defending traditional knowledge but because that variety of *yagé* had already been described in 1931 as *Banisteriopsis caapi* (Spruce ex. Griseb.) by C.V. Morton, and therefore could not be patented.

In discussing this case and others, Ragavan (2002, p.32) points out that “[t]he CBD does not have a mechanism to deal with circumstances in which the resources have been obtained by misrepresentation or by the communication of inadequate information”. A Cofán indigenous person expressing his dissatisfaction with traditional knowledge being stolen by the “whites” highlights differences in approaches to nature, and specifically to *yagé*:

“Look, this is what I want, here we’re going to talk about the plant, even our plant maybe; why do you think we might not want so much research?; what’s the reason?; because now we’re beginning to understand what’s happening, our medicinal plants will start being trafficked, and then we’re the ones who absolutely suffer, so that’s why we don’t allow big research projects, why?, I’m talking about my plant *yagé*, some time ago it was patented in US, Taita Querubín had to help, well he had to sit and talk with them, we don’t agree, like our own *curacas* [elder or chief], the important ones, we didn’t let them continue with the patents, that plant is unique, that’s why for us that plant is very sacred, that unique plant was given to us by God, father God and blessed mother have given that plant to the Cofanes only, that plant is truly for the Cofanes, for our work, to always be like a link to him, we carry that plant, that plant for us is like a career of study, from kindergarten all the way to the end, like the study you’re doing right now for the doctorate, and that’s exactly the level of this, that’s why, we as Cofanes don’t allow them to patent there, and in the end it’s what they’re doing with what God has given to us, that’s why”. (Interviewee VII, Cofán, Putumayo, 12 September 2014)

“Green” projects for environmental conservation (e.g. biofuels and ecotourism) emerged as a response to the new relationship with nature after the 1990s; and the creation of conservation spaces without people have increased throughout the country (Ojeda, 2012). Ojeda presents an example of how policies promoting sustainable management of natural resources under neoliberal conservation strategies like ecotourism have led to marginalization for local communities through privatization and
dispossession in the Tayrona Colombian National Natural Park. Conflicts also result among local community members as they are being classified superficially according to their allegedly commitment to the protection of nature. People who adopt discourses and practices emerging since neoliberal conservation are assumed to be “friends-to-nature”, and they are able to continue living in their territory, whereas people who do not accept these practices are considered as “not-green-enough subjects” that have to be displaced as a way of decreasing threats to biological conservation in the area (Ojeda, 2012).

Another related example is the case of the Medicinal Plants Orito Ingi-Andé Flora Sanctuary created in 2007 in Putumayo. The Sanctuary was created for protecting a unique area where two biogeographical regions converge -the Amazon and the Andes-, and Cofán culture is affected because their sacred and medicinal plants are disappearing due to accelerated economic transformation5. Consequently, despite Cofán communities controlling their collective territories or resguardos, they have not been able to guarantee their complete autonomy and control of the land.

Over decades, Cofanes have faced the internal Colombian war, aerial fumigation with herbicides, logging and hunting by foreigners, oil extraction, and the colonization of their territories by “whites”. Some of these processes persist today. The State is complicit in prioritising the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, but safeguards for indigenous territories and their attendant social practices have not enjoyed the same degree of protection. As a result, Cofán communities must survive in this compromised situation. This results in the emergence of new practices, as they become active in the creation and care of their sanctuary, and this transforms their relationship and interaction with nature. They have realized that this is the only way they can protect yagé, alongside other medicinal plants. In the words of one Cofán indigenous person:

“… look, our medicinal plants are (sic) in the land, in the trees, in the fauna and in the flora, all that [wisdom], survival [is in] our medicinal plants, it’s there, all of it, alive, but only when the mountain is untouched, but there aren’t any left on a spoiled mountain, that sort of medicine

5 http://www.parquesnacionales.gov.co/portal/parques-nacionales/santuario-de-flora-plantas-medicinales-orito-ingi-ande
isn’t there anymore, there are some because they are mysterious, there is one that grows, but another one doesn’t, then that’s why that area that we have is a special area, totally special, like how we have our resguardito, everything there, and that is why we are not [like] another person, as I repeat again, we are not like other people, [for whom] land is to be built on, well, everything, to cut everything down, only for product, [but] it is not that, we preserve ourselves because of her, we live from Mother Nature”. (Interviewee VII, Cofán, Putumayo, 12 September 2014)

The commodification of nature through assigning it a metric of economic value is a clear result of neoliberal, market-led economic policy. These neoliberal tools are gaining acceptance in framing conservation strategies. Some international banks and conservation multinational organizations (e.g. the World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy) support this process (Fürst, 2008; Pengue, 2008). Environmental conservation and also the mitigation of pollution in Colombia is beginning to use “polluter pays” economic arguments; the optimal allocation of tradable pollution rights through the internalization of externalities by those agents that contaminate the environment (e.g. Pigovian taxes), and payments to those that conserve (Pengue, 2008). Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is now supported by a $4 million United Nations fund in Colombia.

5.8 Final considerations

During the 1990s Colombian ethnicities continued to encounter the modern penetration of export and trade economies, reifying the commodification of human and non-human domains. This was exacerbated through the economic, social, and environmental policies discussed. Relations with nature are being reworked, and new ways of operating and experiencing nature have evolved as hybridized practices. The adoption of the neoliberal globalized project, via the Washington Consensus, has allowed the antagonistic diffusion of an alien, if modern fashion of signifying the world, based on policies promoting free markets and state deregulation. The war on drugs has reinforced aggressiveness, even employing physical violence and forcing displacement; and biodiversity policies have brought about the commodification of nature.

Through these policies the neoliberal globalized project has conditioned the role of Colombia in the "global economic village", and in doing so, local/traditional communities have had to hybridize their social practices, often unwillingly. Corva (2008) points out that the sovereignty of state powers has
been reconfigured in the interest of a transnational capitalist order. The process has involved the coercive exclusion of marginalized subjects and spaces within and between nation-states; and led to the militarization of domestic police functions, increasingly mobilized against rural and urban underclasses.

Following Castree (2010), the re-regulation of nature has occurred. It has included privatization, a transformation into property, and the marketing of nature. The translation of nature into resources, goods, and services is possible when nature becomes tradable in markets, as in the case of dams, oil extraction, and mining projects. This has impacts on local/traditional communities’ territories. Further, when property rights are assigned to elements of nature, communities have to defend their own ancestral knowledge and culture, as with the yagé conflict.

“State roll-back or deregulation”, and “friendly-market re-regulation” have also led to hybridizations, as the state has lost some of its regulatory obligations for the control and management of environmental impacts and fair trading relationships. Some communities have had to defend themselves from the destruction of the geographical spaces they inhabit. The state has even blamed socio-environmental impact assessments conducted prior to new projects as obstacles to development (see the document Conpes 3762 “Policy guidelines for the development of national interest and strategic projects” [Lineamientos de política para el desarrollo de proyectos de interés nacional y estratégicos – PINES] in 2013) (CONPES, 2013).

These processes of re-regulation and community hybridization are mirrored in local discourses, as our interviews demonstrate. Respondents expressed their disquiet with the manner in which their territories and livelihoods have been affected, and how they have then had to adopt modern and neoliberal practices to sustain some measure of cultural connection.

Nonetheless, as part of this, local groups have learned to communicate their demands in both national and transnational political arenas, and now use modern media to enlist supporters for their claims. “Non-human sentient entities” (e.g. water, mountains) have become political actors in defending other meanings of nature (Escobar, 2010). Bottom-up processes developed at local scales are producing social-environmental networks, although these are often disconnected and

In economic terms these demands, paradoxically, have been enabled by another outcome of neoliberalizing nature (Castree, 2010:10), the “strong encouragement of ‘flanking mechanisms’ in civil society”. A moral economy based on collective ideas of sharing and mutual aid still exists in Latin America, and if anything, is growing (Burke, 2012; Bacon, 2013, Castree, 2010), even in post-conflict situations (De Bremond, 2013). Struggles by local and traditional communities with collective social practices and strong attachments to place have gained support from different members of society, even those that are geographically distant.

Modernity itself may be questioned in the future, in part through this interest in indigenous knowledge and culture (Giddens, 1990). It is quite possible that neoliberal policymaking underestimates traditional social practices, perhaps because they are not the result of objective knowledge as understood through Western research (Escobar, 2005, 2010; Giddens, 1990). There has been a renewed effort to promote seeing, knowing, and empowering the world in ways that are privileged above other subaltern worlds (Escobar, 2005). Recent meetings of experts on traditional communities have acknowledged that the current cultural homogenization that has taken place as a result of globalization constitutes a threat to their survival (MINCULTURA & OAS, 2008; UNESCO, 2003). Nonetheless, Colombian indigenous peoples are at high risk of cultural and physical extinction. Also, those indigenous peoples who decide not to have contact with dominant and modern society (those living in voluntary isolation) require additional protection from the state.

5.9 Conclusion

Local/traditional communities’ discourses of nature, and in particular, those of indigenous communities have had to hybridize with those from outside in order to resist aspects of modernity, a trend that has been exacerbated by neoliberal globalization from the 1990s. The degree of cultural hybridization is ambivalent, and responds to the interpretation that each community has of those forces emanating from “outside”.

However, the real opportunities that Colombian local/traditional communities have in choosing their degree of participation in the neoliberal globalized project have been diminished greatly due to
historical losses of territories, to mechanisms of economic and cultural subordination imposed on their communities, and to the internal war that is most active and violent in the remote spaces that many of them inhabit. This creates an innate disadvantage at the moment of “negotiating” social practices and discourses as old-new cycles of hybridization are produced.

Since the 1990s local and traditional communities across Latin America have experienced the intensification of a modern ontology through neoliberal and globalized policymaking. This fact constitutes a modern colonization, which has led to the cultural and epistemological repression of culture, the transformation of their territories, and the loss of respect for their knowledge.

‘[As] in the daily life of any human being, one ask[s] oneself: Are there white people who prefer the American Indian only when ready for photos? Some Native Americans prefer to ‘feather themselves’ to profit from the stereotype expected by white people? Do we also judge and condemn those who do not ‘feather themselves’ because ‘Indians are whitening themselves’? Is all of this seen from afar as if those Indians have a history that does not touch our lives? In other words: Can Native Americans not break the stereotypes? What practices, disciplines, or ways of life are characteristic of Native Americans? Of whites? Of [blonds]? Of yellow peoples? Of blacks? What is there to listen to? What is there to eat? How must we feel? Where must we go? Where should we live? How should we be?’

(artist from Inga ethnicity, in Jacanamijoy (2013))

6.1 Introduction to this Chapter/paper

The aim of this chapter/paper is to analyse at a local scale the hybridizations of nature that have taken place in indigenous discourses when communities construct and re-construct territory and how, based on these constructions, their contestation of neoliberal practiced, varies. This is the case of Pijao ethnicity. In conducting interviews, I noticed that for the Pijao, political identity largely shapes their constructions of territory. In this reading, some individuals belonging to Pijao ethnicity self-identify as indigenous, some as campesinos, some as campesinos-mestizos and some as indigenous-campesinos. This self-identification influences their explanations of ‘the defended’, and their relationship to territory, when contesting neo-liberalization. Similarly, ‘nature’ is sometimes separated of culture, following modern ontology (i.e. western scientific ways of knowing); and sometimes it is part of culture following relational ontologies. I explore chapter/paper 6 in relation to the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology according to Fairclough (2010) in Figure 6.
**Stage 2. Identify the obstacles to addressing the social wrong**

Step 1 of stage 2 explored the dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements. The order of discourses of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ when implemented through the enactment of policies and their materializing in territories, relates dialectically with other semiotic and extra-semiotic elements. In this chapter/paper, I explore specific texts of policies and their operationalization in extra-semiotic elements like natural resource extraction projects, as well as the texts regarding Pijao individuals’ interviewed. The Pijao interviews provide insight regarding different aspects of the impact of such policies on their society-culture and territory, and also about identity, territory, and ‘nature’ constructions.

- **Step 2. Selection of texts**

I explore discourses and policies related to Colombian ethnic/class categorizations, land entitlement, and multiculturalism since colonial times until today. Also, semi-structured interviews conducted with Pijao indigenous individuals and communities provide the texts selected for the analysis.

- **Step 3. Inter-discursive analysis of texts**

I analyse indigenous discourses, moving constantly between text and context, synchronically and diachronically.

**Stage 3. Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong**

In this chapter/paper I show how the 1990s have incrementally induced and reinforced the ‘social wrong’, bringing multiple disadvantages into localities. Social wrongs have been contested in terms of cultural and territorial defence, with particular focus on the role of identity in indigenous responses to the neoliberal globalized modern world, i.e. style’s negotiations. In here, it is possible to trace the re-contextualization of indigenous discourses according to their semiotic negotiation with other discourses of the state. The latter in turn respond to orders of discourse regarding ‘neo-liberalization’ and ‘globalization’ which in turn reflect the powerful ideologies of modern understanding of being in the world. The re-scaling of ideologies from global to national enactments demonstrates the powerful structures and dynamic diffusion of these networks of orders of discourse.

Re-contextualization indicates the power of discourses and genres of the neoliberal globalized modern narratives, and also the imposition of styles on indigenous individuals. In this chapter/paper I point to the constant negotiations between state categorizations, i.e. styles embedded in state discourses, which are communicated across semiotic (e.g. policies, newspapers) and extra-semiotic (e.g. social discrimination) elements, and internal self-recognition by indigenous persons and groups, i.e. the re-contextualization of styles under subordinate positions, given the socio-economic marginalization of these peoples since colonization.
Stage 4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles

Pijao communities have been disadvantaged historically by state discourses; however, they have empowered themselves through the re-contextualization of discourses, in order to get socio-economic benefits according to the immediate possibilities. This is evident in their real defence of territory, ‘nature’, and culture, through mobilization and organization in rural and urban places (i.e. extra-semiotic means), reifying their indigenous inheritance and claiming for recognition of rights, cultural and territorial autonomy (semiotic means). This analysis demonstrates the constant negotiations of genres, discourses and styles according to the texts (i.e. interviews) analysed.

Empowerment does not necessarily mean ‘victory’ in their struggles, but is part of the contestation and resistance to dominant neoliberal discourses. Semiotically, empowerment is evident in the re-contextualization of their discourses, in new ways of genre interaction, and in the constant reinforcement of styles by social agents in response to powerful ideologies of the orders of discourses brought about by the neoliberal globalized modern world.

6.2 Abstract

Rationales for ethnic identification are crucial drivers in the social construction of territory and its subsequent defence. Pijao people are interesting in this regard, as their identification with territory varies according to how they signify their collective identity, building it on indigeneity and/or class. This flexibility influences territorial defence. We analyse how external categorizations led by Colombian policies have shifted the internal political identification of Pijao communities as indigenous and/or campesino-mestizo. We also discuss how the Pijao constructions of territory have been re-constructed based on access to or alienation from land. Finally, we show how neoliberal policies are re-configuring the social construction of territory by these communities. Territory may encompass material and spiritual dimensions of ‘nature’ as a part of their relational worldviews, or could be a physical dimension which gives opportunities for livelihoods in a capitalist contemporary understanding of being. This depends of their rationales for ethnic identification. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in several Pijao communities in Tolima department; and with displaced members in Bogotá DC.

6.3 Introduction

According to the 2005 Census, Colombia hosts 87 indigenous ethnicities, 3.43% of the population (DANE, 2010). After the political constitution of 1991 that defined the nation as ‘multicultural’, indigenous ethnicities were statistically more visible. But since this time there have been many
threats to indigenous cultural and territorial autonomy, particularly linked to neoliberal natural resources extraction projects implemented in areas portrayed as ‘remote’ or ‘under-developed’.

Neo-liberalization rolled back the Colombian state (Williamson, 1990), but also connected indigenous community territories to the global market-led economy. This may be read in at least two ways. Firstly, as Castree (2010:10) points out ‘[neo-liberalization] is necessarily a state-led project’, and government institutions manage to encourage ‘privatization’, ‘marketization’, ‘deregulation’, and ‘market-friendly reregulation’. Secondly, the multicultural labelling has facilitated an increase in contact between the private sector and/or government institutions with indigenous communities. Indigenous communities have to register their identity and any claims with the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs (CMIA), which renders them visible for several purposes, including demands for access to their territories.

These demands are part of a clash of values. Indigenous communities are changing the way they understand and appropriate the world, as their ‘relational worldviews’ of nature are altered to defend their autonomy against neoliberal projects like mining and agribusiness (A. Escobar, 2010, 2012). Of course, territories have been the site of shifting meanings since Spanish colonization; but contemporary shifts in ethnic identification are important for the moments when neoliberal policies and ancestral territories meet. A heightened sense of ethnic identity can translate greater resistance and struggle.

In this article we focus on one ethnicity, Pijao, and show how its communities modify their ethnic identification strategically, claiming indigenous heritage or campesino-mestizo identity at different times. Pijao territory is socially constructed, shifting according to their relations with other groups, and the nature of threats to livelihood and identity. Many of these threats are about access to and control over land. Finally, we show how neoliberal policies are (re) configuring the social construction and practice of territory by these communities, contrasting this with individual animist constructions of nature, which appear less affected.

After setting out our methodology and theoretical approach, we review the essential elements of Pijao ethnicity. Then we explain the external categorizations that have been given to indigenous peoples during the Colony, Republic, and post-Political Constitution of 1991 periods as ‘Indians’, campesinos-
mestizos, and/or indigenous, and the land rights associated to those categorizations. Pijaos have contested those categorizations, and therefore negotiated ethnic/class boundaries. Variant constructions of identity, territory and ‘nature’ characterise Pijao communities; the conclusion is that identity is constructed in part to fight and protect, not only to enable intergenerational continuity of their culture.

6.4 Methods and theory

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the first author in several parcialidades and resguardos of Pijao ethnicity in Tolima department (municipalities of Coyaima, Natagaima, El Espinal, Coello, Saldaña [Map 5]), and also in metropolitan Bogota in April and May 2014. Elders were interviewed as for their knowledge of collective memory. Cabildo members, i.e. political authorities, were elected with community approval, and secondly, because of their role as negotiators in the collective interest. We have anonymised people and community names, and used Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010).
Map 5. Municipalities appointed in this paper, Tolima Department

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
Barth’s ‘ethnic boundary’ (1969, 1994) is a useful way to understand the reification of ethnicity when groups encounter. At the same, Barth trivializes the ‘cultural stuff’ that visibly identifies an ethnic group, e.g. language and clothes. Jenkins (1997:14), however, does not wish to reify ‘ethnic boundaries’. In his view,

‘[N]either culture nor ethnicity is ‘something’ that people ‘have’, or, indeed, to which they ‘belong’. They are, rather, complex repertories which people experience, use, learn and ‘do’ in their daily lives, within which they construct an ongoing sense of themselves and an understanding of their fellows’.

Therefore, according to Jenkins, social identity is defined in daily life in a dialectical process where similarities and differences are negotiated, and ‘externalized in social interaction and internalized in personal self-identification’. Negotiations occur in embodied individuals, in the interaction with others, and in the institutionalization of identity (e.g. the ‘cultural stuff’).

Based on Jenkins (1997), we focus on two major negotiation processes implied in ethnic identification of Barth’s boundary: the internal ethnic self-identification by the individual and the group, and the external categorization of ethnicity. Identity self-identification is permanently defined in the encounter with the other, but negotiations also occur in contesting external categorization. In the Colombian case, external categorizations are led mainly by the state’s understanding on how-indigenous-people-should-be.

Therefore, in this study, we analyse the ethnic boundary negotiations carried out by the Pijao internally as a group, in the encounter with others, and in response to external categorizations, in order to understand what-it-is-to-be-Pijao nowadays from the voice of ethnicity members. This allows the analysis of ‘the defended’ when Pijaos are forced to defend their territories⁶.

⁶ Authors like Myriam Espinosa (2003) and Joanne Rappaport (2007) in studying other Colombian ethnicities refer to Mary Louise Pratt’s (2007) ‘contact zone’, a similar concept to Barth’s ‘ethnic boundary’. The ‘contact zone’ refers to “the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt, 2007:34).

We use Barth’s, and especially, Jenkins’ understanding of the processes of negotiation in the ‘ethnic
6.5 Pijao ethnicity

The Pijao ethnicity gathers descendants of several tribes belonging to the Karib family, who were grouped broadly under the Pijao Nation during the colonization period (Bernal, 2008; Cubillos, 1946). As by 2005, 58,810 people self-identify as Pijao, 4.2% of Colombia’s indigenous population. They are concentrated mostly in Tolima department (90.1%), Bogotá DC (4.5%), and Huila department (1.6%) (Map 2); 37.9% of the population lives in urban areas (MINCULTURA, 2010b). Nowadays, according to one interviewee, they comprise 220 communities and approximately 63,000 people (I, Natagaima, May-14; pers.comm., Aug-15).
According to Bernal (2008) and Cubillos (1946), the Pijaos’ original name was *pinaos* which meant ‘proud’. Spaniards found this word very similar to *pija*, synonym of ‘penis’; and they gave them this name because men went completely naked. Other shared characteristics included language, physical appearance, and anthropophagic practices. The most prominent cultural feature was their warlike
character, amply documented in the chronicles of early settlers (Bedoya, 1992; Bernal, 2008; Cubillos, 1946).

The Pijao ethnicity was the last Nation subjugated by the Spaniards in the territory known today as Colombia. Their final surrender, in 1608, was the result of betrayal, assimilation, slavery, genocide, and suicide. As a result, the ‘conquering’ of Pijao implied their almost complete physical destruction (Bernal, 2008; Cubillos, 1946). According to Cubillos (1946), the Natagaima and Coyaima Pijao tribes decided to befriend Spaniards at the beginning of the XVII century, becoming allies in fighting other Pijao. Therefore, these tribes and a few other smaller ones survived Spanish rule. A sustained warless rivalry with Spaniards remained after colonization. Since 1819, with the creation of the Republic, the state pursued acculturation, and included them into the class categorization of campesino-mestizo.

The descendants of the Pijao Nation nowadays perpetuate their old traditions to some extent. After the Political Constitution of 1991, many of them organized in communities seeking recognition before the CMIA. Their motivations for official recognition vary according to their interests, and more importantly by their self-identification in response to state categorizations.

6.6 Negotiating identities

During colonization, the Pijao hybridized their social practices with the Spaniards. During the Republic period (from 1820), they faced aggressive mestizaje policies. However, during 1930s with the creation of the indigenous movement in South Colombia (see below), and after the Political Constitution of 1991, some have mobilized for ethnic recognition. These stages have affected community organization, ethnic and class identification, and allowed the emergence of communities in urban areas. Thus, the internal identification of communities has greatly depended on state categorizations and the associated benefits, particularly to the opportunities for territorial autonomy and defense.

6.6.1 External categorizations

Spanish arrival in the territory today known as Colombia in the XVI century brought with it the new identity categorizations of ‘Indians’ and ‘black slaves’ in the imaginary of the encountered. Those categorizations reinforced the European idea of white supremacy over those American and African
non-whites (Suárez, 2005). Spaniards were portrayed as a superior ethnicity capable of ‘owning’ and deciding for others.

For the Spanish Crown, colonial societies were strictly organized by castes based on the proportion of Spanish blood, phenotype, and skin color (Telles & Flores, 2013). Pure-blooded Spaniards were the superior caste, followed by criollos (i.e. children of Spaniards born in America), and ‘Indians’ and ‘black slaves’ at the bottom. However, as Dueñas (2000) points out, as a result of the seduction and rape of indigenous women by the Spaniards, a new social categorization emerged in the colonial society, the mestizo (racial amalgamation [Stepan, 1991], mixed-blood [Wade, 1993], mixed-race [Telles & Flores, 2013]).

For several decades the mestizo were the most rejected category in society (Dueñas, 2000; Suárez, 2005). For indigenous groups, mestizaje meant the destruction of the social fabric, economic life, and autonomous organization, leading to physical abandonment of communities, thus a steady population decrease. The Catholic Church saw mestizos as the product of illegitimate unions and the colonial state did not include them at all in caste based categories. As mestizos belonged to no colonial institution, taxes were not payable and their socio-economic marginalization led to easy physical mobilization when they needed to deploy it (Dueñas, 2000).

By the mid XVI century, allegations of physical abuse of indigenous people in encomiendas (i.e. places where indigenous people worked for a Spaniard ‘owner’) were escalating. Therefore, the Crown enacted segregationist laws that lasted until the end of the colony, controlling indigenous groups in resguardos (i.e. indigenous communal titles). Colonial policies expressly forbade indigenous contact with other members of society, even whites or indios ladinos (i.e. assimilated Indians), but especially with the mestizo. Every resguardo was to be governed by a cabildo, a council elected by the community. This replaced traditional forms of organization. The governor was the ruler of the cabildo and was the only contact with outsiders. The Crown ensured their protection from slavery, payment of taxes, and surveillance. Indigenous communities gained collective land titles (Dueñas, 2000; Hristov, 2005; Molano, 2015; Morner, 1963; Rappaport, 1990).

The mestizo population kept growing so they were eventually incorporated into the caste system to control tax evasion. Mestizo included, among others, mulatos (i.e. children of blacks and Spaniards)
and zambos (i.e. children of Indians and blacks). Caste placement depended on ancestry and physical appearance. By the XVIII century, some ‘non-pure whites’ succeeded in the capitalist economic system which permitted social mobility, and social controls weakened (Dueñas, 2000; Suárez, 2005; Telles & Flores, 2013; Wade, 1993).

At the beginning of the XIX century, the white-Americans demanded the control of powerful institutions like universities, given that only whites-Europeans had that possibility (Wade, 1993). Tensions led to dispute territorial political control, and the white-Americans independency movement beat Europeans (Suárez, 2005). Despite white-Americans wanting a degree of self-governance but under Spanish dominion, independence from Spain was declared in 1819 (Pombo & Guerra, 1911). The newborn Republic abolished castes, but social stratification effectively maintained racial categorizations (Dueñas, 2000).

From 1819 to 1991, Colombians unified around mestizo identity –however aiming whitening, disowning cultural diversity- in the new nation (Viveros, 2000). In the first half of 20th century discourses associating modernity, progress, science, and whiteness were reproduced by Latin American elites themselves (Stepan, 1991). Also, citizenship and voting privileged white men land owners. Politics and discrimination were the basis of several civil wars and the beginning of the rejection of the categorization as Indian by people who did not conflict with it in the past (Espinosa, 2003; Suárez, 2005; Wade, 1993).

In 1991, cultural diversity was finally acknowledged in Colombia through the new political constitution. That recognition was the result of national and international pressures for the enactment of multiculturalism and associated rights. The participation of indigenous leaders in the constituent assembly and joining the International Labour Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (No.169/1989) created the required legal changes.

In regarding to indigenous territories, since the very beginning of the Republic, the liberals pursued the abolishment of resguardos under the idea of ‘freeing’ indigenous people and their incorporation into the capitalist system (Law 1/1821). However, the dissolution of resguardos could not occur across the whole country. Some Nasa ethnicity resguardos in Cauca province, for example, pursued different land tenure arrangements. Nevertheless, in most cases, the Republic took back collective
lands, individualized and sold them, and some indigenous people became *terrajeros*, i.e. *campesinos* working in *haciendas*, forced to pay for subsistence and lodging through labor (Hristov, 2005; Molano, 2015; Rappaport, 1990; van de Sandt, 2007).

However in 1889, the conservatives issued the Law 89, ‘by which it is determined how the savages who are embracing the civilized life must be governed’ [own translation]. The Law aimed to regulate the uncontrolled selling of *resguardos*, nonetheless, their entire dissolution should occur in 50 years time. The Law acknowledged the colonial organization of indigenous communities in *cabildos* in order to facilitate land division; also, stated that *resguardos* were inalienable, imprescriptible, and unseizable collective properties. The Law was systematically flouted by local governments though (Gros, 1991), but also, the few indigenous communities which still held titles defended actively their right to collective lands based on Law 89 (see next section). The enactment of contradictory policies regarding indigenous lands during the Republic mirrors the opposing political administrations of the time, characterized by constant two-party (liberal and conservative) clashes. Law 89, nevertheless, is in force till today.

The Political Constitution of 1991 follows Law 89 in determining *resguardos* and indigenous community organization. Therefore, from 1991 *resguardos* are autonomous territorial entities, and communities (either holding collective titles or not) have to elect yearly their *cabildos* and register them with the CMIA in order to gain official recognition and socioeconomic benefits. Any recognized indigenous community is called *parcialidad*, and *resguardo* constitutes the collective land of that *parcialidad*. In practice, for indigenous communities, they constitute a *resguardo* if they hold collective land titles and *parcialidad* if not.

Since the Political Constitution of 1991, therefore, there has been a new external state categorization of indigeneity. It is advantageous for communities to receive this status. Status is assessed officially by the CMIA. They look for a common story and worldview held by a group, cohesion, attachment to territory, traditional medicine, kinship patterns, and a distinctive regulatory system. The ambiguity in these parameters has led to multiple demands before the Constitutional Court, which has been the arbiter of indigenous legislation after the 1991PC. As a result, the Court has handed down several judgments emphasizing that the subjective element of self-determination as an ethnic and culturally
diverse community must prevail over objective criteria. Also, the Court points out that registration before the CMIA cannot be the only instrument for ethnic recognition.

Given these historical and contemporary complexities over ethnic identity and indigenous status (all of which have implications for land and property), we now try to link them to ethnic identity negotiations in the communities interviewed.

6.6.2 The Pijao response to external categorization

In Southwest Colombia, the departments of Cauca, Nariño and Tolima host the most significant indigenous resistance movements that have operated since the birth of the Republic. Some of them boosted the recognition of Colombia as multicultural, in 1991. As a result, active resistance has shaped some Pijao communities’ identification in Tolima. In this case, the Pijao portray their struggle as timeless and with strong attachments to territory. On the other hand, some communities have taken advantage of their geographical position, asserting their ethnicity to gain some benefits from the state, taking into account that their class-based claims as campesino-mestizo are no longer heard. Between these two very different rationales there is a motley amalgam of ethnogenesis, which in turn define territorial defence. I sub-divide the analysis in terms of rationales for organization and identity construction, for the former I group communities per municipalities in order to facilitate the analysis.

6.6.2.1 Rationales for organization

Natagaima and Coyaima municipalities

As described earlier, the Pijao Nation was in mostly South Tolima, and since colonial times the vast majority of communities have been in Natagaima and Coyaima municipalities. Some of these communities were involved at the beginning of the XX century in the first indigenous movement that contested Republic policies to gain rights for cultural and territorial autonomy, known as La Quintiada, it lasted from 1912 to 1925, led by Manuel Quintín Lame (1880/83–1967), an indigenous man from the Nasa ethnicity, in Cauca department (Map 2). La Quintiada was active in Tolima as early as 1914 (Ilich, 2013; van de Sandt, 2007); then, after 1925 when Quintín Lame was displaced from Cauca department due to defamation campaigns during his last imprisonment in the frame of La Quintiada, he moved to Tolima where he lived his last 40 years, leading what some have called El Lamismo (Espinosa, 2003). He is remembered in Tolima today.
Manuel Quintín Lame was a literate man who used a poetic, prophetic and legalist discourse. He took advantage of the legal culture at the time where indigenous people and landless campesinos found in Law a hope to gain some land entitlements, given that Colombia was shifting its economic specialization from mining towards agro-exports, and access to land was the core issue. Policies at the time endorsed the dissolution of resguardos and the colonization of baldíos (i.e. unworked land) in order to incorporate them into the capitalist market, meanwhile, hacenderos (i.e. big landowners) were privileged with the most productive land and indigenous and campesino communities were displaced to less productive areas or had to work under terraje system (K. Escobar, 2013; Lemaitre, 2013a; Villaseñor III, 2014). Interviews reify the dispossession of land and poor labour conditions under which they were subjected due to those policies in Coyaima and Natagaima.

But also, Law89/1890 was in force. This was Lame’s legal tool. Resguardos had to be acknowledged in order to be abolished. The cabildo in every community had to facilitate collective land division, and allocation of individual plots. The Law also stated that if someone owned a resguardo title, and had been dispossessed in a violent or wilful way, that person/community could sue for repossession and gain land entitlement. Manuel Quintín Lame promoted the searching of colonial resguardo entitlements, and the subsequent recovery of the lands they owned in colonial times that had been divested during the Republic (Gros, 1991; Lemaitre, 2013b).

Manuel Quintín Lame’s proposal also involved education for indigenous peoples. In his words ‘nothing enslaves more than ignorance, nothing discourages more than misery’ (Lame, 2013 [1916]-b). Multiple press releases and official correspondence spread information about the movement (Lemaitre, 2013a). On the ground, several riots took place. Terrajeros stopped working for hacenderos, and some ancestral territories occupied by haciendas were ‘recovered’ by force (Ilich, 2013). Violent repression took place (Espinosa, 2003; Lemaitre, 2013a).

Religion and citizenship were the basis of the political constitution of 1886. Then, Manuel Quintín Lame recognized Catholic religion as the highest authority and pointed out that the defence of the ‘yellow race’ (i.e. indigenous people) contributed to citizenship (Lame, 2013 [1916]-a, 2013 [1922]). Notwithstanding his effort in aligning his discourse with the aims of the Republic, Manuel Quintín Lame was labelled as a threat to the state. For the first time, a literate indigenous person had rich knowledge on Law, non-indigenous followers, and the capacity to mobilize an inter-ethnic and inter-
departmental movement in South Colombia (K. Escobar, 2013; Lemaitre, 2013b; Villaseñor III, 2014). He challenged indigeneity as a pejorative term, as de la Cadena (2000:308) states for the case of Quispe in Peru in 1922, ‘[b]y maintaining Indian identity and being literate, Quispe [and Lame] represented a challenge to the dominant definition to Indianess’.

Confrontations with local and national governments led to his imprisonment several times, for seven years; a government strategy to usurp the power of the movement. Once released from prison for the last time in 1921, Manuel Quintín Lame was exiled from Cauca; he moved to Tolima where he became prominent among the Pijao, leading *El Lamismo* but with lesser influence at a national level than in the past. ) *La Quintiada* lasted until 1925 after persecution and smear campaigns against its leaders. For some, Lame’s failing was his blind belief in the white legislature (Benavides, 2009; Rappaport, 1990; van de Sandt, 2007). Being in Tolima, he decided to modify his strategy of struggle from physical recovery of land to political actions and intellectual production. It was in those years when he decided to dictate to his secretaries the document entitled “Thoughts of an Indian educated at the Colombian jungles” (*Los pensamientos del indio que se educó en las selvas colombianas*), which became the flagship document of indigenous liberation among indigenous movements in southwest Colombia during the 1970s (see below) (Espinosa, 2003; Lemaitre, 2013a).

But also, during *La Quintiada*, an episode with important relevance to Pijao communities occurred in 1919. Manuel Quintín Lame was imprisoned, but the movement set up the Council of the Indies in Natagaima. Some *Parcialidades* of Cauca, Tolima, Valle del Cauca and Huila departments were involved (Map 2). Indigenous communities joined forces around Manuel Quintín Lame’s three points: recognition of *resguardo* territories, application of Law 89/1890, and acknowledgment of traditional authorities (Consejo, 2013 [1920]). The Council symbolically recognised the Great *resguardo* of Ortega-Chaparral that used to comprise a large portion of South Tolima (Molano, 2015; Vasco, 2008). Indigenous communities after *La Quintiada*, had to stop claiming for rights on land entitlement in terms of ethnic differentiation and rights as original owners of the land, and had to join claims as members of *campesino* class due to state repression, But, later on, in 1971, the Nasa and Guambiano ethnicities in Cauca department created the first official indigenous organization, the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC). CRIC was inspired by Manuel Quintín Lame’s ideas, and in particular his manuscript ‘Thoughts of an Indian...’, which was printed again in the 1970s and was...
circulated among indigenous communities (Espinosa, 2003). The council was founded in response to the lack of representation of indigenous concerns in left wing political parties, and unsuccessful class-based demands for agrarian reform. Leaders of campesino movements supported the establishment of the Council, which in turn led to the government repression of class-based struggles (Benavides, 2009; van de Sandt, 2007; Villaseñor III, 2014). The movement relied on the assertion and legitimation given by the government through Law 89/1890 (Findji, 1992). But a difference with Lame’s proposal, the 1970s movement pursued the recovery of cabildos, understood as autonomous and independent of the state, not as the colonial cabildos which were a way to control indigenous population by the Crown. Cabildos would facilitate the political organization of the movement. In times of Lame, the main purpose was the abolition of terraje and the recognition of resguardo entitlements, not so much recognition of cabildos as he was not familiarized with them (Vasco, 2008). Importantly, the movement constituted an ‘indigenous awakening’ and a re-validation of ‘being indigenous’ (Laurent, 2007).

Later, in 1974, CRIC and other indigenous movements organized the first Indigenous Regional Meeting in Tolima (a sub-meeting in the frame of the first national meeting of campesinos), which led the creation of the Indigenous National Organization of Colombia (ONIC) in 1982 (Gros, 1991; Hristov, 2005; Ulloa, 2005).

At the 1974 meeting, the first departmental indigenous organization in Tolima was created, the Indigenous Regional Council of Tolima (CRIT). According to one interviewee, communities in Natagaima began to organize in cabildos and parcialidades in the 1970s, and to portray territorial claims from a more political basis. Afterwards, other organizations were founded based on political affiliations in Tolima⁷, and cabildos joined them. Some government officials also promoted the organization of communities in cabildos. Some testimonies we received pointed out the role of outsiders in the organization of cabildos (also found by van de Sandt [2007:85]), particularly Edgar Londoño, at the time an INCORA field officer (National Institute for Land Reform created in 1960), and after a CRIC leader (García & Caballero, 2012; Espinosa, 2003). Van de Sandt points out that during

⁷ Liberals: Indigenous Regional Association of Tolima (ARIT) and Indigenous Regional Council of Tolima (CRIT); Conservatives: Indigenous Regional Federation of Tolima (FICAT); Communists: Indigenous Cabildos Association of Tolima (ACIT) (I, Natagaima, May-14)
early 1970s ‘[t]hese INCORA officials had basically encouraged the tenant farmers to occupy the haciendas in order to reopen talks between the owner and INCORA’.

There have been physical threats to Nasa people and since the 1910s (e.g. leader assassinations, disappearances). As a response to constant repression, in 1978 a radical segment of the CRIC created the Armed Movement Quintín Lame (MAQL), which had only partial support from communities (Rappaport, 1990, 2005). MAQL aimed to protect recovered lands from big landowners, and resguardos from attack by illegal groups in Cauca. They tried to co-opt indigenous people into their movement rather than to any of the other six official and unofficial military forces in the area. MAQL was not an anti-state guerrilla movement. It made a public appearance in 1984 and was part of the peace process during Barco’s government (1986-1990), and finally demobilized in 1991 during Gaviria’s government (1990-1994).

Demobilisation allowed some CRIC members to be part of the constituent assembly that formulated Political Constitution of 1991, in which the three indigenous representatives (two elected and one demobilized MAQL) allied some other demobilized guerrilleros to support indigenous and black peoples, in what was called the ‘democratic block’ (Benavides, 2009; Findji, 1992; Ulloa, 2005; Villaseñor III, 2014). Indigenous claims for autonomy in the Constituent Assembly portrayed territory as a fundamental element for the practice of culture, as well as livelihood. Territorial advocacy therefore differentiates indigenous struggles from the ones led by campesinos that are more about rights for livelihoods (Findji, 1992; Troyan, 2008; van de Sandt, 2007).

Summarizing, the indigenous presence in Natagaima and Coyaima is considered as pre-colonial. The Pijao in these municipalities live in rural areas where parcialidades and resguardos are also located. Organization of cabildos in the area dates back to the 1940s, and the first parcialidades were organized during the 1970s as a result of struggles for territorial autonomy, and inspired by indigenous movements in Cauca department. Land claims in these municipalities are based on ethnic rather than class identifications. After the Political Constitution of 1991, most communities have registered before the CMIA to argue for recognition and awarding of resguardos. The following testimonies show the steady reference to struggle and resistance processes in the organization of communities in Coyaima and Natagaima,
‘[The cabildo] was formed in the midst of land recovery, of the struggles for all the social recognitions we were fighting for, health, education, our own culture, our own government, right? (...) in the beginning that was the premise, cultural claim of all communities, self-recognition as Pijao people, the strengthening of our identity, that was the biggest premise, we were fighting for autonomy, culture, identity and territory, for those four things’ (II, Coyaima, May-14).

‘All of a sudden we got organized as an indigenous community because we had a vision with relation to the other communities that had already been organized, we heard them (...) and they fought a lot (...); the objective, that when we were organized the state would give us land (...), so that the state would take us into consideration’ (VIII, Natagaima, May-14).

Another important driver for seeking national government recognition is to shelter the protection of territories under previous consultation mechanisms instituted in the Political Constitution of 1991 and Law 21/1991,

‘That is the major characteristic of us indigenous people, that we look for each other amongst families and we form groups (...), back in the year 2000 we had been working hard, and then in 2006 through a megaproject planned in the south, the Triángulo de Tolima, well they covered several communities and we were among them, and the Anthropologists from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (...) made a study and gave us a resolution, it’s like an identity card that the state gives us so that we can sort of defend ourselves because in the end we, the parcialidades, don’t get government transfers’ (X, Natagaima, May-14).

Coello municipality

This municipality comprises Pijao rural communities which were not influenced by indigenous resistance movements in Tolima. They asked for ethnic identification due to their geopolitical location,

‘The indigenous cabildo was established here in 1994. Back then I was working in the municipality’s Town Hall and the mayor told me ‘(...) why don’t you take advantage of that place called ‘El Indio’, you can form an indigenous cabildo and the government can help you with many things, the government can offer you more education, better health, better quality of life, and many of those types of things, the lands where you are now are already infertile,
they are not as productive as they used to be, so now you need better land to work and produce for your families and your future well-being’ (...) we became very interested and so I got together with the community and told them about the issue, people agreed, we said ‘if we are going to organize a cabildo, let’s ask for advice to an indigenous cabildo from south Tolima’ (XV, Coello, May-14).

**El Espinal and Saldaña municipalities**

This group of communities involves urban Pijao, but moving between rural and urban places. They are larger municipalities than Coyaima and Natagaima; closer to Ibague (Tolima’s capital city), and to Bogota (Map 1). These Pijao are re-forming their indigeneity. Some authors use the term ‘urban indigenous’, because they inhabit a space that is not associated with their historical origins (Bonilla 2011). They are mostly led by Pijao individuals originally from Coyaima or Natagaima, and were recognized by the government during the 2000s,

’We had been getting together, I mean personally I am of indigenous descent (...) because there were urgent needs we had to organize ourselves as an indigenous community in order to access several rights, we had to be legally constituted and grouped, as stated by several legal norms and Law 89 of 1890 which basically governs us as original peoples or native groups. (...) We carried out the due process for the constitution and recovering customs and habits (...) that gave us footing to obtain our national recognition by the Ministry’ (III, El Espinal, May-14).

**Bogota DC**

Some Pijao have settled in Bogota as a result of forced displacement due to the internal Colombian conflict. They cannot be considered as re-indigenizing their culture, yet they are aware of their status in the urban context,

’We are organizing ourselves because it brings us a lot of benefit, (...) in health, it benefits our children’s education (...), so that we do not lose the traditions of the Pijao people (...). I am in

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8 The Colombian internal war has continued in Tolima department since the onset of conflict. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - FARC were created in Planadas municipality (Tolima department, Map 1), during the 1950-60s. The first confrontation army – FARC, dates to 1964 (Molano, 2015)
Bogota because I was displaced from Chaparral (...), back then we were not organized and it wasn’t until I came here that I became organized (...) I moved in 2005’ (XX, Bogotá, May-14).

6.6.2.2 Identity construction

The Pijao political contestation to the state has been embodied in the organization of communities, mobilization, and recognition before the CMIA. The drivers for recognition are diverse, as explained above. In this section, we suggest that in this steady negotiation, community members have also de/re-constructed their identities as indigenous people and/or *campesinos-mestizos*. Ethnic/class ascription cannot be sub-divided by municipalities, as this is an individual-intimate process. Individuals from one community may differ in their approach to identity, having similarities with individuals from other communities.

Interviews show that since the Political Constitution of 1991, some individuals prefer to portray their indigeneity according to the government understandings of how indigenous-people-should-be, in order to validate their claims,

‘Well, the fact is that we, let’s say, have lost our language, but we have not lost our territory until now, but we are demanding recognition (...). We have not lost the skills of our grandparents, such as making crafts, soaps, clay pots, *balay*, *mochilas*, those things have not been taught to us by outsiders, that comes from knowledge of our grandparents’ (VI, Coyaima, May-14).

We argue that this constitutes a contemporary form of colonization. Other Pijao pointed out that although they accomplish the parameters posed by the CMIA, they do not limit their indigenousness to them,

‘In general all of Natagaima is indigenous, even if you see the deeds they say ‘the indigenous community grants space to the municipality’, so we were part of the Great *resguardo* [of Chaparral], so a lot of history has been planted in these territories, and beginning in 2008 the Ministry told us, ‘yes, you are Indians’ and it is not like that because we carry it in our blood from ancient time’ (X, Natagaima, May-14).
‘We are indigenous by birth, what happens is that many times we are told, civilization, right? Civilization is how many of our traditions, features, and indigenous cosmogony, have been taken away from us. Why? We go to the city, we wear a jacket, trousers, and we are part of civilization. We are indigenous wherever we are!’ (XIX, El Espinal, May-14).

Some testimonies show that for some Pijao, class identification as campesino-mestizo is preferred over an ethnic one. Recognition before the CMIA seems to be a political strategy that permits people to enjoy some socio-economic benefit,

‘Well there were many Indians here because we found all these ceramics, all of that, but we are not indigenous. We had heard a lot about indigenous people, but in the end we do not consider ourselves indigenous, [we are campesinos], plain and simple’ (XV, Coello, May-14).

Others reaffirm their indigeneity through contrast,

‘The campesino is that one who works out in big fields and who is finishing us indigenous people, because campesinos are those who have money in their pockets and who can get 20-30 hectares of land, cultivates them, and will dump some product that will affect us, and they pocket their money and we are left with illnesses, that is the campesino, we indigenous people are the ones who work in our small parcels, that is where we make our living to sustain our families’ (XIX, El Espinal, May-14).

Some talk of displacement,

‘I say I am indigenous because I consider myself to be so and blood left me here and I searched and searched and I am where I should be (...) (You mean to say that the fact that you were displaced has strengthened your identity as an indigenous person?) Yes, because we searched for each other, we attract ourselves, we see an indigenous person and we get closer, it’s the blood’ (XX, Bogota, May-14).

But, independently of these different drivers, most of the interviewees highlighted the 1990s as a crucial decade due to the benefits that became available for communities that mobilised. This poses a further question: can state categorizations of indigeneity bring about a real internal shift in the self-recognition of community members? This seems to be occurring to some degree, as contemporary
multiculturalism has created a favourable atmosphere to claim indigenous inheritance, even for those who thought it impossible in the past.

On the other hand, it is important to clarify that the individual self-recognition in terms of class or ethnicity is not only the result of state-led classification. The Pijao have mixed up their genetics with non-native Americans for centuries. Indeed, Ossa et al. (2015) analysed the genetics of some Pijao with other groups; they found 38.8% genetic admixture (32% European and 6.8% African). Social contexts in turn have also taken their part in genetic mixing, which was not always voluntary. In Tolima, sexual harassment of indigenous women was common, and has only diminished recently (VI, Coyaima, May-14).

Other powerful discourses like the one of mestizaje held by the church and local elites, questioned the legitimacy of indigenous claims for land. During the Republic they maintained that a piece of land was given by God to whoever works it, and there were no original owners (Anonymous, 2013 [1917]). Indigenous people were therefore ambivalent about how to implement land claims, the core of the struggle for both political identities, indigenous and campesino-mestizo. Colonial and Republic race/class/ethnic categorizations are still reproduced in Colombian society today. Indigenous and blacks have been portrayed as ‘primitive, dependent, uneducated, rural and inferior’ (Wade, 1993:19). All these factors have repercussions for Pijao individuals’ self-recognition.

Diachronic and synchronic analyses of Pijao organization and identity construction allow us to illustrate the complexity behind ethnic/class identification, organization and mobilization. However, interviewees highlighted land entitlement as the core element to pursue recognition. We argue that notwithstanding the benefits brought about by policies for ethnic recognition, the main reason why indigenous communities organize is that their historical socio-economic marginalization has acted as a catalyst for rekindling identification in what-it-is-to-be-Pijao, and that process cannot be decoupled from their territories. In this regard Hristov (2005:104) asserts that,

‘this kind of mobilizing strategy has long been practised by indigenous groups in Latin America, and used by them from colonial times onwards in their petitions to what they perceived as an impartial higher authority (such as the King of Spain and the President of the Republic)’.
As we have shown, there are intricacies to how Pijao resistance to neoliberal projects occurred. Post-1990s Colombian economic policy has been contested using different political mechanisms, and this implies group reconstructions of territories. Elements of nature are taking on political overtones, the new set of rights granted after 1990 has altered these. We now explain this with reference to neoliberalisation. Neoliberal discourses are the new external categorizers with which indigenous communities are negotiating their internal ethnic recognition in the Colombian social structure. As neo-liberalization a state-led project, the state remains active in inducing negotiations of identity.

6.7 Neo-liberalization, constructions of territories and ‘nature’

The 1990s were a moment of change in cultural policy. However, it was also a decade of drastic socio-economic changes in Colombian politics with the embracing of neoliberal economic models, with considerable impacts for indigenous peoples and their territories. There is an evident contradiction in the way economic and social policies have unfolded. On the one hand, the state recognises multiple ethnicities and allocates rights accordingly. On the other hand, it is supporting market-based neoliberal policies that will to attract foreign investment; and the resulting projects require land for agro-industry, mining, and other uses, and ‘underdeveloped’ indigenous territories are strongly affected.

It could be argued that this is another example of different arms of government working against each other and throwing up inevitable contradictions. However, van de Sandt (2007) points out that rather than being a contradiction, socio-economic policies during the 1990s were actually reflecting a widely held wish to decentralize the country and to adopt neoliberal economic ideals (see also Gros, 2012; Laurent, 2007). Hale (2005) refers to this as ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’.

For example, Pijao rights after the Political Constitution of 1991 include securing prior consultation when public and private agencies are interested in carrying out natural resource extraction projects in their territories. This implies that communities, and particularly cabildos, are consulted because of their CMIA registration. Indigenous communities now interact with multinationals without state mediation (Colchester, 2002). Communities in Coyaima and Natagaima were consulted for the construction of a dam, the Triángulo del Tolima, a state project. In Coello, the community was asked by multinationals for permission to drill for oil. Interviews we conducted displayed the negative impact
that these negotiations have had on cohesion and trust among community members. In Coello internal disputes over oil extraction led to some leaving the community.

Another example is the overcoming of socio-economic marginalization experienced over decades - even centuries. The state’s historic failure to provide basic welfare to communities has provided a catalyst. According to interviewees, electricity and water aqueducts were offered by the government to get community consent for the dam in Coyaima and Natagaima. These were significant concessions, although in reality the dam has supplied an irrigation district for agro-industrial exports and by 2014 electricity had not been provided. Similarly, in Coello, the multinational was building a lower-specification aqueduct in 2014, and there was assistance to a local school. In both cases, there was general confusion about the precise agreements made, since stakeholders meetings with leaders were private.

Sometimes, however, communities were not consulted. In these cases, there have been protests. For example, communities in El Espinal are part of a regional movement for the protection of paramo ecosystems in Cajamarca municipality (Map 1) threatened by the projected La Colosa open-pit goldmine. Communities have also raised their voice against the impact of pipelines transporting oil and gas across Natagaima.

Pijao also made reference to their discontent about international Free Trade Agreements, which considerably affect campesinos and indigenous livelihoods. Tolima is an agricultural region where the landscape has been transformed by agro-industrial monocultures, majorly of rice, as a result of agreements. Pijao interviewees in Saldaña and El Espinal emphasised the effects of international trade deals, in terms of jobs and food safety. But, the environmental impact of agrochemical use and the desiccation of wetlands to extend monocultures have galvanized resistance to agroindustries.

There are pervasive synergies between some of these neoliberal projects and Colombia’s paramilitary groups. As Hristov (2005:90) shows nationally, ‘peasants, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are being forcibly displaced from oil-rich areas through campaigns of terror and their accompanying massacres’. Among the Pijao in Coyaima and Natagaima, interviewees reported threats, murders, intimidation, physical displacement and other forms of violence led by paramilitary groups who support the establishment of the irrigation district, forcing consent from the communities.
And similarly, attacks on pipelines by guerrilla groups have been a way to sabotage foreign investment in Natagaima, impacting indigenous communities.

Despite these tough—and violent—contexts brought about by neoliberal policies, the Pijao have been active in expressing their dissatisfaction with post-1990s operationalization of projects in their territories. But their contesting to neo-liberalization as an ethnic group is much harder and less coherent than in prior periods. ‘Neoliberal multiculturalism’ has had a perverse effect on indigenous identity politics, and on struggles for land and rights. Shifting identities mean the Pijao perceive territorial threats and opportunities different today. The days when territorial defence was led by Indians, campesino-mestizo and indigenous-campesino communities working together to protect entitlements is now in the past. Therefore, neither Pijao communities as groups nor their members share exactly the same constructions and meanings of territory and ‘nature’ today.

Communities in Natagaima and Coyaima are mostly organized in resguardos and parcialidades located in their ancestral territories where they have a degree of autonomy. These Pijao signify their territories as lived spaces, where daily life is practiced, livelihoods constructed, and memory re-created. They stress that territory is a place of belonging, of historical resistance and empowerment, and of construction of collectivity, cohesion and indigeneity. Territory preserves historical memory and sacred sites. Water, forest, air, and other elements are interconnected, and therefore natural phenomena like climate variability and erosion depend on the harmony of such relations.

Elements of nature are portrayed as non-human political entities. Territory is also the physical place for growing food, and farming is permitted and governed by attributes of nature like the moon cycles. Also, animist perspectives have not been displaced by the politics of land struggles. They refer to Mother Earth, as the Mother-creator of everything, the source of life, the organizer, the ruler. We also heard this from some Pijao El Espinal. Also, communities in the three municipalities have shamans (Mohan descendants), who have a direct connection with Mother Earth, and they are respected for their advice on many issues. There is a strong reliance on medicinal plants, and a few people maintain their cosmogony and beliefs based on ancestral stories.

The construction of territory by the Pijao in Natagaima and Coyaima, in this reading, encompasses material and immaterial or spiritual dimensions of ‘nature’, which evidence their relational world-views.
where nature and culture are inseparable. Therefore, in their advocacy, these communities are defending territory as a cultural and socio-economic political entity who gave them the possibility to perpetuate their indigenous inheritance.

In El Espinal, the residents of parcialidades do not hold collective land titles, so political and environmental advocacy is necessary to gain non-indigenous support and local government attention, and in order to safeguard sacred sites and community cohesion. They are fighting on several fronts against pollution from the overuse of agrochemicals, mining activities, the desiccation of wetlands and urbanization. They need land for traditional crops and they advocate for attributes of landscape like the Magdalena River, important for fishing and providing soil nutrients. The material and immaterial dimensions of ‘nature’ are also constructed in their meanings of territory, however territory is abstract as, despite being inhabited, is a urban space shared with other non-indigenous, over which they do not have authonomy.

The Pijaos in Coello and Saldaña hold completely different meanings of territory and ‘nature’. Their organization follows socio-economic rationales; most of them prefer to portray themselves more as campesino-mestizo than indigenous. For many in Saldaña, territory is a place to be transformed in order to grow monocultures. For the Pijao in Coello, territorial advocacy is about extending their production away from their small parcels where the soil is already ‘tired’, but they are uninterested in monocultures. These communities share with others a reliance on medicinal plants, but territory and nature have less spiritual meaning. Rather these communities understand territory as a physical space inhabited, which provide them of livelihood. Elements of nature like water or trees are important as far as they provide sources for the growing of crops.

These cases reinforce the point that Pijao rationales to defend territory and access vary in the multicultural, but still unequal, political climate. There is a complexity to indigeneity, territorial defence, and constructions of ‘nature’ faces with modernity and neoliberal commercial projects. Territorial advocacy, rather than being homogeneous, is diverse. As it is the role of animism in the defence.

When communities use the law to assert their rights in this context, they become subject to regulations and compliance. Eventually the state can argue that as they are ‘protected’, and have differential rights, their reduction in numbers and potency is not the result of external pressures but is
somehow voluntary (Bonilla, 2011), in a democratic process that advantages some over others (Yashar, 2005).

Alienation of differential rights has led to ethnic identification for some Pijaos, and a strengthening of ethnic recognition for others. Therefore, the post-1990s contestation of ‘multicultural neoliberalism’ is an embracing, a negotiation, and a rejection of neo-liberalization; and their experience of their new position in the Colombian political structure assists them in framing what is central to territory, self, and collective identity.

6.8 Conclusions

Jenkins’ invitation to ‘rethink ethnicity’ helps us to contest the taken for granted homogeneity of Colombian indigenous ethnicities (Jenkins [1997], see also Hristov [2005]). We have shown that the Colombian government interpretation of ‘how-indigenous-people-should-be’ depends on cultural liberal ideals that brand indigenous communities as ‘national minorities’ to be defined by a superficial association with ancestral, rural and traditional territories and the social practice therein. However, paraphrasing (Jenkins, 1997:46), Pijaos’ internal identification is not the only driver for ethnic identity formation. The mobilization of Pijaos’ self-recognition as Indians, campesinos (indigenous-campesinos, campesinos-mestizos), and/or indigenous throughout Colombian history, also has occurred because they have not always been in a position to choose who they are or what their identity means in terms of its social consequences. The state’s external categorization has been an important contributor to identity formation.

The neo-liberalization of Colombia during the 1990s has meant further negotiations by Pijaos as individuals, as communities, and as an ethnic group, but in different ways. The rationale for ethnic identification in each community is quite specific; however, the defence of autonomous territories gained with the Political Constitution of 1991 is a new driver. Identity and collectivity have been reconstructed with post-1990s ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’. This highlights the blurred and ambiguous character of the Pijao identity boundaries, constructions of territory, and meanings of ‘nature’ faced with.
CHAPTER/PAPER 7. THE CASE OF COFÁN AND MUISCA-CHIBCHA ETHNICITIES (COLOMBIA): MEMORY, BLOOD, THINKING, ANGUISH AND RESISTANCE

7.1 Introduction to the chapter/paper

The Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha communities approached in this study share a broader consensus on their constructions of territory in discourses. Territory encompasses material and immaterial dimensions of ‘nature’, where the last ones constitute the main drivers of mobilization against neoliberal globalized practicing. In conducting interviews I noticed that based on their beliefs and very well coordinated networks of legal support, they have gained several struggles for territorial defence as well as they have been very active in civil movements for socio-environmental justice.

Despite the contrasting contexts where Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha live, the defence of territories share its basis. Both ethnicities have adopted the legal jargon brought about by multicultural and economic policies, and structure discourses in forms that the defence of beliefs is also active despite the constant use of modern elements.

In this chapter/paper I analyse the hybridization of discourses that have taken place in indigenous individuals and communities, tracing defence of territories in very specific circumstances related to natural resource extraction projects emerging as part of neo-liberalization. I propose the term ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ to the strategies of hybridizing discourses in order to defend animist practices. I present five successful cases of Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha defence of territories grouped in strategies regarding previous consultation mechanisms, ‘writ of protection’ actions, creation of natural parks, and participation in collective action.

Finally, it is important to highlight that as in the case of the Pijao, Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha discourses of territory have been somewhat politicized while the immaterial dimensions ‘nature’ in discourses are more intimate and spiritual. I explore chapter/paper 7 in relation to the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology according to Fairclough (2010) in Figure 7.
Stage 2. Identify the obstacles to addressing the social wrong

Step 1 of stage 2 explored the dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements. As I introduced this in the chapters 3 and 4, the orders of discourses of the ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’ relate dialectically with the texts produced by indigenous interviewees and policies, in semiotic and extra-semiotic ways. In this chapter/paper, I explore specific policies related to multiculturalism and the tools provided by them, and the negotiation of indigenous communities practices when using those tools to protect their territorial and cultural autonomies, and their views of ‘nature’ based on animism. Negotiation takes place when natural resource extraction projects are carried out in interviewees’ territories.

- Step 2. Selection of texts

I explore policies related to multiculturalism, and different historical state enactments that have impacted the territories and social practices of Cofán communities since the 1970s and Muisca-Chibcha communities since the XVI century. I focus particularly on the policies of the post-1990s Washington Consensus. Also, I analyse semi-structured interviews conducted with Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha indigenous individuals and communities in this study.

- Step 3. Inter-discursive analysis of texts

I conduct the inter-discursive analysis of texts and contexts

Stage 3. Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong

In this chapter/paper I show how the 1990s have incrementally induced ‘social wrongs’, bringing multiple disadvantages into localities. Social wrongs have been contested in terms of cultural and territorial defence, with particular focus on the role of animism and resistance in indigenous strategies to contest the neoliberal globalized modern world. Inter-discursive analysis allows the understanding of re-contextualization of discourses and the genres and styles associated as a result, for example, when the territorial defence by indigenous communities has implied the enactment of discourses in different spaces portraying elements of nature as non-sentient political entities.

Stage 4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles

Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha individuals and communities have created ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ or in CDA jargon what can be named ‘inventive semiotic re-contextualization strategies’ which allow them to contest and resist neo-liberalization in their territories. The strategies introduced in this chapter/paper have been ‘successful’, however the orders of discourses brought about by the neoliberal globalized modern world imply a constant threat to worldviews or ontologies ‘outside’
7.2 Abstract

Modern hybridity in indigenous actions and beliefs is intended to safeguard spirituality. Hybrid spaces have emerged through interaction between indigenous desires for territorial autonomy and the modern political and legal mechanisms available. We compare two indigenous ethnicities in Colombia, the Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha. They have different land entitlements and social organization. We describe the animist beliefs that underlie the attachment of both groups to territory, and analyse to what extent territorial transformation has impacted social practices from the perspective of animist life-worlds. Then we explore the contestation mechanisms employed by communities to protect their animist beliefs, particularly after the major changes in Colombian governance since the 1990s. Finally, we assess the extent to which their defence of culture has been successful. We conclude that despite the multiple disadvantages that post-1990s policies have brought to indigenous territories, the communities have been empowered, responding through hybrid inventive advocacy, challenging modernity when possible.

7.3 Introduction

Spiritual ecology is the study of the behaviour that religions and beliefs induce in the way their practitioners approach nature (Sponsel 2010, Palmer 2015). Animism constitutes a variety of beliefs practised by most indigenous peoples (but not confined to them) in which humans, nature, and the supernatural are perceived as interrelated and interdependent (Sponsel, 2010, 2012). Animist knowledge contrasts with the objectivist knowledge of modern epistemologies which understand humans as set apart from—and superior to—their natural environment (Bird-David, 1999). Natural resource extraction projects generally reflect a modern epistemology, where nature is a source for human wellbeing with little meaning beyond its use value. Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha ethnicities in Colombia, on the contrary, relate to nature according to their animist beliefs in ‘spaces forged in the margins of modernity’s binary oppositions of self-other, nature-culture and future-past’ (Larsen 2006: 311). Their beliefs and culture, and how they have shifted over time and with changes to the status if these ethnicities form the basis for this study.
In Colombia, indigenous territories have been targets of transformation since the 1990s due to the numerous extractive projects projected or executed in them. Two main shifts in the national political arena have permitted this. Firstly, the enactment of a new Political Constitution in 1991 which granted differentiated rights to ‘ethnic minorities’ in order to ‘ensure’ their cultural survival. Indigenous communities have been registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and gained recognition as cultural others with some socio-economic benefits, and in some cases, land entitlement. This permits the identification of communities and their association with ancestral territories, and registration facilitates the contact of outsiders with their leaders. At the same time, indigenous territories are being targeted as frontiers for natural resource extraction, especially since neo-liberalization of the Colombian economy during the 1990s (CONPES 1990). Neo-liberalization implies greater exposure of local territories to the global market-led economy, without state mediation (Chaves-Agudelo et al. 2015).

Colombian indigenous peoples have protected territorial autonomy using various means. Neo-liberalization has allowed, paradoxically, the creation of pan-ethnic movements which were uncommon in the past, strengthening indigenous defence at national and international levels. One very interesting outcome of this novel context was the work by spiritual authorities from several Colombian ethnicities (Barbosa 2011; see also Navarro 2002). Spiritual authorities conceptualized shared ‘elements’ of their animist beliefs. Their document aims to explain to the 96.6% of the population that are ‘non-indigenous’ (DANE 2010) some of the reasons why indigenous peoples are particularly sensitive and vulnerable to interventions carried out in or planned for their territories.

Territorial transformation affects places and peoples in multidimensional ways, from physical alteration to spiritual desertion; spirits may leave, so there is a collective loss and a sense of individual loss of meaning. Spiritual connections and social organization are negotiated with other mainstream powerful realities when outsiders enter. This leads to the hybridization of indigenous social practices. The defence of territories often implies the further hybridization of indigenous discourses with policy language. These policies entrench the separation of people from their environment. Territorial transformation occurs at accelerated rates, and adopting terms from policies facilitates advocacy for indigenous peoples, even as their meanings and intentions usually differ.
Cofán communities approached in this study have always lived in the Amazon jungle. Their territories began to be transformed rapidly from 1912. Nowadays they are organized in communities, living in resguardos (i.e. collective lands), and are registered with the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The Muisca-Chibcha have inhabited the Eastern Andean Range Mountains of Colombian for thousands of years (Silva [1968] 2005). They were the largest group in Colombia on the arrival of the Spanish in the XVI century. The Spanish found a hierarchical and highly organized society, and took advantage of these familiar characteristics in Muisca-Chibcha cacicatos (i.e. towns) as early as 1537 (Friede 1974, Pérez 1950). Today, there is a dilution of ethnic identity in part due to their early colonization. The community interviewed does not hold legal collective land titles, and is not registered as an ethnic group with the Ministry of Internal Affairs; however, some recognition is given by the local government. They are organized at a departmental level across different municipalities. Self-recognition and mutual acceptance guide their identity as Muisca-Chibchas, based on a lineage of spiritual inheritance.

7.4 Aims and methods

In this article we argue that modern hybridity in indigenous actions and beliefs are intended to safeguard spirituality, and that these hybrid spaces have emerged through interaction between indigenous desires for territorial autonomy and the modern political and legal mechanisms available to them. We describe the animist beliefs that underlie the attachment of both groups to territory, and analyse to what extent territorial transformation has impacted social practices from the perspective of animist life-worlds. Then we explore the contestation mechanisms employed by communities to protect their animist beliefs, particularly after major changes in Colombian governance after the 1990s. Finally, we assess the extent to which their defence of culture has been successful.

The first author conducted interviews in two Cofán communities in Putumayo department (the municipalities of San Miguel and La Hormiga, Map 7), and in one more dispersed Muisca-Chibcha community across Boyacá department (in the municipalities of Tunja, Cómbita, Motavita, Sogamoso, Villa de Leyva, Map 8) in 2014. Pseudonyms are used throughout this article for reasons of confidentiality. Documents were reviewed extensively.
Map 7. Location of Cofán communities approached in this study

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
Map 8. Location of Muisca-Chibcha community members approached in this study

Source: Cartographer Chandra Jayasuriya, Department of Geography, the University of Melbourne
For both ethnicities, *cabildo* governors (i.e. political leaders) were first contacted, and they provided community introductions. Several meetings were necessary in order to expose the aim of the study, and community members deliberated permission/denial for interviews, and who was to be the interviewed. The interviewees had to be elders and/or political leaders who could provide accounts of communities’ history and current struggles. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted and recorded.

Only in one Cofán community, San Miguel, were interviews denied. Elders conditioned their approval on a *yage* ceremony to consult spirits, but there was no agreement, or involvement of the governor who was not keen to drink *yage*. There was a general distrust towards outsiders, and researchers “have stolen [their] knowledge several times”, as it was pointed out during one meeting. The fieldwork corresponded with threats of displacement from oil extraction, and people were tired of the confusing motives of outsiders’ visits. Eventually, conversations were permitted with a few key informants, and recorded or noted according to the desire of the participant.

We acknowledge the challenge of translating concepts, relations, and symbols into academic discourses. It is also problematic to find English or Spanish equivalent translations to describe indigenous life-worlds, even if respondents speak in Spanish. In some cases the words we use embody only a small dimension of the embedded meaning. However, descriptions in the article approach the significance of what indigenous individuals mean when talking about their worlds.

Some excerpts from interviews are given. We begin by situating the two ethnicities in history, in order to understand their current beliefs and how these inform their actions and their defensive struggles. We introduce five cases of defence mechanisms against resource extraction that have been undertaken since the 1990s. In concluding, we discuss how the rationales for defending territories converge through the deployment of similar actions despite different contexts. Muisca-Chibcha and Cofán create *hybrid inventive advocacies* to defend their beliefs and culture from neoliberal resource extraction and land grabs.
7.5 The Cofán

7.5.1 Brief historical context

The Cofán are believed to have numbered around 15,000 people at the time of Spanish contact 400 years ago, when the Ecuadorian-Colombian border had not been established. This period is known by them as ‘the time of slavery’. The Cofán were forced to work in mining, and at the same time, Jesuit missionaries arrived in their region but were not fully successful at evangelizing the population until after the second Spanish arrival, a period known by them as ‘the time of evangelization and massacre’ (ZIO-A’I 2002). According to Cofán respondents, the Christian evangelizers took advantage of the trust people had in them and naively gathered together in a temple, where the evangelizers locked them in and killed everyone. Only four to six families survived the massacre, as they distrusted evangelizers and did not attend that, hiding in the treetops. They dispersed using other river routes, reaching the southern part of today’s Putumayo department in Colombia. According to Pérez (1950), the Franciscan order was in Cofán territory during the XVII and XVIII centuries, therefore it is possible that they could have been responsible for the massacre. The third and last arrival of Spaniards was also accompanied by missions, mainly the Capuchin order. Culturally, they promoted Spanish and Catholic education, and prohibited the use of traditional customs. Children were taken into boarding schools and convents (López 2001, ZIO-A’I 2002). Dates for these occurrences are not given in their interview narratives and are not present in interviews quoted in the literature.

During the XIX and beginning of the XX century, extractive economic activities by foreigners increased, e.g. the collection of quinine (Cinchona sp.) and ivory palm (Phytelephas sp.), hunting of animals for skins, and rubber tapping. In some of those activities the Cofán were working under tough conditions, even slavery. As a result, population numbers declined, and social practices began to alter. During the war against Peru (1932-1933) some Cofán were recruited to defend the country (López 2001, ZIO-A’I 2002, Tobar et al. 2004).

Since 1912, the Cofán have experienced a steady decrease in living space, and the Amazonian landscape has changed considerably. In 1912, the Colombian government opened roads in Putumayo department to promote the colonization of South Colombia, and in the 1960s directed colonization was promoted to ‘develop’ the region. The presence of ‘whites’ and territorial invasion
was constant for indigenous ethnicities (López 2001, ZIO-A'I 2002). Interviewees stated that the breaking points were the oil extraction activities conducted in their territories since the 1970s; and confirmed in the literature (ZIO-A'I 2002, Tobar et al. 2004, López 2001). This involved more roadbuilding and an aggressive colonization.

Roads also facilitated logging (e.g. for cedar [Cedrella sp.], amarillo [Ocotea sp.]). According to ZIO-A'I (2002), between 1,000 and 1,500 trees were cut per day, and logs thrown into the river to be sold downstream in the nearby town of Puerto Asis. The presence of money for the first time, before logging ceased, brought rapid transformation and socio-cultural change. In-migration by whites led to the resettlement of indigenous people in defined areas, soil loss and contamination due to logging and oil spills, and the loss of wild animals. Diets changed, and significantly, associated spiritual connections.

Since the 1970s the expansion of coca crops for cocaine production and its derivatives attracted some indigenous people in Putumayo department. Some Cofán were involved. Expansion occurred because of remoteness, the lack of state control, and the lack of income opportunities and fair prices for local market products. Coca expanded over time, moving further into the jungle, especially the areas occupied by colonizers, including areas close to or even inside indigenous resguardos. Aerial fumigation of coca, sponsored by US, began in 2000. Coca crops were sprayed with herbicides indiscriminately and the Cofán were strongly affected in different ways.

The 1970s also saw the army established, to protect foreign oil drilling operations. Guerrilla groups followed, and even today they attack pipelines. Cocaine production also brought fighting between paramilitary groups, guerrillas, and the Colombian army. The consequences for Cofán territories are enormous, including constraints on mobility, the establishment of two battalions in Cofán territories, and water and soil pollution caused by attacks on pipelines and drug production. Violent livelihoods are common in South Putumayo. Local residents are aware of their vulnerability: ‘we as indigenous people (...) must not participate and we are totally not in favour of war’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55).
7.5.2 Today

Cofán people have a history of continuous occupation of the western Amazon. According to ZIO-A'I (2002), they now number only 1,143 people in Colombia, with more in Ecuador. In Colombia, they are organized in eleven communities.

The Colombian Western Amazon is a transitional region where the Andean and Amazon bioregions meet. The ecosystems are highly diverse. Indigenous ethnicities located in the zone (i.e. the Inga, Cofán, Siona, Kamsá, Coreguaje, Totuyo, and Carijona) have evolved with a remarkable knowledge of medicinal plants, and particularly, they rely on yage (a beverage made out from ayahuasca [Banisteriopsis caapi Spruce ex. Griseb.] and pinta whose identification is kept secret). Yage is the basis of Cofán culture. Its preparation and consumption provides insights into spiritual and everyday life. For Cofán, the ‘ordering of everything’ is taught by taitas (i.e. spiritual leaders) after consuming yage in ceremonies (Molano 2011, UMIYAC 2000, ZIO-A'I 2002, Tobar et al. 2004).

Cofán thinking has points of reference in three worlds. The world above is the world of the stars, the intermediate world is the world of men and the invisibles; and the world below is the world of the dwarves, beings without an anus. Yage permits the traveling between worlds (ZIO-A'I 2002). We make reference to the intermediate world, which is constantly referred to by those interviewed.

‘Spiritually, we are special people, we know Mother Nature, everything has its masters, animals, fish, and so on, the large tree, those are the homes of what is spiritually known as the invisible ones, you don’t see them, but we do know who are the invisible ones. (...) I speak about my plant yage (...) it is a very sacred plant, it is the only thing left to us by our God (...), left exclusively to the Cofán (...) to make contact with him (...). Our yage is our ceremony, that is where we develop all of our history, knowledge, culture, respect, all of that. Our yage plant, it educates, it does so through visions, it takes you and shows you everything, how the people must coexist, and (...) it also tells us about health’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

Every Cofán community has at least one taita who is the highest authority. The elders (mayores) deliberate issues occurring in their territories, and take decisions that have to be adopted. The cabildo is an institution imposed by the government, a political board led by the administrative governor,
composed of about eight people. According to Colombian Law, every registered indigenous 
community has to annually elect a cabildo to negotiate with outsiders. But the traditional institutions 
are maintained and elders have the last word in every decision.

Elders also hold knowledge of medicinal plants, spiritual connections with nature, and the beliefs 
inherited from ancestors. They maintain traditions that are being gradually lost in the younger 
generations, including the Cofán language, and they carry living memories of the transformation of the 
jungle.

This rich knowledge is closely attached to territory. Spirituality has been developed hand in hand with 
elements of Mother Nature. Inhabited places are far more than physical, and are lived through 
everyday practices. But they are changing:

‘We take care of our territory as a mother, we cannot abandon it as if it were another person, 
like colonists who go to other places, other countries, we are not like that, we maintain our 
territory preserving everything we need for our future’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

‘Nature is important because we coexist with it, right? (…) That’s where we find medicine, we 
pick a herb, we ask the plant’s spirit for permission to prepare a tea (…), that is why our 
forefathers never used western medicine, only because nature was there, living with nature is 
pleasant (…) in our culture it is a sign of harmony, right? Because spirits are in nature, not 
only of plants, there’s also animal spirits, our own spirits are in the jungle, they guide us within 
nature, and when you do the yage ceremony, we relate to live better’ (II, La Hormiga, Sep- 
2014, age-59)

‘There’s a lot of medicines in the jungle, for example, to cure any illnesses you may have, yes ma’am, go to the mountain, one knows because the forefathers have shown me, they say this 
for this thing, for an ailment this other thing, they show, so we also learned’ (III, La Hormiga, 
Sep-2014, age-74)

‘For us nature is when the elders make a ceremony for them to have the jungle, the forest as 
well, to have more strength, more energy, for the elders’ (IV, La Hormiga, Sep-2014, age-57)
7.5.3 Cultural consequences of territorial transformation today

‘The invasion entered and changed all the ways of our culture (…), it is not easy to defend oneself in the midst of a confused world’ (V, La Hormiga, Sep-2014, age-52)

The first indigenous reserves in the area were created by the government in 1943 (ZIO-A’i 2002), however they were only fully legalized in the 1970s. The community interviewed in La Hormiga municipality had a reserve of 3,750ha in 1973; San Miguel received 9,325ha in 1976. Despite this, due to the dynamics of colonization, the Cofán could not enjoy freedom and autonomy across their entire extent. It was not until 1998 that new indigenous legislation was decreed and communities received resguardo titles, inside the former reserves. Resguardos are indigenous autonomous territorial entities, which constitute inalienable, imprescriptible, and unseizable collective properties.

The community at La Hormiga received a resguardo of 755ha, and San Miguel 880ha. According to (ZIO-A’i 2002), the large spatial reduction of reserves to resguardos was accompanied by an influx of colonizers and battalions across 70-80% of the resguardo in the first case, and 52% in the second. Communities have allowed settlers to remain, but distant from their own settlements (ZIO-A’i 2002). The consequences of territorial transformation on communities are multiple and multidimensional:

‘The survival of our ancestors (…), they were very free, very peaceful, lots of peace, they can [move], nobody prevents it, in all routes where they can travel the river, because before our roads were all rivers, there were no highways, they were all rivers, so they had freedom to go wherever they wanted, that is their life, very relaxed, with Mother Nature's different species, animals, fish, birds, everything, as you see the abundance of the mountain, animals are also abundant, fish, all you want to pick and eat, and with this they live in peace.

(…) That is why we are constantly suffering, and the state never thinks about improving this or recognizing it, compensating all the damage it has done, never (…) we are in threatened everywhere, the end of the Cofán population (…) I see a lot of need where I live (…), we want to recover our territory, if we do not recover it then, where will we go? What will happen to us?

(…) [The invisibles are leaving] because Mother Nature is gone, all of the mountains, where did they go? There are some (…) that go underground (…) in another planet, down there, they are all there, there are some that are in the mountains, they are there. With all those
fumigations that are going on, they want nothing to do with it, and the noise that comes from those wells, those machines, the noise, that has its negative effects even on us during ceremony days for our yage plant, we are unable to concentrate as we should, all that air, all that we are, we cannot, that is why we need our own territory which is silent for us, everything, concentrate, all spiritual work, how? We have to be in contact with the spirits, of water, within the earth, the air, well, all you can imagine, that is the spiritual part.’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

‘Today we see that there used to be no work, but life was better, we didn’t need money because everything was planted, harvested, we bartered with other communities, but today after the [coca] bounty, and so much entry into the western area, many things are coming from the outside like television, like motorcycles, so young people hope to have those things, so everybody needs their money to be able to purchase what they need.

(…) In the past it was because there used to be more forests, right? So the spirits weren’t lost; but due to invasions into our territory, logging, the spirits have left, why? Because when you take the remedy, yage, the spirits don’t come near anymore, right? There’s no sharing that experience or orientation in the people we are, so that has changed (…). All the spaces we live in have changed due to certain things, including logging and drilling. The [spiritual] masters of the hunt, they live outside the land (i.e. in the jungle) and with that exploding sound [of the drilling rig], they go further each day, getting lost, and where are they now? They are in the highlands, in the mountain range, that is what the taitas are telling us [after consulting yage]’ (II, La Hormiga, Sep-2014, age-59)

‘We were all united, the young people, the elders, we were all united, but not today (…) we have changed a lot with those workers from oil companies that came here, we changed a lot (…), early during the arrival of coca, we were scared, he used to say, my husband would say ‘let’s go, let’s go somewhere else, we cannot live here anymore’ because with coca many of the young people became damaged (…), during that time there were murders. [Before] we were simple people [in our lifestyle] early when it arrived’ (VI, La Hormiga, Sep-2014, age-75)
7.6 The Muisca-Chibcha

7.6.1 Brief historical context

'I am a descendant of a race that silenced itself to be able to resist (...) so one has to stay still, be silent to be able to resist, to be able to project ourselves over time' (VII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-46)

The presence of a Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity dates back to 500 BC (Silva [1968] 2005). Their ‘conquer and colonization’ by the Spanish is perhaps the most documented in Colombia. Some authors like Silva ([1968] 2005), locate this culture as the third most ‘elevated’ in terms of socio-cultural organization after the Inca and the Aztec at the times of Spanish arrival. In the XVI century, Spaniards found an agricultural society, with a hierarchical organization, and an active commercial trade taking place with other groups, sometimes across long distances (Triana 1951).

The Muisca-Chibcha were organized in cacicatos, with Bacatá and Hunza being the principal ones. The highest political authorities in the cacicatos were the caciques. In 1537 Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada encountered these societies, and in 1538 the New Kingdom of Granada was founded, centred on Muisca-Chibcha and other neighbouring territories. Santa Fé de Bogotá, today’s capital city, was founded on the cacicato of Bacatá in 1538; Santiago de Tunja, the cacicato of Hunza in Boyacá department became the provincial capital from 1539. There were many indigenous rebellions against the Spanish, and colonial governance was really established after 1640 (Pérez 1950, Friede 1974).

The Muisca-Chibcha traded in salt, emeralds, cotton blankets, and gold. Salt was highly valued. Gold and emeralds were commonly employed in worship (Triana 1951). There are many stories describing the greed and avarice of Spaniards for gold and emeralds and trade is well documented (Oliva 1991). Ceramics, stone carving and goldsmithing were also practiced (Silva [1968] 2005). Spanish chronicles describe the use of chicha (a traditional drink made out of fermented corn) and hayo (toasted coca leaves), both encountered today.

The Muisca-Chibcha worshipped and enshrined lakes and forests, and adorned their caciques and xeques or mohanes (priests) with gold and emeralds. They also had temples. They trained the xeques in cucas (i.e. seminaries) for twelve years (Rojas 1991). Astronomical knowledge was
advanced, and monuments to fertility (monoliths) were abundant (Triana 1951, Pérez 1951, Silva [1968] 2005). Ruins attest to those practices.

Despite their high level of social organization, conquest and colonization of their ethnicity was rapid. The first contacts were marked by welcoming the Spaniards with gifts, this being a largely pacifist society (Silva [1968] 2005). Soon after, the Muisca-Chibcha noted the aggressive character of the outsiders, driven by their quest for El Dorado and thirsting for gold and riches. The Spaniards divided the indigenous people into encomiendas from 1539 (the colonial Spanish system of extracting tribute from native populations) (Friede 1974). Every participating Spaniard in the conquest was entrusted by the Crown to manage at least one encomienda in order to collect tributes. That person became an encomendero, and also had to evangelize and to teach the Spanish rule-of-law to indigenous people.

Encomiendas were organized based on the previous cacicatos, and then the caciques became intermediaries (Friede 1974). Abuses by Spaniards were multiple and some caciques filed complaints against them. The case of the cacique don Diego de Torres was taken as far as the Crown in Spain in 1584, with positive outcomes (Rojas 1991, Rappaport and Cummins 2012).

Encomiendas lasted until the XVIII century. But from the late XVI century, due to their dramatic demographic decline, the Crown started ordering its colonies to create resguardos for indigenous people, in a way acknowledging the disorganization and abuse suffered under encomenderos. Indigenous people also had to pay tributes to the Crown when in resguardos, despite the fact that they now owned the land collectively. At the time, the Crown began to regulate land tenure in favour of Spaniards, some of whom invaded resguardos. By the XVIII century, Muisca-Chibcha resguardo lands were completely invaded by outsiders (Hernández 1975, Friede 1974).

According to Friede (1974), Tunja providence, which today comprises Boyacá department, hosted about 500,000 indigenous people by 1537. (Hernández 1975) concurs. Yet, strikingly, by 1756 there were only 24,892 indigenous people counted, the others, whites and mestizos totalled 37,573 (Friede 1974). The Republic dissolved the few resguardos remaining in Muisca-Chibcha territories in 1821. They were sold to big landowners, and indigenous people lost their entitlements. They went to work in haciendas, and in time many were absorbed by urban growth (Durán 2005, Hernández 1975).

The composite term Muisca-Chibcha is a response to a debate over their naming. We follow the interviewees in using this term. One interviewee said,
'Well, obviously one would say that formally one can only be Muisca, but there is a conflict in the words and norms for those of us who have opted for Muisca-Chibcha, since in the territories of Boyacá, towards the north, one hears more the word Chibcha among the people, and towards Cundinamarca one hears more the word Muisca. So, in our claim for the recognition of the Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity we have gone beyond the argument of simply belonging to an ethnicity, and more towards a historical-political belonging, that is why we say that we are part of an organizational process that we call Indigenous Communities of the Muisca-Chibcha People Nation’ (VIII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-52)

7.6.2 Today

The Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity has experienced different re-ethnicization processes since the 1990s. In political terms, some communities have decided to gain state recognition, and legal status following constitutional precepts, with socio-economic benefits. But alternative, less formalized movements have emerged. These have been led by Muisca-Chibcha spiritual leaders or chyquys (Gómez 2010, 2009). This was the case in the community we interviewed,

‘First you have to recognize yourself, then you have to recognize others, before even thinking about social organizations, we are at that stage, right? That stage of recognition (IX, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-50)

The Muisca-Chibcha ancestral territories are mainly in Boyacá and Cundinamarca departments (see Map2). Communities are clustered according to their former geopolitical organizations. In Cundinamarca department they are organized in parcialidades, registered before the state (Cota, Chía, Suba, Bosa); they share collective spaces where they practice their culture. In Boyacá department, their basis for identification is self-recognition and they are scattered across different municipalities. Meeting to practice cultural values is rare and costly.

According to these interviews, by August 2014, this group comprised eight sub-communities (unofficially and confusingly called parcialidades), centralized in the principal cabildo in Tunja; they comprised perhaps 1,600 people. This way of organization challenges the understanding of indigenous groups as inhabiting discrete spaces, thus national government recognition is difficult,
In socio-cultural terms, individuals practice, hybridize, and/or adopt old traditions from their and other ethnicities. The Muisca language is in recovery. Interviewees said that animist practices include pagamentos (i.e. ‘payments’), tobacco and fire rituals, dances, and gatherings to share the word (compartir la palabra), among others. They maintain ancient uses like hayo chewing, tobacco smoking, ambil (semiliquid tobacco) consumption during ceremonies, chicha drinking, and the building of malokas or chuszúa (Muisca-Chibcha houses), with these last currently used only for ceremonies. (Gómez 2010) reports similar practices among communities in Cundinamarca department.

The spiritual leaders of other ethnicities were custodians of Muisca-Chibcha cultural elements, and are now able to return them to the people. The Muisca-Chibcha describe their return as a re-awakening. Some interviewees made reference to the mamos of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (North Colombia) returning the tutusoma (i.e. ‘white cap’ that identifies the spiritual leaders) and the poporo (i.e. gourd to deposit powdered lime prepared from burning seashells, which spiritual leaders retrieve with a stick and consume while chewing hayo). Gómez (2010, 2009) found other returning elements were the knitting of mochilas (i.e. indigenous bags), the use of fire during rituals, and some words from grandparents. Gómez points out that the use of tobacco and ambil was returned by taitas from the Huitoto people in South Colombia; and the murundi or tobacco powder was returned by the Tubú, from Eastern Colombia. Mamos, taitas, and other spiritual leaders are helping to facilitate the ‘Muisca awakening’; and they acknowledge the chyquys as their equal and peers (Gómez 2009).

Another source of collective memory is the one held by mestizos indigenous-campesinos living in remote areas. The colonization process was very active in the valleys where the centres of surveillance and control operated; therefore, some of them decided to relocate to the high mountains. In these areas, even today, people practice rituals that were forgotten in the cities and towns, and where traditional doctors and midwives still operate (Gómez 2009, Pinzón and Suárez 1991). In these cases, individuals do not identify as Muisca-Chibcha yet they do not disown their indigenous inheritance. There are, therefore, different rationales for ethnic self-recognition operating. Knowledge is transferred in intimate spaces, and conventionally hidden from outsiders. According to Pinzón and Suárez (1991), silence and secrets were/are the resistance codes for the Muisca-Chibchas who are still present in Colombian society. Their language, ways of thinking, food, and agricultural practices
are recognised today (Restrepo 2005). This is probably a consequence of their assimilation, with some socio-economic classes more readily absorbing conventions from their close neighbours.

The contemporary Muisca-Chibcha social presence, political or not, refutes the dominant Colombian imaginary of their ethnicity as remote, alienated from their lands, and possibly extinct. The consequence of this re-engagement and re-positioning is felt as a tension by some parts of society with regard to these emergent communities (López 2005). Among those who protest their legitimacy is the Catholic Church in Boyacá because of the powerful role of this institution in reproducing the discourse of *mestizaje* in the region after the XVI century.

Finally, the ancestral territories of Muisca-Chibcha have clearly been transformed by extensive urbanization, and economic activities like large-scale agriculture. The interviewees live in urban and rural localities, moving regularly between the two. They are from very diverse occupations, including *campesinos*, shoemakers, nurses, lawyers, educators, and even academics. Thanks to the diversity of sectors in which they move they have gained communicative skills to demand the acknowledgement of their ongoing presence. This is not common for other ethnicities. Their near assimilation gives advantages (e.g. knowing the system and how to manoeuvre within it; empowerment of individuals and groups) and disadvantages (e.g. fear of alienating the oppressor; loss of identity) for community members.

*Chyquys* from this ethnicity were part of the study conducted by Barbosa (2011) cited above, in which spiritual leaders from different groups explained indigenous peoples’ vulnerability to natural resource extraction projects based on their spiritual beliefs. Our interviewees talked about the Law of Origin which determines their relation with *everything*, their beliefs, and their meanings of territory,

> ‘When indigenous people talk about the Law of Origin (...) they are not talking about statements, they are not norms, it is a cosmic ordering of creation, that is to say, each thing is in its place serving a purpose, but there is interdependence and interrelation between each of the components of what we would call creation, more than nature (...). So there are spiritual guidelines that must be followed (...), listen to the Mother (...). From our perspective nature becomes a living being among many living beings, where they require a relationship with us as stewards, right?, not to order it, not be arbitrary, I mean, we see her as a Mother that we must care for, obviously with all the anguish that come from the impacts of Mother Earth,
right? So the relationship with nature and creation becomes very important, because it is the base of the Law of Origin, it is the book that gives us what we call the universal principles of life, right? We cannot talk about a geographic territory if we are not clear on the universal principles of life, and amongst them is life, right? Life as a principle, not as a law or as a right, but as a principle that we must follow to care for and live, right?’ (VIII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-52)

‘Territory is a vessel, it is a live body where all relationships between the things that make it up, people, water, land, are created and experienced. When there is recognition of who I am and what I do in that space, in that vessel, immediately there is a recognition with a people, a tradition, a function, a memory, a need to look after; and, at that moment, for me, it is a recognition of belonging to a community, we usually associate ‘community’ with what is human, the human community. The territory is the community of everything, all that makes it up is a community, and the moment you engage in relationships, you recognize yourself, you are part of that community. So, for me, the Muisca community is not just about people, it’s all the territory (…). My recognition comes just from thinking’ (IX, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-50)

7.6.3 Cultural consequences of territorial transformation today

As these quotes show, Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity members relate to their territories spiritually. Despite their loss of control and autonomy from 1537, they have respected nature and continued to signify, practice and protect territory. As a community, they are re-interpreting their role, debating the main threats to territories and communities, and planning its protection,

‘For us the Muisca-Chibcha territory is part of, tiny part of, Mother Earth, so we have to look after that tiny part, but from that tiny part, or that belly button, we recreate the rest, looking after the Mother, we must also take into consideration in the calendars that we also inhabit the cosmos (…). In the order of everything, the territory plays an important part because it becomes life itself, the vital space, worldview and cosmology (…). According to our beliefs, our forefathers left it for us to look after and they are places for pilgrimage, they are places of our pagamentos’ (VIII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-52)
‘The memory is there, but the tradition has been interrupted (...), so we have to sit and [read the territory] again, how does one look after things today? (...) it’s not just my house, it’s my food, it’s my mother, it’s my father, it’s where I am from.

(...) To say it this way, you go and distance yourself from the grandfather because all of a sudden you say ‘not me, that is his time, this is mine’, but you are still in the same territory, what globalization has brought (...), tourism here, for example, and other types of situations, that distance is outside the territory, I don’t identify with the food anymore, I don’t identify with the weaving, or the memory, there’s young people who don’t like it ‘no, that is my grandfather’s, I am not like that, I’m going to the city’, (...) and so there is a diaspora from the territory, (...) so there is a social displacement, there is cultural displacement, there is land appropriation by people who do not come to take care of it, so even land use, everything changes very fast’. (IX, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-50)

7.7 Defence of territories against natural resource extraction

‘What oil companies call crude or oil for them, is not the same for us (...) it is not oil, that is the blood of our Mother Earth’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

We have highlighted the intermingling constructions of ‘identity’, ‘territory’ and ‘nature’ by members of both ethnicities. The major challenges of cultural and physical transformations create concerns about assimilation and loss (Escobar 2016). The narratives above illustrate the ontological struggles of Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha in their own voices.

Interviewees’ constructions of ‘territory’, ‘community’, ‘nature’, ‘resistance’, ‘conservation’, ‘self-determination’, ‘autonomy’, ‘reguardo’, ‘cabildo’, ‘parcialidad’, are given hybridized meanings. These concepts have been borrowed and re-interpreted. This has been essential for indigenous advocacy, and been proven useful for the external delivery of messages. Hybrid discourses facilitate communication between peoples and worlds, shaping negotiation and advocacy. Hybridity has permitted the survival of powerful symbolic and material realities over time and in different social arenas.

The 1990s was a crucial decade for both ethnicities. They both received some rights, but despite this, and even because of this, there is now increased contact by outsiders (Hale 2005). Natural resource
extraction has increased considerably because of the government’s support for multinational, foreign and local companies through neoliberal tariff agreements. According to interviewees, natural resource extraction projects like oil drilling, mining, and agro-industrial plantations are the most significant causes of territorial transformation in their ancestral territories and resguardos since the 1990s.

Colombian legislation recognises indigenous ancestral territories as physically-inhabited spaces with cultural values, whether legally recognised –as resguardos in the case of the Cofán- or not. Therefore, any territorial intervention has to involve consultation. For the first time, indigenous peoples can negotiate directly with new commercial actors. Yet territory signifies far more than bounded space for the communities interviewed.

The twin negotiation is resistance, in order to preserve ontological beliefs and the meaning of an ethnic identity, retained from the past. Countering loss of territory is also a determination to continue social practices (Escobar 2016). They do this as people who physically inhabit their territories as well as representing the possibilities for others who are associated with them in a metaphysical sense. All share a belief in the multi-dimensional co-responsibility of the living and the ancestors, to sustain the cultural territories, and more broadly, the world. Territories are transferred from ancestors and spirits, and they must defend this trust, as their guardians. Memory is important for place and culture as the changes that occurred in the distant past for the Muisca-Chibcha, and more recently for the Cofán, have repercussions at multiple levels: not least the threat of cultural loss.

In these two cases, territories have been defended actively, and quite effectively. This has been through hybrid inventive advocacies comprising sacredness, beliefs and memory with post-1990s legal mechanisms that protect cultural diversity. But strategies differ according to context, so we introduce five illustrative cases presented in peoples’ own words, showing previous consultation, ‘writ of protection’ actions, employment of biodiversity policies, and collective action.

### 7.7.1 Previous consultation

The Cofán take advantage of their resguardos to use previous consultation as a mechanism of defence. This is possible because the Cofán held collective land titles and any direct intervention concerning these lands requires consultation with them under the Political Constitution of 1991 and the Convention No.169 of the International Labour Organization. The following testimonies are two
successful cases of denying permission to exploit oil wells which disturb spiritual practices. The first case is about work disruption at an oil well by the community in San Miguel.

‘I closed it, not sealed but closed, because there were times, of course we have done some good things, five years of the consultation process, previous consultation, and after five years we have reached an agreement, negotiations have been [officialised], and it was for eight months, so in eight months they [should] have complied with the drill, drilling, and more than eight months went by, so in all truth I had to get angry to tell them to comply. ‘Your contract time is over, your job, you guys have to close this now, and if you are going to do a production study, it will have to enter a consultation, if not’. This time, I closed [the entrance to the oil drilling site, denying the access to] them, and at the end I opened [it and they could] take all of the machinery out’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

The second case is about denying permission for oil extraction by the community in La Hormiga.

‘There has been previous consultation since 91, right? (…) Well, in our resguardo we have a lot of experience, since 91, we have another two wells that haven’t been drilled, the companies have told us ‘the oil beneath the ground belongs to the State’, and I think at that time I was [the cabildo] governor, I have a lot of experience, and I told the other governors [of indigenous cabildos] ‘there are grave threats, but if we are strong they will have to respect us’, because it has been many years since they threatened us with bringing the army to take away our land and exploit those wells, the companies, even the major was in our community, but it was not possible, we told them that if they were going to kick us out they would have to do it to the entire community, and we went with our grandfathers, they are also very strong, they took a clear position, and said ‘no and no’, and they have not been able to explore until now and it has been like 35 years and they haven’t done it’ (II, La Hormiga, Sep-2014, age-59)

7.7.2 ‘Writ of protection’ actions

A ‘writ of protection’ action is an instrument granted to all Colombians for the protection of his/her rights under the article 86 of the Political Constitution of 1991. Indigenous peoples sued for their rights before the Colombian Constitutional Court, which is developing the judicial framework for indigenous concerns (Sánchez 2010, Borrero 2014). Case three shows how Muisca-Chibcha’s use of ‘writ of
protection’ and other legal mechanisms have allowed their ideas about territory to be accepted and leading to success in countering unwelcome oil extraction in sacred sites.

‘Well here we used to support the professional collective who used to roam the region, they are worried about their territory, so they called us as a cabildo, so we organized a meeting with the company directives in [the municipality of] Iza (...), [and] we were able to stop this due to issues with archaeology and environment, especially environment. (...) For example, what was argued (...) is that there is a sacred territory where our pagamento sites are located, and where our spirit grandfathers guard, because that is where the priest of Sogamoso’s Temple of the Sun was chosen. And, when we see the figures of the study showing [archaeological sites], (...) there is a high, medium, and low density of archaeological heritage, so they didn’t respect that, right? So the archaeological study has to do not only with our interpretation of territory, but also the spiritual connection we have with it, right? (...) [The company was] able to do 97% of the seismic studies [at the moment we presented the writ of protection action] (...), [even] they were able to get into the exploration phase, but something curious happened, because they set up the platform but they didn’t find anything, as if the oil had moved, right?. Of course, spiritual work has also been done there, right? There is something called, ‘move the land’, that comes from a long time ago, so pagamentos (rituals) were done.’ (VIII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-52)

7.7.3 Biodiversity policies

Biodiversity protection regulations have been used by the Cofán to establish a national park in one of the few relatively unspoiled areas remaining in their territories. Biodiversity policies are a mainstream Colombian government response to neo-liberalization. These commodified assets are labelled for their ecosystem services. An example of this are the cultural or provisioning services associated with the creation of natural parks. This deconstruction of nature into disconnected species and places acts against the maintenance of indigenous perceptions of connectivity and interactions (Chaves-Agudelo, Batterbury, and Beilin 2015). However, in this case, the Cofán have agreed with a less than ideal form of protection to ensure a place where the contact of taitas with other worlds during yage rituals can be sustained. Case four involves the Cofán ethnicity in Colombia.
‘The masters of the animals are all [in] the mountain, and so on, so he (a taita) went on a trip there, a hunt, he was travelling, he saw all of that, and said ‘no, this area is good to form a territory, a learning territory’, all that is knowledge, wisdom, this territory is an excellent sanctuary, ok? (…) for us knowledge about wisdom is all that is known, look, our medicinal plants are on the earth, in the tree, in the fauna and flora, all of that, survival is in our medicinal plant, everything is there, alive (...), so that is why we have a special area, very special, like this resguardito, everything there, that is why we are not just like any person, as I repeat, we are not like other people, [for whom] the earth is for construction, well, everything, has to be logged, only for a product, that’s not it, we preserve ourselves because of her, we live from Mother Nature’ (I, San Miguel, Sep-2014, age-55)

7.7.4 Collective action

The geopolitical position of the Muisca-Chibcha community in or close to centres of power, and knowledge have opened spaces for their ideas to be listened to at a senior level. This has allowed the creation of and participation in collective action movements for environmental and social justice. These sorts of actions are difficult for other ethnicities, for example the Cofán, who rarely leave their resguardos. Case five is collective action led by Muisca-Chibcha during a protest against free trade agreements affecting small-scale farming.

‘We have been able to interfere in various things, right? The fact that the territory is being environmentally affected, that transnational corporations are affecting sacred sites, that has made us think a lot, so, how could we say that we have been affected here? Well, we have! And we have to go out to different venues and say, ‘wait a minute!’, but even then, without a registry, we have fought and supported collective movements in civil society that have empowered themselves and decided to defend their territories, right? (…) and it has been a nice process, right? Because people feel supported by indigenous people, by the Muiscas, the first inhabitants. And, yes, we have achieved many things, right? With various transnational corporations, the presence of Muisca-Chibcha indigenous people has made a difference, right? We have also had an impact on an agricultural strike that occurred last year, around this time in August (2013), through CUPIB, right?, the Union Coordinator of Indigenous People of Boyacá. We held a forum (…) we could not allow them to talk about
seeds, about transgenic, about other things except what is really the territory (...). Something nice has happened, they have called us, as if the indigenous person had hope to say ‘let’s take things down a different path’, we have also found that when we have been called after the strike, [and asked] what do indigenous people suggest?, so obviously there is a need to increase people’s awareness about the use of the territory, of water, of timber, of forests, the topic of seeds, also the topic of customary use through calendars’ (VIII, Boyacá, Aug-2014, age-52)

Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha communities, in talking about their physical surroundings, prefer to talk about territory rather than ‘nature’. Territory serves to explain the multi-dimensional space that houses their lives and their culture as one; while nature, the Mother, has a further meaning for ethnicities related to that primal ‘idea’ or ‘energy’ responsible for their existence. Furthermore, indigenous ethnicities interpret territories according to social practices; in studying Tukano people in the Colombian Amazon (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1996: 9) says ‘[w]hat gives [the universe or earth] life is man, by ‘incorporating’ what we call nature, into human scale. The Indians have done this on many levels, on levels of awareness, of imagination, of productive use’.

In invoking territory, tangible and intangible elements are referenced. The Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha are the peoples-guardians of the adjudicated territories. Territory also has other worlds, the invisibles, the spiritual fathers and mothers, the elements, Mother Nature. Territories encompass sacredness, memory, thinking, ordering, and the material representation of the Original Law (Laws). Cofán noted the additional practical use of territory for hunting, farming, recreation, and aesthetic values. Some Muisca-Chibcha said that their community only exists because it inhabits territory (see Escobar 2001).

The human relationship to territories is based on reciprocity and co-responsibility. Members-guardians maintain Order, and this is rewarded by spiritual beings and their forebears. There are ‘systems of respect and protection (…) [in which] mutual obligations exist between people and the beings or forces they believe to exist’ (Anderson 1996: 174). Legal tools are based on modern understandings of space, but territorial advocacy goes far beyond the inhabited physical arrangements. As Boelens (2015: 249) states Andean communities, ‘to understand (…) how intensely they are defended, it is necessary to plumb the depths of this cultural foundation’. For the Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha we are limited by the constrained meaning of words to describe the intangible character of territory and
identity. During interviews it was very clear that when people were asked about ‘what territory/nature mean to them’, their words were few, and silence was meaningful.

Indigenous peoples live with tremendous disadvantages viewed against ideals of progress and development, economic growth, and civilization in Colombian society. But, despite this, they are empowered, having learned to use the political environment of the post-1990s. As Anderson (1996: 10) indicates ‘people have learned, over time, better methods of coping’. This leads to hybrid inventive advocacies, as described in these five scenarios. Territories (and their invocation) are symbolic-silent forms of resistance to modernity constructions.

Indigenous peoples have ‘hybrid, dynamic and interrelated’ interactions with territory (Boelens 2015: 137). We challenge conceptions that portray indigenous people as ‘ecological natives’ (Ulloa 2005) or as practitioners of ‘fertility cults’ (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1996). Nor do their defence of territories have a ‘pro-warlike character’ (Rappaport 1990). As Ulloa (2005: 172) states, these interpretations ‘often ignore indigenous peoples as social agents by categorizing them as part of “nature”’. The Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha, as social agents, manage territory and live in multi-layered ways. Their inner and outer negotiations of cultural meanings are constant, given their shifting histories and hybridizations. Muisca-Chibcha animism is one such example, part of strengthening group and individual identities since the 1990s.

Their ‘negotiation and accommodation as much as resistance’ means indigenous people ‘act individually and collectively, creating (...) room for manoeuvre within and beyond any constraints (...) place[d] on them’ (Bebbington 2000: 499). Sometimes Colombian indigenous peoples have joined pan-ethnic movements like the U’wa, Emberá-Katio or Koguis also facing extractivism (Ulloa 2005). But, Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha defend territories ‘individually’; their actions against extraction are immediate and context-specific, requiring innovation, creativity and imagination. They lack the international support available to some other ethnicities.

The protection of territories against natural resource extraction has required the incorporation of modern terms and meanings. Spanish words e.g. ‘conservation’, ‘oil companies’ (petroleras), ‘species’ are used by the Cofán without translation and with no prior significance in their own language. Both ethnicities struggled with the word ‘nature’ in their discourses, modifying their language to talk with outsiders. In using binaries like nature/culture as the oppressors do, communities may feel like they
are divorcing themselves from their reality and identities are hybridized. Hybridization facilitates advocacy, but at the same time negatively impacts constructions of identity.

Finally, despite examples of small battles won in territories, the threats are multiple for both groups. Over time these threats have become more aggressive and multi-dimensional. For example, the national government plan during the last two Presidential terms (of 4 years each) have stressed that Putumayo department is no longer to be preserved as an Amazon department, but is now a special mining district. This was a source of great concern during interviews. Communities are still consulted about extractive activities up to 24,000 hectares, which is big enough to affect their entire resguardos. The Muisca-Chibcha’s use of legal mechanisms has resulted in physical threats to their leaders, and unambiguous rejection from some segments of Colombian society. Anguish is always present in the indigenous defence of territories.

7.8 Conclusion

Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha communities hold animist beliefs that shape their relations with territory. These views are implicit when they defend it through legal and other mechanisms. The use of legal tools requires the hybridization of discourses as part of resistance, and appearing to accept legalistic and physical interpretations of space. But, hybridized discourses also encompass their worldviews, their identities, and their connection to tangible localities. Moving between outsider and insider worlds leads to the permeation of their culture with a modern epistemology that appears ‘black and white’ in its ability to guide or influence policy decisions. They run the risk that their deeply held beliefs will be simplified by their apparent capture in written, legalistic words and symbols.

Despite the multiple disadvantages that post-1990s resource extraction has brought, both groups have practiced hybrid inventive advocacy. They harness the law to protect their spirituality, with the mechanisms available to them in modern contexts. In this process they have changed their internal discourse to allow a certain level of acceptance of meanings as connected to material realities and consequences. Nonetheless, their discourses confirm the centrality of memory, belief, blood, anguish and resistance.
CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSIONS: HYBRIDIZATION OF DISCOURSES AND OTHER SOCIAL PRACTICES AS A STRATEGY OF RESISTANCE AND EMPOWERMENT OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

8.1 Introduction

The core analysis of this study was the possible hybridizations of constructions of ‘nature’ that Cofán, Pijao and Muisca-Chibcha peoples may undertake in defending their socio-cultural and territorial autonomies against the material impact of neoliberal projects in their localities. I demonstrated that modernity and globalization are ongoing processes that have impacted indigenous realities since the XVI century in Colombia, and that the neo-liberalization of the Colombian economy during the 1990s implied a deeper penetration of these processes into indigenous localities. The dominant discourse of a ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’, which is composed of several main narratives regarding ‘neoliberalization’, ‘globalization’ and ‘modernization’, has been programmed and assisted by government policymaking across many social and economic fields in Colombian life. My focus has been on how it is ‘materialized’ in several of the country’s indigenous territories. Indigenous struggles for territorial and cultural autonomy contest these contexts.

Briefly, the neoliberal globalized modern world discourses stands on the idea that societies follow an evolutionary course. Belief in free markets and enterprise, commercial resource extraction, and rolling back state support to the citizenry suggests that ‘backward’ societies will eventually evolve into ‘developed’ ones, supported by neoliberal economic regimes. In Colombia, the nonconformists include indigenous peoples who resist these trends either through open and hidden protest against attacks on their territorial autonomy, or through defence of cultural hegemony. Today, there are less ‘binaries’ – of the sort that demeaned indigenous people as ‘primitive’ – than in the XVII and XVIII centuries when there were periphery and centres, old and new worlds, and racially segregationist ideas. One that remains, however, is that Latin America and its societies are portrayed as ‘developing’ countries which have to follow US and European orderings in order to reach required levels of development.

An example of the dependency of Colombia on the global economic market of the neoliberal globalized modern world is the boom in natural resource extraction projects in which national companies, and especially transnational corporations, are the dominant actors. These are very
distinct symbols of the country’s globalised market links, and they have intensified since the 1990s. Transnational corporations benefit from the weak negotiation powers and formal mechanisms of the state, which means foreign and domestic investment has been facilitated. Many of these ‘investments’ have their physical manifestation in indigenous territories. Therefore, localities are exposed to global market forces, largely without state mediation or protection.

The increasingly common everyday encounters of local people - who have ascribed ways of being in the world, but who constantly have these challenged by dominant global modernity- creates a tension that is at first glance, incommensurable. But I have shown that this is not the case. The groups I interviewed experienced an incessant cultural hybridization of subsumed discourses, reflected in their livelihoods and social practices. Hybridization of discourses as well as a continuous change in the construction of discursive meanings are timeless processes. They occur in all societies. In this analysis I emphasized the discursive negotiations that are carried out by indigenous communities in a world characterized by its willingness to endlessly expand its modern ontology; and how this dominant expansionist narrative and its social practices (e.g. the capitalist economy, the objectification of men and women, and the separation of culture and nature) present endless, wearying challenges for indigenous communities. This is a political reality that causes them to reframe and re-voice what it is they are doing, in order to maintain both their socio-cultural knowledge and political lifelines.

This analysis of discourses stands upon the recognition of them as social practices, constitutive of the social world. In this reading, the study of narratives allows an understanding of how indigenous realities may change in response to exclusive contexts. Despite the fact that the hybridization of discourses and other social practices of the Cofán, Pijao and Muisca-Chibcha within the neoliberal globalized modern world have occurred from a subordinate position, hybridization (i.e. using elements from each) have become elements of resistance and empowerment for these indigenous ethnicities.

Throughout the research presented here, I encountered the active agency of contemporary indigenous peoples. Their advocacy in struggles is diverse and dynamic; they constantly negotiate their perpetuation in the modern world of dominant Colombian society, even though they make up only four percent of the entire population. Indigenous communities have strategically hybridized their defence, and their advocacy has taken different forms.
This means, on the one hand, that the responses of indigenous communities and ethnicities to the neo-liberalization of the economy are not homogeneous, and their cultural struggles have to be studied individually in order to uncover the particular and specific intricacies of their realities. On the other hand, it also suggests that cycles of hybridization with modernity have occurred since the first encounters with the colonial powers (and before, with each other, although this was not my focus in this thesis). These have been part of an ongoing development that indigenous peoples have had to learn to manoeuvre through in order to culturally resist the alienating socio-political and economic contexts imposed upon them since the XVI century.

The voices of the Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao ethnicities interviewed presented diverse cultural hybridizations. It was simultaneously very interesting and challenging to uncover them, pointing to the need for constant reflection, and revisiting the context in which they evolve. All of this added complexity to the already multifarious nature of the study. Hence, the development of ideas guiding this thesis was at the same time slow and exciting.

While hybridization is an endless process, I highlight in this concluding chapter some of my findings around the core hybridizations that indigenous individuals and groups have carried out in order to safeguard their cultures since the 1990s. In general terms, at least four processes have been crucial in contesting the neoliberal globalized modern world. They are: 1) the hybridization in ways of organizing, and the insistence of retaining collective practices in a world promoting individualism; 2) the hybridization of identities and the strategic flux of these in order to gain benefits (in this case, socio-economic marginalization has been the driver to contest state categorizations and subjectivities in relation to rural communities who have moved between blurred ethnic –indigenous- and class –campesino- identities); 3) the hybridization of legal mechanisms to protect spirituality through what I have called ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’.

Hybridization of identities, collective practices, and legal actions, demonstrate how indigenous communities nowadays are actively testing, challenging and resisting interventions in order to defend their worldviews. This defence is in turn portrayed by indigenous communities in order to deliver clearer messages to outsiders and, in accordance with the possibilities of contemporary contexts, to assert claims for cultural and territorial autonomy through territorial defence discourses. Territory
itself is a hybrid term. Territory became popular in indigenous advocacy especially after the 1990s
given the new rights for communities after the enactment of multicultural policies.

Territory, despite being a term adopted from outside the indigenous worlds, advocating for it
incorporates multiple dimensions, and not only to protect physical inhabited spaces. Hence, territory
combines material representations of ‘nature’, i.e. territory itself for outsiders, and immaterial
constructions of that same ‘nature’ or ‘Mother Nature’. Re-meanings of ‘nature’ are therefore
transversal to the other cycles of hybridization of social practices of the indigenous communities
approached, but in order to give a clearer reading; I include this as a fourth process of hybridization
below. I also conclude with the contribution to knowledge of this study, its limitations, as well as areas
for further research, and a final conclusion.

Figure 8 is a summary chart regarding how the parallel analysis conducted in terms of Critical
Discourse Analysis (CDA) in this thesis assisted me to elucidate ways to overcome obstacles brought
about by the ‘social wrong’ analysed (i.e. the suppression of indigenous worldviews due to the
implementation of economic neo-liberalization and globalization in Colombia in favour of the
positioning of the country in the global market). Understanding of the wrong is in itself a first step that
helps to point out ways to overcome it.

In the chart below I present a summary of the findings of the CDA, and how the study of narratives
helped to highlight the importance of discourse as a social practice, which mirrors broader shifts in the
structures of social realities. This allowed me to elucidate the re-contextualization of narratives -using
CDA jargon-, or the hybridization of discourses and social practices led by communities. This re-
contextualization of discourses is led by indigenous communities’ subsumed discourses to powerful
social orderings brought about by the neoliberal globalized modern world, and corresponds to
strategies that indigenous communities employ in order to contest such reality.

**Figure 8. Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010) and its use in this thesis – VI,
chapter/paper 8**

**Stage 4. Identify possible ways to past obstacles and conclusions**

The previous figures regarding discourse analysis in other chapters and chapters/papers (Figures 2,
3, 4, 6 and 7) gathered the parallel analysis of the data collected in this study under the lenses of the dialectical-relational version of Critical Discourse Analysis proposed by Fairclough (2010). The stages and steps in the figures related the information in the chapters and chapters/papers with the other possible reading of that same information carried out through an inter-discursive analysis.

Inter-discursive analysis allows the understanding of texts corresponding to indigenous communities’ narratives collected in interviews as a semiotic aspect of social events in social reality. This means that texts are not freely produced and circulated; rather they are embedded in social structures of societies in which relations of subordination and domination take place. These relations of power are reflected in turn in institutions and organizations of societies, which can be read as networks of social practices. The semiotic aspects of these networks of social practices are in turn the orders of discourse. The ‘neoliberal globalized modern world’, I have posed, can be read as a major dominant order of discourse which in turn is part of a feedback loop associated with other orders of discourse related to ‘neo-liberalization’, ‘globalization’ and ‘modernity’. The networks of social practices associated with this dominant order of discourse are, for example, the programming of it in social, environmental, and economic policies after the nineties, and also its manifestation in natural resource extraction projects like oil drilling, mining and the construction of dams for irrigation district that aim agro-export, and aerial irrigation of herbicides on indigenous territories to attack cocaine production in the war on drugs, even as this impacts territories and people unrelated to such practices.

The neoliberal globalized modern world as a dominant order of discourse is an ongoing social practice. This ideology has been in place in Colombia since the XVI century, but has been reinforced in its economic neoliberal version since the 1990s. While this process is continuous, its penetration into all parts of Colombian society and its localities, however, is increasing. This is because of the rolling back of big government with the joining of the Washington Consensus, and the insistence on market access, and small government that has been promoted since the 1990s.

At the same time, some other orders of discourses have emerged, such as multiculturalism. It seems to create synergistic opportunities in the Colombian context wherein the promotion of neoliberal globalized values is also the promotion of multiculturalism, so it seems that Colombia is modern and sensitive to its diverse indigenous people. But what it does is make them visible in a way that
commodifies their social and cultural being and spaces. But also, other associated phenomena have emerged in the frame of the neoliberal globalized modern order of discourse that are materialized in extra-semiotic ways which further influence the construction of semiotic social events (narratives or texts), like the Colombian internal war and the association of illegal armies with multinationals in pressing the acceptance of natural resource extraction projects in indigenous territories.

These are some examples of the multiple semiotic and extra-semiotic dimensions of discourses considered in this analysis. Furthermore, despite the special focus on post-1990s transitions, the re-contextualization of texts led by indigenous communities show that strategies, resistance, and contesting the dominant orders of discourse have been an ongoing/continual process. Therefore, the analysis of indigenous communities narratives has to go back to historical processes highlighting the particular socio-historical contexts of communities, in which socio-economic marginalization since colonization has been the main driver to semiotic and extra-semiotic negotiations and mobilizations of discourses, genres (i.e. means of communication) and styles (i.e. identities).

8.2 Overview of findings: cycles of hybridization

8.2.1 (Re) meanings of territory, Mother Nature, and ‘nature’

The conceptualization of territory (territories) that I propose in this study is based on the voices of indigenous interviewees. I consider this conceptualization important as it allows outsiders to know what indigenous communities defend in their contemporary struggles for cultural and territorial autonomies. But as a reflexive practitioner/researcher, the understanding of their constructions of ‘nature’, Mother Nature and territory, has been a decisive finding and allowed me to deconstruct their very intricate territorial defence today.

Indigenous communities’ constructions of territory are examples of how they have had to hybridize their constructions with contemporary law, due to lack of interlocution if they portray that same defence based on their animist constructions. The concept of territory became popular among indigenous communities only after the political constitution of 1991, when the state recognized particular rights for indigenous and black communities and the ancestral territories associated to them. Some exceptions are the ethnicities in southwest Colombia who have portrayed territorial defence since before 1991, however not always as an ethnic group in terms of territory but land.
Some communities in north Colombia have also made similar claims before the 1990s, which ended up in the recognition of the ‘black line’ which divides the territories of ‘older’ siblings and ‘younger’ siblings in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Indigenous communities have increased the use of the term territory in their discourses to facilitate the communication with the national and the global. I argue, however, that the imposition of territory as a political term has neglected the structuring of discourses from animist perspectives, or at least, has denied interlocution; and this is why indigenous communities are hybridizing this term with their own interpretations of the word. Indigenous discourses are subsumed to the hegemonic discourses which brought territory as a popular term after the 1990s. It again shows the power and privilege of some ideologies over others. Animist constructions of territory have been silenced, while contemporary impositions, although hybrids, are gaining more space in indigenous narratives.

According to my findings, the emergent constructions of territory (territories) by the Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao, encompass material and immaterial meanings of ‘nature’: material in the sense of the physical place inhabited and immaterial in regards to the spirituality associated with their existence in that place. They refer to ‘territory’ as the material dimension of ‘nature’; while ideas that I translate as ‘Mother Nature’ correspond to the immaterial or spiritual dimension of that same meaning of ‘nature’. Here, I clarify that territory, as the construction which facilitates references to the material place inhabited, also encompasses immaterial dimensions because the recognition of their rights externally requires that there be recognition of their cosmology. In the internal sense, the immaterial or ‘Mother Nature’, is more dominant (if now distant for some) and represented through symbolic and relational ways of knowing. ‘Territory’ and ‘Mother Nature’ go beyond dualistic differences in indigenous discourses; they are part of their constructions of ‘nature’, where the material and immaterial, as well as ‘nature’ and culture, are intricately related.

Also, another important finding was that constructions of territory vary within members of ethnicities and even within the same communities. Not everyone shares the same constructions. Here, self-identification and socio-economic marginalization mostly explain the diversification of constructions. Different constructions of territory make evident the amalgam of identities that shape the world, and emphasize peoples’ values and expectations in their existence, which vary according to their own beliefs and practices.
For the Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao, territories are, firstly, the place of the ancestors and spirits, and contemporary indigenous communities are their guardians. They guard the place in political as well as ontological terms. Therefore, territorial defence may ultimately mean an ambition to guarantee ‘autonomy’ and ‘self-determination’ of communities as it is understood under modern ontology, but it cannot be limited to those terms. Hence, again, it is evident that powerful discourses constructed within modern understandings, for example legal jargon, limit the meaning that communities aim to deliver.

Territorial advocacy incorporates the perpetuation of social practices of peoples inhabiting territories, as well as the possibilities of other beings -associated or not to those peoples- to exist, in a multidimensional co-responsibility for the existence of place and space, people and the non-human, the visible and invisible. Defence is mediated by spirituality but employing modern law for advocacy. Defence is carried out in their direct territories due to the urgency brought about by capitalist transformation in the neoliberal globalized modern world, but it also aims to defend other non-human worlds and absent territories because each territory is only a piece of the entire picture of Mother Earth.

### 8.2.2 Collective organization

Today’s understandings of ‘indigenous community’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘cabildo’, ‘parcialidad’ and ‘resguardo’, are as in the case of ‘territory’, terms that became widespread and popular after policy enactments of 1991. However, ‘cabildo’, ‘parcialidad’ and ‘resguardo’ are ways of organization of indigenous groups that were imposed on them since colonization. The political constitution of 1991 and the subsequent multicultural policy enactments ratified these colonial social arrangements. Consequently, ‘ethnicity’ is the denomination to refer to a cultural differentiated indigenous group; ‘communities’ are the organization of groups of people belonging to that ‘ethnicity’; ‘cabildo’ is the political board representative of the ‘community’; ‘parcialidad’ is a synonymous of ‘community’; and ‘resguardo’ is the denomination of the collective land hold by any ‘parcialidad’. However, indigenous communities in practical terms call ‘parcialidad’ to a given community which does not hold collective titles, and ‘resguardo’ to any community holding collective land titles.

Multiculturalism in Colombia has implied that indigenous communities have to register their identity and any claims with the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs, which renders them visible for several
purposes, including demands for access to their territories led by outsiders, and access to particular socio-economic benefits led by indigenous communities. Their registration has to follow the endorsement of indigenous political organization directed in the political constitution of 1991. I have pointed to the different rationales for the organization of communities. Some communities have hybridized their own traditional ways of organizing with those of the state in order to gain a voice for the defence of their territories. Urban communities are organizing in a process of re-claiming indigeneity. Some communities are challenging government understandings of political organization. These actions show the active agency of indigenous communities in contemporary Colombia.

Cofán communities have a history of continuous occupation of the western Amazon. Their livelihoods are remote to centres of power, considerably isolated of the rest of Colombian society until recently (the 1970s). At the same time, the Cofán are cohesive in cultural terms, they believe they have been ‘the Cofán’ forever. They maintain a direct association with ancestral territories. Their political organization in cabildos traces back to the colony. Also, despite the first indigenous reserves recognizing Cofán autonomy in 1943, it was not until 1998 that new indigenous legislation was decreed and communities received resguardo titles, inside the former reserves. Foreign and autochthonous organization systems co-exist in Cofán communities. Foreign political organizations are the cabildos directed in policy, and traditional ways of organizing are systems where every Cofán community has at least one taita or curaca (i.e. spiritual leader) who is the highest authority. The elders (mayores) deliberate issues occurring in their territories, and take decisions that have to be adopted. Subsequently, Cofán communities have developed their own mechanisms of governance, hybridizing organizational systems.

On ‘the other side of the spectrum’ are the Muisca-Chibcha. The community approached in this study has been constituted as a response to the call of their spirituality, not to fight a particular threat to territory. This was an astonishing finding; I was given a chance to understand how ancestral ties and spiritual connections mobilized them. The recognition as an indigenous person is an inner acceptance of the self, then the recognition of the similar others takes place; and then the organization as a community. They follow an alternative, less formalized movement led by Muisca-Chibcha spiritual leaders or chyquys.
The community approached in this study is not registered before the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs; but there is recognition with the local government. As of August 2014, this group comprised eight sub-communities (unofficially and confusingly called parcialidades), centralized in the principal cabildo. They do not hold collective land titles. They are individuals, families or groups of people dispersed in rural and urban sectors of different municipalities in the department. Therefore, they constitute a community at a departmental level. This way of organizing challenges the understanding of indigenous groups as inhabiting discrete spaces, and thus gaining national government recognition was difficult.

The Pijao ethnicity, in turn, gathers communities responding to very diverse rationales for their forms of organization. The Pijao presence in Natagaima and Coyaima municipalities is considered as pre-colonial. The Pijao in these municipalities live in rural areas where parcialidades and resguardos are also located. Organization of cabildos in the area dates back to the 1940s, and the first parcialidades were organized during the 1970s as a result of struggles for territorial autonomy, and inspired by indigenous movements in Cauca department. After the political constitution of 1991, most communities have registered before the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs to argue for recognition and awarding of resguardos. Another important driver for seeking national government recognition in these communities was the possibility of sheltering the protection of territories under previous consultation mechanisms during 2000s.

In the case of Coello municipality, the Pijao organized as an indigenous community in order to take advantage of their geopolitical location. Communities in El Espinal and Saldaña involve urban communities organized in transformed localities. And, in the case of some Pijao settled in Bogota as a result of forced displacement, they are organizing themselves in a foreign urban context. All of these communities formed parcialidades, and have organized and mobilized during the 2000s.

Indigenous communities have prioritised collective rather than individual capitalist responses in difficult contexts. But also, interviewees’ constructions of ‘community’, ‘reguardo’, ‘cabildo’, ‘parcialidad’, are given hybridized meanings. These concepts have been borrowed and re-interpreted. This has been essential for indigenous advocacy, and been proven useful for the external delivery of messages.
The three indigenous ethnicities approached in this study could not be more diverse in their rationales for self-organization. This diversity reflects what happens when indigenous people reify their presence in Colombian society especially after the opportunities given by multiculturalism and the socio-economic benefits associated with the recognition of the State after the political constitution of 1991. Their responsibilities to each other, and to territory, have also increased with neo-liberalization.

Collective organization occurs also as a pan-ethnic phenomenon. Neo-liberalization has allowed, paradoxically, the creation of pan-ethnic movements strengthening indigenous defence at national and international levels. Despite being mentioned only briefly in the thesis, the Cofán defence of traditional knowledge against the patenting of their sacred plant, i.e. yage -where indigenous communities ethnicities in the Amazon joined efforts to confront the property rights system-, was an example.

Also, some indigenous individuals and communities approached in this study have participated in larger collective action movements I explored some examples regarding the participation of some members of the Muisca-Chibcha ethnicity in collective movements for environmental and social justice, and the case of some urban/rural Pijao communities which also play a role in civil society movements for environmental protection at a departmental level.

8.2.3 Negotiation of identity

Among the Pijao, there was no single identity; rather, some members preferred their association to a class, instead of an ethnic group. Some of the Pijao self-identify with outsiders as indigenous, some as campesinos, some as campesinos-mestizos and some as indigenous-campesinos. The understanding of identity as an indigenous person is not standardized for the case of the Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha either; however, their identification as members of an ethnic group is not as variable as the Pijao.

Since colonization the Cofán have always been recognized as an indigenous group. The Muisca-Chibcha do not hesitate in portraying themselves as indigenous -either indigenous or indigenous-campesinos- to outsiders. This is evident, for example, in the sense that even though they have not been registered before the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs, they mobilized as an indigenous group.
I noted in this study that political categorizations of rural communities led by the state have been important for the Pijao members’ internal recognition as individuals and groups, and therefore, their identification to outsiders. Notwithstanding the benefits brought about by national policies for ethnic recognition, the main reason why indigenous communities organize is that their historical socio-economic marginalization has acted as a catalyst for rekindling identification of what-it-is-to-be-Pijao, and that process cannot be decoupled from their territories. This is why this ethnicity presents a very interesting case in understanding different drivers for self-recognition as an ethnic group in contemporary contexts.

Of course, shifting meanings have taken place since Spanish colonization. Mobilization of identities can be seen also as the result of historical contexts. For example, indigenous persons have mixed with other non-indigenous populations since the colony; powerful discourses of mestizaje questioned the legitimacy of indigenous claims for land during the Republic; and Colonial and Republic race/class/ethnic categorizations are still reproduced in Colombian society today. But, contemporary shifts in ethnic identification are important for the moments when neoliberal policies and ancestral territories meet. A heightened sense of ethnic identity can translate greater resistance and struggle given the new opportunities brought about by multiculturalism.

In this study, the active agency of communities given the particular realities in which they live - aggravated by the neo-liberalization of the economy, and the further penetration of outsiders in places of being- is, therefore, also reflected in the hybridization and mobilization of identities. These hybridizations have led to ethnic identification for some Pijaos, and a strengthening of ethnic recognition for others. Their new position in the Colombian political structure assists them in framing what is central to territory, self, and collective identity.

8.2.4 ‘Hybrid inventive advocacies’

The implementation of ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ was another significant finding in this study. Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha communities hold animist beliefs that shape their relations with territory. Territorial transformation affects places and peoples in multidimensional ways, from physical alteration to spiritual desertion; spirits may leave, so there is a collective loss and a sense of individual loss of meaning. Despite the multiple disadvantages that post-1990s resource extraction has brought, both groups have practiced ‘hybrid inventive advocacy’. They harness the law to protect their
spirituality, with the mechanisms available to them in modern contexts. In this process they have changed their internal discourse to allow a certain level of acceptance of meanings as connected to material realities and consequences.

I presented five examples of ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ carried out by the Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha ethnicities which demonstrate the active and effective defence of territories in today’s exclusive contexts. ‘Hybrid inventive advocacies’ are co-constituted by sacredness, beliefs, memory, and post-1990s legal mechanisms that protect cultural diversity. Community strategies, however, differ according to context.

The first two examples relate to the use of previous consultation as a mechanism for territorial defence by the Cofán, who take advantage of the rights associated with their resguardos’ titles to deny oil drilling activities in their territories. The third example is the writ of protection action - an instrument granted to all Colombians for the protection of their rights. The Muisca-Chibcha use of this and other legal mechanisms have allowed their ideas about territory to be accepted, and led to success in countering unwelcome oil extraction in sacred sites. The fourth example is the biodiversity protection regulations used by the Cofán to establish a national park in one of the few relatively unspoiled areas remaining in their territories. The Cofán have agreed with this less than ideal form of protection to ensure a place where the contact of taitas with other worlds during yagé rituals can be sustained. And, the fifth example presented in this study is the strategic advantage that the Muisca-Chibcha are taking of their geopolitical position in or close to centres of power, and the diversity of roles they play in society which have provided them of opportunities to share their ideas at a senior level. This has allowed the creation of, and participation in, collective action movements for environmental and social justice. These sorts of actions are difficult for other ethnicities.

These ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ demonstrate how spiritual connections and social organization are negotiated with other mainstream powerful realities when outsiders enter. This leads to the hybridization of indigenous social practices. The defence of territories often implies the further hybridization of indigenous discourses with policy language. These policies entrench the separation of people from their environment. Territorial transformation occurs at accelerated rates, and adopting terms from policies facilitates advocacy for indigenous peoples, even as their meanings and intentions usually differ. According to interviewees, natural resource extraction projects like oil drilling, mining,
and agro-industrial plantations are the most significant causes of territorial transformation in their ancestral territories and resguardos since the 1990s.

The use of legal tools requires the hybridization of discourses as part of resistance, and appearing to accept legalistic and physical interpretations of space. But, hybridized discourses also encompass their worldviews, their identities, and their connection to tangible localities. In this sense, I argue that modern hybridity in indigenous actions and beliefs are intended to safeguard spirituality, and that these hybrid spaces have emerged through interaction between indigenous desires for territorial autonomy and the modern political and legal mechanisms available to them.

8.3 Contribution to knowledge

I consider that this study contributes to the understanding of Colombian indigenous societies’ rationales, and what differentiates them from others. Indigenous communities, as well as black, gypsy and some campesino communities, and even some collectives and individuals of the Colombian dominant society, hold particular relations to ‘nature’ and understandings of being in the world, which being subordinated to larger dominant structures, have not been explored to a great extent in the literature. This study has shown that rather than being romanticised pre-modern societies, indigenous ethnicities are composed of active agents –individuals and groups- who construct their realities in everyday encounters.

Despite the efforts of many to cover these topics, the Colombian indigenous communities’ contestation of neo-liberalization and globalization have sometimes been portrayed as homogeneous. While ethnographic studies (e.g. Ulloa, 2005) provide exceptions, this is largely because of the very complex structure of Colombian society and the intricate multidisciplinary nature of the analysis required which makes the development of knowledge diffuse and at sometimes slow. In order to contribute to this task, this study weaves the understandings of Colombia’s rich and complex society with the contestations made to dominant structures in contemporary indigenous communities. Consequently, this study contributes to post-colonial studies, political ecology, ecological economics, and critical social research, which study inequalities and injustices in different ways. Their struggles for environmental and social justice, which are at the core of indigenous ethnicities, claim for their right to continue empowering material and immaterial realities in their worldviews and livelihoods.
Indigenous societies are part of a diverse world, in which dominant worldviews have made them invisible and have largely silenced the voice of these cultural others.

Also, this study contributes to the understanding of cultural hybridizations of contemporary indigenous communities, and their agency in constructing those. This study, very importantly, explains how other constructions of ‘nature’ co-exist today with the modern western scientific way of knowing.

Finally, the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology was very useful in the analysis of narratives in interdisciplinary research. The uncovering of ideological relations in everyday encounters, and the subsequent discourses structured in- and meanings constructed out of these encounters are examples of the utility of this approach in understanding indigenous struggles in Colombia, and largely, in Latin America. I consider that this is another contribution of this study.

8.4 Limitations

The biases considered in the introduction of this thesis are limitations. In particular, the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis implies a high risk of overlooking theories and frameworks that should have been taken into consideration. But also, the number of interviews and the time spent in communities limited my understanding of indigenous communities’ realities. Finally, the constant movement between languages constitutes another limitation in the sense that ideas gathered in Spanish (or Cofán-Spanish, for example) are constructed within different systems of signification, therefore when being translated into English, some meanings can be lost, especially in the translation of interviewees’ narratives.

8.5. Areas for further research

Several areas for further research have been opened up, including the exploration of other indigenous individuals’ narratives when they are not associated to leadership roles in their communities or ethnicities, and the further constructions of ‘nature’ and contestations to the tough contexts brought about by the neoliberal globalized modern world. A greater focus on gender, for example, looking at the constructions of territory and nature from a gendered perspective, or looking at why ‘nature’ is portrayed as a female in animist constructions, would have been helpful. Also, the role of landscape attributes and non-human others in the indigenous communities’ constructions of territories would be
an area of interesting further research. This analysis could also be extended to other indigenous ethnicities.

8.6 Conclusion

As a general conclusion I would like to respond to the main research question of this study: ‘To what extent and how have discourses of ‘nature’ held by Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao indigenous ethnicities hybridized with those of the neoliberal globalized modern rationale?’.

Cycles of hybridization of the local and the global carried out by these ethnicities have accelerated with the post-1990s political shifts in Colombia. Political transitions linked to neo-liberalization, and multiculturalism -what some associate as ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’-, have permeated all spheres of indigenous social realities. I presented examples showing the implications of the pervasiveness of neoliberal policies in Colombia, across social, cultural, economic, and environmental domains, and how they were materialized in indigenous territories.

The Cofán, Muisca-Chibcha and Pijao communities approached in this study, despite having diverse histories and contemporary contexts, have contested the ruling of the neoliberal globalized modern world through important and critical hybridizations of discourses and social practices. These processes reveal their awareness and skill, in contesting, resisting and criticizing dominant discourses and social practices. Their aim, as revealed in interviews, is almost always to safeguard their relational worldviews. Hybridization was found to be a complex process. Identities, collectives, and ‘hybrid inventive advocacies’ were deployed to respond to dominant socioeconomic realities.

Nonetheless, indigenous ethnicities can be internally diverse and -to some extent- contradictory. Negotiation of discourses and practices is an ongoing process in everyday encounters, with multiple outcomes. This study also challenges the understanding of contemporary indigenous groups as culturally homogeneous in Colombia. I argue that this understanding fails to consider the active agency of indigenous individuals and groups.

The multicultural character of Colombia imposes very different rationales across its heterodox geographical space, which also implies that ethnicities may interpret and respond differently to the operationalization of policy. I focused on three major examples. Indigenous peoples have great disadvantages if progress and development, economic growth, and ‘civilization’ is their aim, or the aim
of those seeking to control them. But, despite this, they are empowered, having learned to use the political environment of the post-1990s. Hybridization facilitates advocacy, but at the same time negatively impacts indigenous worldviews.

Finally, the extent to which indigenous communities hybridized their discourses and other social practices with outsiders – national and global ‘others’ – depends on the opportunities or lack of opportunities that such actions will bring to them. Particularly, based on my analysis, indigenous communities seem to be willing to hybridize their social practices as long as the survival of their powerful symbolic and material realities over time and in different social arenas is guaranteed. This alone should ensure their survival in contemporary Colombia.
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**Chapter/paper 6**

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**Chapter/paper 7**

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Chiga afepaema
(Cofán)

Chogui chogui
(Muisca)

Careyx careyx botax imax
(Pijao)

Muchas gracias
(Spanish)

Thanks
## Appendix 1. Semistructured interview structure in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Información general</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cuál es su nombre? (no va a ser revelado en los documentos del estudio)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuál es su edad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Género del entrevistado</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Información específica (voz y orden del discurso)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A cuál etnia pertenece?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ha sido miembro de la comunidad durante toda su vida?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Qué papel (rol social) desempeña en la comunidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Por cuánto tiempo ha desempeñado ese papel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuáles son sus compromisos con la comunidad de acuerdo a este papel?</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discurso personal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Qué otros papeles ha desempeñado en la comunidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A qué edad usted desempeñó esos roles y por cuánto tiempo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- En términos generales, cuáles fueron sus compromisos con la comunidad en esas posiciones?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hablemos de su familia…</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuál es la estructura social de su comunidad (jerarquización)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cuál es el papel de las mujeres en su comunidad?, la misma pregunta para los hombres</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Padres - rol en la comunidad</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Quiénes son/eran sus padres directos? (un poco de historia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Son/fueron ellos miembros de la comunidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Si la respuesta es afirmativa, cuáles son/eran sus papeles dentro de la comunidad?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pareja - rol en la comunidad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tiene una pareja? (casado/a?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuántos años tiene?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hace parte de la comunidad?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuál es su papel en la comunidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cuál es su papel en casa? Cuál es el suyo?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hijos - rol en la comunidad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tiene hijos?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cuántos años tienen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cómo la comunidad establece cuando una persona ha alcanzado cierta edad para volverse independiente?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Si los hijos son independientes: cuáles son sus papeles en la comunidad? Si aún son dependientes: qué espera para sus hijos cuando ellos crezcan?</td>
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</table>
- Es abuelo/abuela? Si es afirmativo, las mismas preguntas que para los hijos

Ahora hablemos de su experiencia personal…

- Cumple usted actualmente el rol en la comunidad que usted esperaba cumplir cuando era niño/a?
- ¿Qué ha cambiado?
- ¿Qué solía hacer cuando era niño/a? Quiero decir, sus recuerdos más influyentes
- Fue al colegio? ¿Qué clase de colegio?
- Fue a la universidad? / Planea ir a la universidad?
- En qué medida el hecho de ir a una Universidad y dejar la comunidad es bueno o malo para los miembros de la comunidad? Y para la comunidad?
- ¿Qué solía hacer 30/25/20/15/5 años atrás? (depende de la edad del entrevistado)

Discurso extendido a la comunidad

- Cómo, de qué manera, ha cambiado la identidad de la comunidad como etnia indígena a través de los años?
- ¿Qué momentos han marcado los mayores cambios en la comunidad?

Hablemos acerca de su lengua nativa…

- Habla su lengua nativa?
- Si respuesta afirmativa, cómo aprendió su lengua nativa? Por ejemplo, desde que nació la fue aprendiendo, o es el resultado de un proceso de reivindicación
- ¿Cómo ha mantenido hablar en su lengua nativa a través de los años?
- Si respuesta negativa, cuáles son las razones por las cuales no habla su lengua nativa?
- Otros miembros de su comunidad hablan la lengua nativa?
- Respuesta afirmativa, cómo la lengua es transmitida?
- ¿Cuál es la importancia de la lengua nativa para usted? Para su comunidad?
- Si nadie habla la lengua nativa, cuáles son las razones?
- Si no se habla la lengua nativa, qué considera usted que la etnia ha perdido con la pérdida de la lengua? Qué ha ganado?
- Hablar español tiene alguna ventaja para su comunidad? Desventaja?

Discursos de la naturaleza

- Usted cree que la manera como se relacionaban con el territorio/ el hogar/ la comunidad (entre otros, dependiendo de lo que se haya hablado hasta el momento y del contexto de la comunidad) ha cambiado con el cambio de la lengua nativa por el español? Cuál es la diferencia? Ejemplos

Hablemos del relato de la creación o el comienzo de todas las cosas…

- Puede comentarme un poco sobre la cosmogonía de su comunidad?
- Todos en la comunidad creen este relato?
- Cuál es la relación de los miembros de la comunidad con el resto de la sociedad, especialmente con la que le rodea directamente? (gente, límites territoriales, intercambios económicos…)
- Esta relación ha cambiado durante el tiempo?
- Respuesta afirmativa, cuáles han sido los principales cambios?
- Cómo recuerda su conexión con el territorio cuando era más joven (niño)?

El contexto de la comunidad…

- Quiénes son los vecinos de la comunidad?
- Cuáles son los términos de la relación de la comunidad con sus vecinos?
- En particular, hay alguna relación comercial con sus vecinos? Tengo que hacer algunas observaciones de acuerdo a la información sobre a qué se dedican los miembros de la comunidad
- Cuáles son los límites de la comunidad con sus vecinos? E.g., Limites étnicos (pertenecen a la misma etnia?), limites territoriales, en relación a la percepción del mundo …
- Cómo se relacionan los líderes de su comunidad (usted?) con el gobierno central?
- Vive en el mismo lugar de cuando usted fue un niño?
- Es su casa similar a la casa que habitaba cuando era un niño?
- Es su dieta alimenticia la misma que cuando era niño?
- Ha dejado en algún momento físicamente a su comunidad? Con qué propósito?
- Usted piensa que su comunidad está bajo alguna amenaza física o cultural? Cuáles son esas amenazas? Cuándo esas amenazas tuvieron lugar (especial atención a los 1990s)?

Algunas comunidades, completamente contactadas con la sociedad occidental, están desarrollando procesos de reivindicación de sus derechos para mantener su cultura y específicamente, sus percepciones sobre la naturaleza. En estos casos, preguntaría:

- Cuáles son los procesos de reivindicación cultural que ustedes están llevando a cabo hoy en día?
- Cuánto tiempo llevan en este proceso?
- A quién van dirigidos los reclamos? E.g., gobierno, sociedad colombiana…
- ¿Qué es naturaleza para usted? (o territorio, depende de lo que se haya hablado a lo largo de la entrevista)
- Su percepción de la naturaleza es la misma percepción de toda la comunidad?
- ¿Qué percepciones de la naturaleza han cambiado en su comunidad?
- ¿Qué ha motivado esos cambios?
- Por qué mantener sus percepciones sobre la naturaleza es importante?
## Appendix 2. Semistructured interview structure in English

| SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE TO BE CONDUCTED TO PIJAO, MUISCA-CHIBCHA AND COFAN COMMUNITIES (COLOMBIA) IN THE FRAME OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT |
| J. Marcela Chaves-Agudelo |
| PhD Candidate |
| School of Geography |
| The University of Melbourne |
| Australia |

**Information of general kind**

- What is your name? (confidentiality)
- How old are you?
- Gender of the interviewee

**Information of specific kind** (voice and order of discourse)

- Which ethnicity do you belong to?
- Have you been a member of the community throughout your life?
- Which is your social role in this community?
- How long have you been commissioned in this role?
- What are your commitments with the community according to your role?

**Personal discourse**

- What other roles have you had in the community?
- At what age did you take those positions and for how long?
- In general terms, what were your commitments with the community in those positions?

**Let’s talk about your family…**

- What is the social structure of your community (hierarchization)?
- What are the role of women in your community?, same question for men

**Parents-role**

- Who are/were your direct parents? (a bit of story)
- Are/were they community members?
- If yes, what are/were their role in the community?

**Partner-role**

- Do you have a partner? (married?)
- How old is she/he?
- Is her/him member of the community?
- If yes, what is her/his role in the community?
- What is her/his role at home? What about yours?

**Children-role**

- Do you have children?
- How old are they?
- How does your community establish when a person reaches certain age and becomes independent?
- If children are adults: what are their roles in the community?
  If they are still young: what do you expect for your children when they grow up?
- Are you grandmother/grandfather? If yes, same questions than for children
Let’s move on to your personal experience…

- Are you doing nowadays the role in the community that you expected when younger?
- What has changed?
- What did you use to do when you were a child? I mean, your more remarkable memories
- Did you go to school? What kind of school?
- Did you go to the university? / Are you planning in going to the university?
- To what extent the fact of going to university and leave the community is good or bad for the community members? For your community?
- What did you use to do 30/25/20/15/5 years ago? (up to the age of the interviewee)

Discourse extended to the community

- How, in which way, has your community shifted the indigenous identity over the years?
- What moments did mark changes in the community?

Let’s talk about your native language…

- Do you speak your original language?
- If yes, how did you get your native language? For example, since was born, or over the time as a result of a claiming process
- If yes, how have you maintained speaking your native language?
- If not, what are the reasons?
- Do members of your community speak the native language?
- If yes, how is the language transmitted?
- What is the importance of the native language for you? For your community?
- If no one speaks the native language, what are the reasons?
- If no one speaks the native language, what do you consider has the community missed when losing the language? What has the community had gained?
- Does speak in Spanish have any advantage for your community? Disadvantage?

Discourses of nature

- Do you think that the meaning of territory/place/community (among others according to previous answers) have changed along the shift of language? What is the difference? Examples

Let’s talk about the story of the beginning of everything…

- For your ethnicity, what is the story of the beginning of everything (of the world)?
- Does everyone in the community believe in such story?
- How is the relationship between community members and the world (people, territory boundaries, economic exchanges) surrounding them?
- Has this relationship changed over time?
- If yes, what have been the main changes?
- How do you remember you connected with the territory when you were younger?

The community’s context

- Who are the community’s neighbors?
- How is the relationship between the community and its neighbors?
- In particular, is there any specific commercial relationship with the neighbors? I have to do some observations about the community members’ jobs
- What are the borders of your community with the neighbors? Example, ethnic borders (do they belong to the ethnicity?), territorial borders, in relation to the perception of the world…
- What is the relationship of community leaders (you?) and the central Colombian government?
- Do you live in the same place as when you were a child?
- Is your house alike to the one you inhabited when child?
- Do you eat the same food than when you were a child?
- Have you physically left the community in any moment of your life? With what purpose?
- Do you think that your community is facing some risk in both physical and cultural terms? what are those risks? To when do they date (gets at pre/after 1990s issue)?

Some communities, completely contacted with the western society, are developing processes for claiming their right to maintain their culture, and specifically, their perceptions of nature. In these cases, I will ask:

- What are the cultural claims that you are addressing in the present day?
- How long have you been in this claiming process? Who are you addressing the claims to? For example, government, society…

- What is nature for you? (or territory, depends on previous answers)
- Is your perception of nature the same perception of the entire community?
- What perceptions of nature have shifted in your community?
- What have been the drivers of such shift?
- Why to maintain your own perceptions of nature is important?
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>University /Institution</th>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>(Re) Meanings of ‘nature’ in a neoliberal globalized modern world: three cases of Colombian indigenous ethnicities (Muisca-Chibcha, Cofán and Pijao)</td>
<td>Completion Seminar School of Geography</td>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Memory, belief, and thinking: Animism at the roots of post-1990s’ defense of territories. The case of Cofán and Muisca-Chibcha ethnicities (Colombia)</td>
<td>Wally Thompson Spanish Seminar Series 2016</td>
<td>Deakin University – City Campus. Melbourne</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>(Re) meanings of nature in a neoliberal globalized modern world: three cases of Colombian indigenous communities. A community view perspective</td>
<td>III Spanish and Latin American Research Day</td>
<td>Monash University – Caulfield Campus. Melbourne</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Identity contestation: Colombia pluricultural or mestiza? A brief historical overview</td>
<td>The Institute of Latin American Studies at La Trobe University Symposium “A new path for Colombia: opportunities and challenges”</td>
<td>La Trobe University – City Campus. Melbourne</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>“We live from Mother Nature”: neoliberal globalization, commodification, the ‘war on drugs’, and biodiversity in Colombia since the 1990s.</td>
<td>Wally Thompson Research Seminar 2015</td>
<td>Monash University – Caulfield Campus. Melbourne</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Meeting with Dr. Diana Ojeda</td>
<td>Pontificical Xaverian</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>Meeting with Dr. Nohra León Head of the Department of Geography</td>
<td>Colombian National University, Bogotá DC</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Meeting with Brigitte Baptiste General Director</td>
<td>Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>The political ecology of discourses of nature: the role of Colombian policies during the 1990s in the (re) meaning of local discourses</td>
<td>Mesoamerican Society for Ecological Economics 2nd Conference, EcoEco Alternatives 2014. &quot;Varieties of Ecological Economics: Advancing Towards Alternatives for People and Ecosystems in Latin America&quot;</td>
<td>University of Costa Rica, San José</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Human rights of Colombian indigenous peoples, threats and responses. Graduate</td>
<td>Roundtable on International and comparative human rights with Dr. Jim Hathaway, University of Michigan</td>
<td>Melbourne School of Graduate Research, The University of Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Applying Critical Discourse Analysis based on Norman Fairclough’s work in analysing (re) meanings of discourses of nature of two Colombian indigenous communities in a neoliberal globalized modern world</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Theory Workshop with Dr. Antonio Almeida, University of Sao Paulo and A/prof. Ruth Beilin, University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Department of Resource Management and Geography, The University of Melbourne</td>
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Appendix 4. View of the article entitled "We live from Mother Nature": neoliberal globalization, commodification, the 'war on drugs', and biodiversity in Colombia since the 1990s, published on August 2015 by SAGE Open Journal

"We Live From Mother Nature": Neoliberal Globalization, Commodification, the "War on Drugs," and Biodiversity in Colombia Since the 1990s

J. Marcela Chaves-Agudelo 1, Simon P. J. Batterbury 1, and Ruth Beilin 1

Abstract
This article explores how macroeconomic and environmental policies instituted since the 1990s have altered meanings, imaginaries, and the human relationship to nature in Colombia. The Colombian nation-state is plur-ethnic, multilingual, and megabiodiverse. In this context, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, and some peasant communities survive hybridization of their cultures. They have developed their own ways of seeing, understanding, and empowering the world over centuries of European rule. However, threats to relatively discrete cultural meanings have increased since major changes in the 1990s, when Colombia experienced the emergence of new and modern interpretations of nature, such as "biodiversity," and a deepening of globalized neoliberal economic and political management. These policies involve a modern logic of being in the world, the establishment of particular regulatory functions for economies, societies, and the environment, and their spread has been facilitated by webs of political and economic power. We trace their local effects with reference to three indigenous groups.

Keywords
discourses of nature, Colombia, neoliberal globalization, political ecology, biodiversity

Introduction
The Colombian constitution of 1991 recognized the plur-ethnic character of this nation-state for the first time. It acknowledged traditional communities including indigenous groups, Afro-Colombians, gypsies, and peasant groups who rely on their own ways of constructing and practicing nature based on their fashion of seeing and understanding, and empowerment in their territories and places. But the 1990s also saw a marked increase in the threats to the cultural survival of all of these groups, with the emergence of globalized forms of neoliberal, market-led economies and a host of new interpretations of nature, including "biodiversity management." In this article, we identify these threats, and the relevant policies, illustrated with accounts from three different Colombian societies, the Panjasi, MuSa-Chibcha, and Coñán.

These shaped a decade of important changes to policy, leading to the hybridizations of local discourses of nature with those from "outside" Colombia. This article presents and critiques the deepening of modern ways of knowing in Colombian society with their arrival.

We define the neoliberal globalized project as something that is ongoing—"neoliberalization" is a worldview with modern values that has been spread globally since the 1980s with particular regulatory functions for economies, societies, and the environment (Castree, 2010, pp. 7-13). It prioritizes the idea of individual, corporate, and collective freedom of choice. The state, in this reading, obstructs liberty, and fails in guaranteeing welfare in society. The market, by rewarding "success" and through competition, may take its place. This
Author/s:
Chaves Agudelo, Judy Marcela

Title:
(Re) meanings of nature in a neoliberal globalized modern world: three cases of Colombian indigenous ethnicities (Pijao, Cofan and Muisca-Chibcha)

Date:
2016

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