Fall 8-10-2018

Translating Global Nature: Territoriality, Environmental Discourses, and Ecocultural Identities

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Running head: TRANSLATING GLOBAL NATURE

**TRANSLATING GLOBAL NATURE: TERRITORIALITY,
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSES, AND
ECOCULTURAL IDENTITIES**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Communication

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December 2018

Dedication

I dedicate this study to Lina, Antonia, and Sebastián, who were my strength and inspiration throughout this journey. Sebastián enlightens my early mornings by saying my name and summoning me into the new day. Antonia and her curiosity about my work opened opportunities to ground my thinking by engaging with a bright eight-year-old who complicated in beautiful ways my ideas. By looking at her eyes, I felt the peace I needed. Lina is the voice and the body, the tender caress, and the loving gaze. Tú me elevas, my LSD —Lina in the Sky with Diamonds.

To all of you, even though I was away in my mind, I was always present with my heart.

Acknowledgements

What is written in the following pages is one of the paths I took to engage in the search of my academic self. My interactions and relationships with Awá people, their stories and histories, and their resilient force have sedimented my commitment to environmental and social justice. Awá also gave me the gift of humility, for which I will always be thankful.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my advisor Dr. Tema Milstein. Gracias for the simple questions that opened myself to the ecological dimension, the ontological challenges to my humanity, and the lightness of being. I feel we end this part of our shared journeys fearless.

Dr. Mary Jane Collier, gracias for positively complicating life by expanding my world of meaningful human relations. Our conversations were always fruitful and engaging and became moments of mentoring that I will cherish and emulate in future endeavors.

A very special thanks to Dr. Ilia Rodriguez for her precise insights and constant support. Gracias por la camaradería, the encouragement, and the bilingual conversations.

I want to thank Dr. Chris Duvall for his interest in my study. Gracias for your commitment to the process of this dissertation.

I thank Aliesha Ringer, a friend whose editorial work and suggestions improved the final manuscript of this study.

Fially, I would like to thank the institutions that granted me financial support at different stages of my studies. The scholarship I received from the Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación of Ecuador, supported the first

four years of the program. The scholarship supported my basic living expenses during this academic journey. The fifth year, the Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico granted me its Ph.D. Fellowship, which allowed me to dedicate most of my time to writing and finishing my dissertation. Lastly, the National Consortium of Environmental Rhetoric & Writer-in-Residence Summer Fellowship Program opened the inspirational space of Enchanted Rock in Hillsboro, NM, at a time when I most needed a retreat from everyday life to land my ideas and emotions.

In the end, it seems that everything starts all over again. This study is the beginning of unpredictable future paths, and I am thankful to each and everyone who, in their own and unique way, nurtured my spirit. As the poet Antonio Machado said, Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar…

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Abstract

In this study, I explore environmental discourses circulating among Indigenous transboundary organizations working on environmental initiatives at the border between Ecuador and Colombia. I focus on three global environmental discourses –sustainability, development, and climate change– as they are at the core of the global environmental governance vernacular. La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), one of the few transboundary Indigenous organizations working along the binational border, utilizes these global concepts to frame their environmental initiatives and projects. I use a critical and interpretive qualitative approach to investigate, deconstruct, and rearticulate global environmental discourses circulating among and translated by two of the organizations forming the GFAB: Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (FCAE) and Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA) from Colombia.

I conducted in-depth interviews with cultural and political elites working in, or related to, these Awá organizations. I analyze interview texts, Awá organizations' community-based plans, official government documents, and NGOs reports to understand (1) How does the GFAB understand, construct, and reproduce their relationships with their territories?; (2) How does the GFAB translate the global environmental discourses

of development, sustainability, and climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works?; and (3) What are the politics of identity, ecocultural identities and positionings, that emerge from Awá's translation of and engagement with development, sustainability, and climate change within Awá's territoriality?

To answer these questions, I investigate how transboundary Indigenous communities construct a sense of territory, navigate global environmental discourses, and negotiate multiple ecocultural identities. I describe the articulations among relationships and principles that configure Awá's territoriality. Then, I situate the notion of translation in relation to Awá's territory, *katza su,* to explore the system of meanings implicated in Awá's translation of the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change. I illustrate how Awá recontextualize and emplace these discourses once they enter the material and discursive realm of Awá's territoriality. Finally, I further the notion of territory and territoriality to investigate the formation of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities. I illustrate how two dialectics, insider-outsider and respect-disrespect, work in the discursive positioning of these populations as restorative or unwholesome ecocultural identities. In closing, I propose a rhizomatic situational analysis framework to map factors, forces, and processes, and demonstrate its applicability by presenting a situational analysis of the Awá binational Indigenous people. The rhizome illuminates Awá's translation of development, sustainability, and climate change, and the ecocultural identities that emerge through processes of translation. I end with some recommendations to rethink identity-based mediation in environmental conflicts, explore transversal forms of communication, agency, and dissent, and further processes of environmental peacebuilding at the border between Ecuador and Colombia.

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Acronyms

ACIPAP: Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Pueblo Awá del Putumayo (Association of Indigenous Councils of the Awá People of the Putumayo)

BIZ: Border Integration Zone

CAMAWARI: Cabildo Mayor Awá de Ricaurte (Main Council Awa of Ricaurte)

CAN: Comunidad Andina de Naciones (Andean Nations Community)

COMBIFRON: Colombia–Ecuador Binational Border Commission

COVIEC: Ecuadorian–Colombian Neighboring and Integration Commission

ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)

FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

FCAE: Federación Centros Awá del Ecuador (Ecuadorian Federation of Awá Centers)

GFAB: Gran Familia Awá Binacional (Grand Binational Awá Family)

GAD: Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados (Decentralized Autonomous Governments)

ITE: Entidad Territorial Indígena (Indigenous Territorial Entity); Colombia.

PADIF: Program to Support Foreign Trade and Integration

PNBV: Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir 2013-2017, Ecuador (National Plan for Good Living)

PBIF: Plan Binacional de Integración Fronteriza Ecuador-Colombia 2014-2022 (Binational Border Integration Plan Ecuador-Colombia)

PDBA: Plan de Desarrollo Binacional Andino 2006-2011 (Andean Binational Development Plan)

PBIF: Plan Binacional de Integración Fronteriza 2017-2022 (Binational Border

   Integration Plan)

PNDC: Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2014-2018, Colombia (National Development Plan)

SDGs: United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

TIC: Circunscripción Territorial Indígena (Territorial Indigenous Constituency); Ecuador

UNIPA: Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (Indigenous Unit of Awá People)

Glossary of Awapit Terms

Awapit Pinkih Kammu Gramática Pedagógica del Awapit

Excerpt from Ministerio de Educación (2009). Translation by the author

Introduction: About Awapit (Awá: people; Pit: mouth).

Awapit, like many of the ancestral languages of America, is an agglutinating type, which means that it constructs its expressions and meanings by adding morphemes to a root. This characteristic makes Awapit very different from languages such as Spanish, which are more analytical[*] in nature. The differences between these families of languages are not only formal, but respond to completely different logical schemes of thought, which come from worldviews related to specific social realities, differentiated from European cultures and languages by an enormous distance in time and space.

Awapit also shares with many Amerindian languages the characteristic of being basically aspectual. This means that temporal notions are not indicated as specifically as in other languages. The same morpheme can be used to express present and past or present and future, depending on the general context of the enunciation. However, there are certain markers that are used when someone wants to emphasize a specific time. This language, especially in its older speakers, still retains practically intact the characteristics of primary orality.[**] Consequently, when we write texts that do not literally reproduce the

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[*] An analytic language uses little or no inflection — a change in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, and gender to indicate grammatical relationships. As Ong (2002) states, "sparsely linear or analytic thought and speech are artificial creations, structured by the technology of writing" (p. 39)

[**] Primary orality, "the orality of a culture totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print" (Ong, 2002, p. 10)

oral discourse, we are transforming their normal models of expression to adapt them to the needs of schooling and literacy (pp. 11-12).

Rational for Organizing Awapit Terms

I divided this glossary into three major sections. The section "principles" lists the four principles guiding and supporting Awá's territoriality. The section "expressions" indexes the meanings that emerged from the interviews I conducted for this study. Therefore, some of these meanings are not word-for-word translations. I complement these expressions with an exact translation of the Awapit words forming them. To this end, I used the Awapit Pɨnkɨh Kammu Gramática Pedagógica del Awapit, published by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2009). The section "keywords" highlights terms that seem to be relevant as these are the only Awapit words used in Awá organizations' documents written in Spanish and collected for this study. It is worth noting that the word "awapit" is phonetically different in Colombia and Ecuador. In Colombia the letter [p] sounds like a [b] as in the word "bee."

Phonetic note: Pronunciation: ɫ / ɨ = nasal sound

Principles of Awá's Territoriality.

- Katza su: Territory

- Wanmattɨt puran: Unity

- Tɨinta paran: Autonomy

- Au tunto tuan: Culture and identity

Expressions.

Terms in this section are organized in clusters of meanings. The title of the cluster is its linguistic root.

Cluster: Ɨnkal Awá; People of the mountain.

- Awá: People.

- Ɨnkal: Mountain; jungle; environment

Cluster: Wat; Bueno; Good.

- Kalkin: To work

- Puran: To be; to live; to exist

- Usan or Uzan: To live

- Wat: Good

- Wat ɨmtu: Something that is advancing, developing

- Wat kalkin (o wat mɨlna): Sustainability

- Wat mɨlna: To get along; be in harmony with the forests, with nature; development

- Wat puran: Good life/living; be calm

- Wat purakpamakpas ɨnkalta: We cannot damage the environment

- Wat puran sukin: To live/have a good living in the territory

- Wat usan: Good living/life

- Wat usan: Development

Cluster: Maizhna; Cambiar; Change.

- Anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt: Climate change; it is not like in past times, the territory has changed

- Anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt minmukas maishtɨt: Climate change; it is not like in past times; changes in nature; changes in thought

- Ɨmtu: To walk, to advance

- Maizhna: Development (pragmatic connotation of the word; process oriented); project

- Su an iparɨmtu wantus: Global warming

- Wantus kamta wamapas: Climate change

Cluster: Projects.

- Awa kuizhe: Water project

- Kalkintu wat kit kumtu usan: Working and good living

- Maishtawa: trueque; exchange

- Wat kit kumtu usan: Productive project

Cluster: Process and regulations.

- Ɨnkal awá su izhmurus or Ɨnkal awá sukin kamtana pit parattarit: Educational mandate and regulation of the Indigenous Guard. (The Indigenous Guard is an organized non-violent resistance of Indigenous people facing violence and war in their territories. See Sandoval (2008))

- Kamtatkit kamtawa: Teaching-learning-teaching process (among the community, boys and girls, young people, seniors, traditional doctors, men, women, counselors, authorities, and nature). Linked to the principle of reciprocity.

<u>Cluster: Katza su; Casa Grande; Big House.</u>

- Ainki su: Small space (in contrast to katza su)

- Katza su: Big/large space; big house (when referring to the Awá binational territory katza su)

- Pakpana: To sustain; to defend

- Su tichan: To defend the territory

- Tichan: To sustain

Keywords.

<u>Verbs</u>

- Chan: To walk; to dwell

- Kamtana: To learn; to teach

- Kamtus: I am learning

- Kuintakin: To talk; to have a conversation

- Kuppayakin: To accompany

- Makima: Until now

- Mina: To listen

- Piankamna: To know; to get to know; to meet

- Tichan: To stop, to block; do not let go

- Wa: To be (existence)

- Wana: To plow

Nouns

- Alu: Rain

- Kuanka: Grandmother**

- Kuazhi: Water

- Mainkinpit: Tale; story; history; account

- Paina: Deer

- Pampa: Grandfather**

- Pas su-awaruzpa: Our culture; the essence that identifies us as Awá.

- Pi: River

- Pɨh kammu yat: Schools

- Pɨh kamtam mika o pɨnkɨhkamtammika: Guide; teacher

- Pɨh kammu mika o pɨnkɨhkammumika: Student

- Piralpi: Waterfall; water stream

- Sau: Plot or farmland

- Tipuj: Barbacha (an epiphyte plant that grows on and hangs from trees. This kind of

  plan has a shape of hair or beards.)

- Walpura: Sickness from the mountain; chutún

- Wisha: Mestizo

** About masculine and feminine gender: In Awapit there are no grammatical elements (morphemes) to indicate these semantic categories. When you need to specify gender, the words ampu "male, male" and ashampa "female, female" are used.

Chapter 1 Introduction

There are histories I don't remember. What I recall from my school days is the evocation of a "nación pluricultural," a pluricultural nation where Mestizos, Indigenous, and Afrodescendants are recognized as contributing to the formation of Ecuador's constitution. I remember hearing and knowing, although vaguely and superficially, about Kichwa, Shuar, Otavalos, Salasacas, T'sachilas, Cañar, some of the Indigenous people forming the Ecuadorian ethnic tapestry. However, the first time I heard about Awá people was in 2010 at one of the five binational workshops I organized as a consultant of Fundación Natura Regional, a non-governmental regional organization implementing a project along the Ecuador-Colombia border. Through the project "The environment and biodiversity as a meeting point between social actors of Ecuador and Colombia,"[1] my team and I identified environmental projects with a binational character, and initiatives and plans designed by local governments, NGOs, and civil society and community organizations, with the intention to collaborate across the binational border (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011). The consolidation of La Gran Familia Awá Binacional was one of the initiatives presented at these workshops.

During the interviews I conducted as part of the project along the binational border, I noticed that among Indigenous and Afrodescendant organizations, new terms were being used, *sumak kawsay*. These Kichwa words, broadly meaning "good living," were incorporated into the Ecuadorian Political Constitution in 2008 with the intention to frame the country's development initiatives. Sumak kawsay was the "new" term

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxtsIHmbiyQ

circulating among Afro and Indigenous organizations and frequently became part of their environmental vernacular. Interviewees from both countries, Ecuador and Colombia, contrasted sumak kawsay's meaning of wellbeing and harmony with nature to the more "traditional" meanings of development and sustainability used by governments and NGOs to frame their approaches to environmental initiatives. Since their incorporation, sumak kawsay have played a significant role in reshaping the field of environmental discourses in Ecuador and beyond, as these terms became an example of counter-discourses that strive to question global environmental discourses of development and sustainability, and more recently, climate change.

In this study, I look at the politics of nature embedded in environmental globalization. I explore environmental discourses circulating among transboundary Indigenous organizations working on environmental initiatives at the border between Ecuador and Colombia. At the binational border, struggles over water, mining, illegal logging, expansion of the agricultural frontier, and biopiracy, among others, are dismembering the ecological and social tissue that connected the border during the diplomatic impasse in 2008.[2] Within this context, community organizations have been able to carry on initiatives aimed to further sustainable development projects and promote climate disruption mechanisms. Global environmental discourses such as sustainability, development, and climate change, influence constructions of nature that allow and justify humans' environmental practices upon/in/as nature. I use critical and interpretive

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[2] On March 1, 2008, the Colombian military attacked a camp of the guerrilla group FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The *Operación Fénix* (Operation Phoenix) occurred 1.8 kilometers (1.1 mi) over the Ecuadorian border, in Sucumbíos Province. The operation killed Raúl Reyes, second-in-command of FARC, as well as some twenty-four individuals present in the encampment at the moment of the attack. Among them were an Ecuadorian citizen and four Mexican research students. This event generated a delicate diplomatic crisis between Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia.

approaches to discourse seeking to elucidate the ecological dimension of the cultural world. From an ecocultural perspective, I journeyed to understand how *La Gran Familia Awá Binacional* (GFAB), a transboundary Indigenous organization that coordinates Awá communities located along the Ecuador-Colombia border, understands, constructs, and reproduces their relationships with their territories. It is within and in relation to territory where I ask about ways the GFAB translate the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change. I explore the ecocultural identities and discursive positionings that emerge from the translation of and engagement with these global environmental discourses within Awá's territoriality and how Awá's translations inform ecocultural relations among Awá, mestizo and Afro communities.

Translation goes beyond transcending formal language barriers (e.g. sustainability to sustentable/sostenible). Translation here is both a communicative practice and a historicist inquiry that bridges places and spaces, systems of knowledge, and identities. As a communicative practice, translation entails a critical and historical appraisal of the social, political, economic, and environmental structures at play in the process of translation. Further, to translate enshrines the potential to use subalternity as the catharsis of strategic political action (Briziarelli, 2017) insofar as the meaning-making process intrinsic to translation might reveal the ambiguity of seemingly universal discourses such as those that are the focus of this study.

I seek to understand ways the GFAB's processes of translation reproduce, challenge, or resist global environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change. Moreover, this study aims to illuminate to what extent this translation has hindered or contributed to strategies of emergent ecocultural identities,

subaltern positionalities, and formations of multiscale/transnational networks. For instance, some Awá communities have embraced the program Sociobosque, a forest conservation initiative launched by the Ecuadorian government, while other Awá communities have rejected the program (Pineda Medina, 2011). As an environmental initiative, Sociobosque responds to the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) framework, the dominant global perspective on sustainable forest management; however, Awá's stands regarding the implementation of this initiative suggests contested understandings of conservation, which eventually influence how the GFAB negotiates and interacts with state and international institutions.

Humans' understandings of "nature"[3] and the environment are embodied and affective (Castro-Sotomayor et al., 2018; Milstein & Kroløkke, 2012). The materiality of a place —i.e., jungle, mangroves, moorlands— shapes community members' ways of relating to their surroundings. Simultaneously, the geopolitics of knowledge and colonial histories inform notions of space and place, and the environmental discourses deployed by an array of civil society and community organizations, NGOs, and state institutions (Escobar, 2001; Lefebvre, 2014; Peet & Watts, 2004a). By exploring the processes of translation that occur in the communication and collaboration among these actors, this study aims at elucidating gaps, alternate discourses, overlaps, disconnects, as well as convergences in the construction of Awá's interpretations of development, sustainability, and climate change. In the following, I first examine the concept of globalization and

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[3] Throughout this study, I use the term "nature" to make explicit the nuance of its meaning in particular relations to the text I analyze. When nature is not between quotation marks, it refers to discourses about nature that reproduces human-nature and culture-nature binaries. Finally, instead of the dominant Western term "nature," I use nonhuman and more-than-human interchangeably to refer to an animated world that exceeds the human realm and to which we humans are inextricably bonded (Abram, 1996).

focus on its environmental dimension. Then, I present a sociological description of the Ecuador-Colombia border context. Lastly, I briefly address the GFAB's history and current situation.

Environmental Globalization

Globalization is an unavoidable word in academia and an inescapable phenomenon that informs our contemporary experiences in the world. Our understanding of the ecocultural practices of community organizations in general, and of the GFAB in particular, must situate meanings and practices within the larger context of globalization(s). In this section, first, I reflect on the political agendas and epistemological positions implicated in the definition of globalization, and then, I outline the factors and forces that have formed "the environment"[4] as a distinct yet interdependent dimension of globalization.

Defining globalization.

The idea of globalization is the epistemological foundation of a global approach to understanding the contemporary world. Surprisingly, there are not comprehensive studies on the genealogy of the term. According to James and Steger (2014), in the early 1990s, the concept of globalization became one of few powerful signifiers at the center of a political belief system that contributed to the articulation of an emerging global imaginary —a sense of belonging to an entity larger than the local and the national scale. Within this imaginary, definitions of globalization oscillate between analytical and

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[4] Similar to "nature," "the environment" makes explicit the nuances of its meaning in particular relation to the text I analyze. When used without quotation marks, environment means what is managed within the frames and via the mechanisms of environmental governance.

normative perspectives. Regarding the latter, global relations still are discussed today in international relations and transnational connections lingos, which often privileges a world system view that conceives the global as formed by the relationships among countries located at the core, periphery, or semi-periphery of the international regime (Wallerstein, 2004). Such discussion frames globalization scholars' understandings of the political, social, and economic articulations constituting globalization. Moreover, global-based theoretical analysis emphasizes international institutions and legal frameworks that emerged as a response to a reduced steering capacity of national political systems to respond to issues beyond nation-states borders (Hickmann, 2016). The vernacular of nation-state and international institutions to understand what globalization is, could be used as a residual terminology, arguably anachronistic, that reveals globalization as "part of ideological contestation and codification of concrete political programs and agendas" (James & Steger, 2014, p. 424).

Definitions of globalization reveal ideological and epistemological standpoints. For instance, contemporary conceptualizations of globalization direct their attention to the increment of interconnections and speed enhanced by technological innovations. This narrow view of globalization disregards that individuals or collectives do not experience "the global," and its consequences, evenly. The epistemological agenda of globalization attempts to expand a civilizing project that seeks to universalize parochial (Western[5]) epistemologies, to construct a singular human rationality, and to privilege expert

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[5] The interpretation of "the West" could be: (1) Jurgen Kremer and Jackson-Paton's "WEIRD cultures: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic" (Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016, p. 278); (2) The three top macro-narratives of Western civilization with its imperial languages (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) and their Greco and Roman foundations (Mignolo, 2007, p. 456). In this study, I emphasize the latter.

patriarchal-based knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2010; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; Moraña,

Dussel, & Jáuregui, 2008; Plumwood, 2002).

Globalization is always situated, however. This situatedness suggests the

constitutive heteroglossia of the meaning of globalization(s). For instance, it is possible to

speak of globalization from the South or the East (Koh, 2005). This spatial specificity is

not geographic, but it refers to an epistemological location from where reflections and

discussions on globalization emerge (de Sousa Santos, 2011). The global imaginary has

instilled conditions of lived and experienced ways of being-in-the-world. Individuals and

collectivities[6] navigate the disjunctures created by the nexus of the global and the local.

It is within the space in-between the global and the local, where it is possible to rethink

nation-states, cultures, organizations, and ecocultural identities (Halualani & Nakayama,

2010; Milstein, 2011; Sorrells, 2010).

Therefore, I understand globalization as a political and epistemological discourse

that radicalizes the civilizing project of modernity (Escobar, 2010b). This project

propagates through political, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. In the

political dimension, globalization circulates via naturalizing institutions (e.g., states) and

reifying traditional territorial divisions —nations, regions, cities, and communities.

Traditional territorial divisions are inadequate to explain and understand the multiple

institutional articulations, discursive translations, and subject formations, that currently

feature the complexity of the global arena (Peet, Robbins, & Watts, 2011). The growth of

inter-state treaties and the interdependence of an array of sub- and non-state actors —

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[6] I use the word "collectivities" instead of "collectives" because the former refers to the process of community formation. To me, the term "collectives" suggests a gathering of individuals that could or could not have a (political) purpose. The term collectivities, on the other hand, more explicitly suggests a political purpose in the gathering of individuals, which eventually lead to a collective action.

intergovernmental organizations, transnational corporations (TNCs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and social movements— are not only a question of scale (local, national, regional, international) but also a matter of how spaces are politicized via different mechanisms of bio- and geo-power that entail simultaneously a phenomenological constitution of place and a geopolitical configuration of space.

In the economic dimension, transnational corporations and global cities, rather than nation-states, have become nodes of economic development and (in)stability (Sassen, 2007). The market, the economic imaginary of the global, has become the most powerful mediator and creator of symbols and meanings, displacing family, religion, or community (Jhally, 2015). In addition, developmentalism has functioned as one of the ideological instruments of capitalist expansion via the dissemination of (neo)liberal thought (Escobar, 2012; Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Roy, 2010; Weber, 2007). The social dimension of globalization features the proximity between cultural subjects — immigrants, sojourners, activist, refugees, managers— and cultural objects —food, language, music, costumes (Sorrells, 2010). Ironically, the proximity between cultural objects and subjects "contaminates the dialectic of self and difference" (Shome & Hegde, 2002a, p. 176) and exacerbates individualism, which in turn, debilitates possibilities of political organization and action (Middlemiss, 2014).

Since its conception, an apparently innocent civilizing modern project underlies the concept of globalization. Modernity as a civilizatory endeavor entails universality, univocality, and Eurocentrism, built upon a compartmentalized conception of the world that depends on the ontological and epistemological split between mind-body and nature-society. The modern project of extending civilization informs the economic, political, and

social dimensions that constitute the contemporary global imaginary. But at the same time, although the environmental dimension is foundational of globalization, a modern view casts this dimension as complementary. To overlook the environment as constitutive of globalization, however, risks hindering a comprehensive understanding of the global arena. Therefore, approaches to globalization must consider the environment as a distinct, yet interdependent, dimension of the global.

The environmental dimension of globalization.

The formation of an environmental dimension of globalization goes back to post-World War II, but as Stevis (2015) states, "even though the concepts of the biosphere and 'carrying capacity' were known and used, it was social rationales and dynamics that dominated" (p. 326). A historical perspective confirms that environmental globalization is a distinct but interrelated aspect of globalization insofar as human history cannot be fully understood without taking into account the active participation of nonhuman or more-than-human actors in shaping the different ways civilizations advance (Carney & Rosomoff, 2009; Moore, 2015). However, the tendency of separating society and nature, and therefore, subsuming the environment into the social, economic, or political dimensions, reinstates a dualistic perspective and a narrow understanding of "the environment" and "nature" that persists in social science in general and communication in particular (Daryl Slack, 2013; Jagtenberg & McKie, 1997).

Scholars have argued that ideas constructing the meaning of the terms "environment" and "nature" influence cultural, social, and economic practices (Code, 2006; Milstein, 2011; Plumwood, 2002; Sturgeon, 2009). Embracing an environmental/ecological perspective elucidates anthropocentrism as one of the

underlying ideologies of the political, social, and economic dimensions of globalization. As Plumwood (1997) asserts, "concepts of centrism have been at the heart of modern liberation politics and theory" (p. 328), as the creation and upholding of a unique (fictional) center entails discrimination and oppression of which sexism, ethnocentrism, and racism are their most conspicuous references. However, in relation to the cultural, anthropocentrism is not explicitly mentioned as it might decenter the subject of cultural studies —the symbolic, all-knowing, exclusive agentic human.

To embrace an environmental/ecological perspective, it is urgent to explore ways of challenging anthropocentrism. Also called human-centeredness, anthropocentrism positions humans as the center of knowledge, action, voice, and agency, and commends[7] humans' self-sufficiency and human exceptionalism (Grusin, 2015; Hodden, 2014). One of the effects of this human-centeredness is the difficulty to conceive nature as a legitimate participant in decision-making processes that concern them (e.g., a forest plan). The exclusion of nonhuman actors from these processes eventually debilitates a version of democracy that is extensive and more inclusive (Callister, 2013). To integrate an account of human-centeredness with accounts of other forms of centrism, Plumwood (1997) foregrounds ways whereby other/marginal gendered, racialized, ethnicized subjects, intersect with an otherized "nature," possibly fostering a common liberation front. Moreover, human-centeredness normalizes the commodification of nature that fuels the expansion of the capitalist market (McAfee, 1999; Michaelis, 2007; Takach,

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[7] I use "commend" as the word carries a religious nuance that insinuates a degree of arrogance in humans. This human hubris is, I believe, of the religious quality, meaning that we, as humans cannot stop praising us in a suicidal egocentrism whose roots are in a system of knowledge that have constructed the delusion of humans' independence from their place-based knowledge, eco-logos, and their material sustenance.

2013). Finally, although anthropocentrism fuels humans' hubris, paradoxically as an ideology it obscures our understanding of the anthropogenic causes of global environmental crisis scenarios (Moore, 2015; Schwarze, 2007). The human world, our world, is experiencing drastic and increasingly recurrent "natural events" that have unveiled and exposed the fragility of our human existence, as well as our vital interdependency to the more-than-human world.

Infused by an anthropocentric stand, for instance, the idea of the Anthropocene —a new geological epoch characterized by the accelerated human impact throughout the Earth's biosphere since the Industrial Revolution— presents "humanity as an undifferentiated whole" (Moore, 2015, p. 171), rendering the anthropogenic causes of climate change as equally produced and experienced by all humans. According to Moore (2015), this approach to the Anthropocene disregards the "consequential bias" that occludes the differentiated responsibilities and impacts humans have in the formation of the current climate disruption. In addition, the idea of the Anthropocene fails to understanding nature/society relations because its method of analysis suffers from what Moore (2015) calls "consequential bias." To understand the origins of our current environmental era, this bias looks at the consequences of taken for granted dominant practices — industrialization, urbanization, or population, among others— which according to Moore, erases from the equation as one of the main causes of climate disruption. This erasure is relevant insofar as the idea of the Anthropocene has influenced approaches to international relations (Cudworth, 2012), environmental justice (Houston, 2013), and human/nonhuman relationships (Dürbeck, Schaumann, & Sullivan, 2015), in which "humanity" is perceived as an indiscrete definition that risks disregarding or

downplaying issues; for example, the unequal contribution to environmental degradation and the consumption gap between developed and developing countries.

Moore (2015) offers the concept of Capitalocene to address these analytical inadequacies to better understand the contemporary global environmental context. The Capitalocene is "a historical era shaped by relations privileging the endless accumulation of capital" (p. 173), which have shaped contemporary human/nature and society/nature *value-relations*.[8] Capitalist value-relations constitute and are constituted by regimes of discourse that construct "nature as external, space as flat geometrical, and time as linear" (Moore, 2015, p. 191). The severe consequence of these conceptualizations is the reduction of the environment to "cheap nature," demotion needed for capitalism to continue. However, the costs and consequences of unrestrained extraction are not "cheap" anymore. The capitalist regime configures nature for exploitation, commodification, and appropriation. In the same way as anthropocentrism positions nature as the Other in relation to humans, a dualistic approach to nature/society relations positions society as disembedded from nature, which reinforces anthropocentrism by reproducing a dualistic/Cartesian view of human/nature relationships. Cartesianism conceives human/nature relationships as interactions —humans acting *upon* nature— rather than as interdependency —humans in/as nature. Yet, capitalism *moves through* nature, and nature *moves through* capitalism. From this methodological vantage point, "capitalism is not an economic system; it is not a social system; it is *a way of organizing nature*" (Moore, 2015, p. 2).

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[8] Moore is not referring to a "system of values," which addresses moral issues, but to a theory of value (use-value and exchange-value) that, according to him, drastically shifted by the 1400 Century.

In her critique to the term "Capitalocene," Haraway (2015) states that Capitalocene "is a boundary event [of] severe discontinuities" (p. 160). She points out that names such as Capitalocene, Anthropocene, and Plantationocene, have to do with scale, rate/speed, synchronicity, and complexity. Plantationocene, for instance, stands for

> the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms,
> pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on
> slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially
> transported labor[.] The Plantationocene continues with ever-greater
> ferocity in globalized factory meat production, monocrop agribusiness,
> and immense substitutions of crops like oil palm for multispecies forests
> and their products that sustain human and nonhuman critters alike.
> (Haraway, 2015, note 5, p. 162)

The conceptualization of a global nature, therefore, seems to be "the culmination of a long-term evolution of international intervention" (Grainger, 2005, p. 335), featuring global environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change. Ideas of nature constructed within these discourses privilege a global perspective on ways of organizing nature. The ubiquity of ecological impacts and the emergence of environmental consciousness strongly suggest the global character of nature and its role in the human and nonhuman drama. However, in the same way a mainly inter-national view on the environment might disregard the relevance of none- and sub- state actors, a sole global perspective to understand nature- and environment-related dynamics, dangerously obliterates place as a location from which subversive discourses and practices emerge. In investigating how the transnational Indigenous organization Grand

Binational Awá Family (GFAB) translates development, sustainability, and climate change, I aim to unpack some of the ways Awá's deployment of these discourses could have altered their relations with the more-than-human world and their practices upon/with/within the territory *katza su*, the cloud forest. By looking at the translation performed by the GFAB, this study aims to understand the political, economic, social, and cultural forces that have constituted Indigenous communities and their ecocultural identities in countries featuring struggling economies, social unrest, political instability, and environmental pressures. Spaces that a geopolitical view has labeled the "global South."

In the following section, I illustrate the forces and factors informing the material and symbolic conditions of the binational Awá Indigenous people. I describe this binational condition by focusing on the socio-political, economic, and environmental factors that have shaped Awá's contemporary history as represented by UNIPA (Indigenous Unit of Awá People) and FCAE (Ecuadorian Federation of Awá Centers), two Awá organizations located at the Ecuadorian-Colombian border.

Research Site: The Ecuador-Colombia Border as Transboundary Space and Place

At the border between Ecuador and Colombia, community organizations have maintained and developed alternative ways of organizing nature and social life. Binational relations at the border have been reduced to formal institutional mechanisms that have confined Ecuador-Colombia binational relations to the national level (e.g., Presidential Meetings). Additionally, the binational agenda has been dominated by home

security approaches.[9] Within this institutional scenario at the border, community and civil society organizations, national or international NGOs, the private sector, and local governments have participated in and contributed to build the binational agenda not only by supporting the implementation of national development plans but also by managing global frames, such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011). Therefore, the role of community organizations is key as they debate, plan, and execute environmental initiatives that contribute to the implementation of projects targeted to create the environmental and social condition for building peace.

Community organizations' participation is meaningful insofar as it helps to legitimize decision-making processes and policy outcomes. The degradation of the environment parallels the lack of community involvement exacerbated by the design of decision-making venues that privilege transnational voices and further the definition and implementation of policies aligned with neoliberal premises and Western values (Armijos & Walnycki, 2014; Chen, Milstein, Anguiano, Sandoval, & Knudsen, 2012; Endres, 2012; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). The active engagement of communities in alternative and legitimate spaces of participation is essential to create and fortify mutual trust between Colombia and Ecuador, for instance, via transboundary environmental initiatives (e.g., the Mira River binational basin environmental governance project[10]) or state level

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[9] Unfortunately, the militarization has returned to the border. As I write this paragraph, the situation at the Ecuador-Colombia border has dangerously aggravated. The narco-guerrilla have started to operate in the city of Mataje, in the Ecuadorian Province of Esmeraldas. Although the majority of the population is Afrodescendant, there are some Awá communities living nearby this city. It is safe to assume that the situation of Awá communities living at the border zone is not different from the one Awá communities experience in Mataje. https://www.eluniverso.com/tema/inseguridad-frontera-norte

[10] For details of the project, visit: http://altropico.org.ec/projects/fortalecimiento-de-la-gobernanza-en-la-cuenca-binacional-del-rio-mira/

dialogues regarding the border situation (Ramírez, 2008, 2009). Finally, the contribution

from local actors would help to diversify the agenda at the Ecuadorian-Colombian border

(Castro-Sotomayor, 2012). As Lucio and Castro-Sotomayor (2011) have shown, local

actors at the border consider the environment as one of the alternative views to the

dominant militaristic- and economic-laden policies that have shaped the dynamic along

the border zone.

The Ecuador-Colombia border zone: a sociological description.

Socio-political relations, economic activities, and cultural encounters occur along

the Ecuador and Colombia binational border formed by shared unique geographical and

environmental features. Regarding the sociopolitical context, in Ecuador, the National

Development Plan Buen Vivir 2013-2017 frames environmental debates and actions. It is

worth noting that in Ecuador the previous administrative units (provinces) responded to a

political logic that organized the national space mainly based on political parties'

interests. Currently, the Ecuadorian state's political organization and administrative

division are based on geographical and bioregional characteristics, which includes nine

administrative zones.[11] This political-administrative shift results from a process of

decentralization that aims at making local governments more accountable to their

constituents, increasing, thus, civil society participation and empowering citizens as

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[11]Zone 1: Provinces of Esmeraldas, Carchi, Imbabura, and Sucumbíos. Geographically, Imbabura is not bordering Colombia, but this province is considered part of the integration border zone in both, the National Development Plan as well as in the Binational Plan Zone; 2: Provinces of Pichincha (except Canton Quito, capital city), Napo, and Orellana; Zone 3: Provinces of Pastaza, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua y Chimborazo;Zona 4: Provinces of Manabí, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas; Zona 5: Provinces of Guayas (except Canton Guayaquil, Durán y Samborondón), Los Ríos, Santa Elena, Bolívar, and Galápagos; Zona 6: Provinces of Azuay, Cañar, and Morona Santiago; Zona 7: Provinces of El Oro, Loja, and Zamora Chinchipe; Zona 8: Canton Guayaquil, Durán, and Samborondón; and, Zona 9: Quito Metropolitan District. PNBV 2013-2017.

political actors (SENPLADES, 2013b).[12] The Provinces of Esmeraldas, Carchi,

Sucumbíos, and Imbabura form the Zone 1, along the border with Colombia. In

Colombia, the Departments of Nariño and Putumayo are the administrative units that

constitute the border (Table 1).

Table 1 Sociodemographic Information of Borderland Provinces and Departments of
Ecuador and Colombia

	Colombia		Ecuador		
	Nariño	**Putumayo**	**Carchi**	**Esmeraldas**	**Sucumbíos**
Territorial extension (km^2)	33,268	24,885	3,749.6	16,220.5	18,008.3
Total population (2010 projection)	1,639,569	326,093	171,943	385,223	177,561
Indigenous population (%)	11	21	3	3	10
Afro descendent population (%)	19	5	5	40	4
Capital	Pasto	Mocoa	Tulcán	Esmeraldas	Nueva Loja
Border municipalities or cantons	-Barbacoas, - Cuaspud - Carlosama, (Cumbal) - Ipiales, - Ricaurte, - Tumaco	- Puerto Asís, - Puerto Leguízamo - San Miguel - Valle del Guamuez	- Tulcán	- San Lorenzo - Río Verde - Eloy Alfaro	- Cascales - Lago Agrio - Putumayo - Sucumbíos

Source: Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor (2011)

The worrying increase of Colombian refugee population in Ecuador affects the

political scenario of the binational zone.[13] In Colombia, the violent armed conflict has

forced the displacement of people, some of them considered environmental refugees

(Camawari, 2002; Camawari, Unipa, & Acipap, 2012; Stonich & Chernela, 2001). The

fumigation of illegal crops using glyphosate is one of many strategies used by the

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[12] In Ecuador, the National Decentralized Participatory Planning System structures civic participation. The system's goal is to include voices from community and civil society organizations. http://instrumentosplanificacion.senplades.gob.ec/el-sistema-nacional-descentralizado-de-planificacion-participativa

[13]Until 2011, the Colombian government had registered 3.7 million internally displaced people. Cumulative to December 2011, the Ecuadorian government had recognized 55,092 refugees: 60% lived in urban areas, and 40% remained close to the border or in regions where infrastructure and basic services are limited. www.acnur.org

Colombian state to cut the financial support irregular armed groups obtained from the cultivation and processing of coca and marijuana. These fumigations have had devastating effects on the health of people and ecosystems (Appendix A), a situation that simultaneously positions borderland populations as both war and environmental refugees.[14]

The presence of Indigenous and Afrodescendant populations at the border demands considering ethnic, racial, and cultural factors. As Martínez (2014) argues, the low percentage of Indigenous and Afrodescendant populations in Ecuador, and most likely in Colombia, is the result of a historical minimization of these communities through demographic mechanisms used to measure ethnicity and race. The mechanism of the census, she concludes, is a strategy of social control to manage diversity, which has had differentiated effects on minority populations because "ethnic statistics may have empowered some groups while disempowering others" (p. 404-405). The risk of the misrepresentations of minorities in Ecuador, i.e., Indigenous and Afrodescendants, is that the government uses this data "to reinforce the discourse that in democracy a minority cannot impose its will over a majority" (Martínez, 2014, p. 416). Therefore, regardless of the "low" percentage in the charts, the political relevance of Indigenous and Afrodescendants populations at the border should not be overlooked in process of design and planning policy that may impact the border.

The environmental context is essential to understanding the Awá people's situation. The cloud forest covering most of Awá's territory is part of the extraordinary

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[14] The newly elected president of Colombia, Iván Duque, has announced the re-implementation of glyphosate fumigations, a decision that once again puts at extreme risk the life and health of border populations. http://www.vanguardia.com/colombia/436494-se-reactivarian-la-fumigaciones-aereas-de-narcocultivos-en-gobierno-de-duque

biodiversity connecting Ecuador and Colombia through shared river basins, mangroves, and jungles. Diverse thermal floors[15] with lush ecosystems such as páramos (moorlands)*,* as well as abundant water resources run along the borderline (WWF, 2009). The *natural binational assemblag*e is composed of: 1) the *Colombian strip:* from Tumaco Bay in the Department of Nariño to the Natural National Park, La Paya, in the Department of Putumayo; and 2) the *Ecuadorian strip*: from the north coast of the Mangroves Ecological Reserve in the Province of Esmeraldas to the Cuyabeno Fauna Production Reserve in the Province of Sucumbíos (Figure 1).
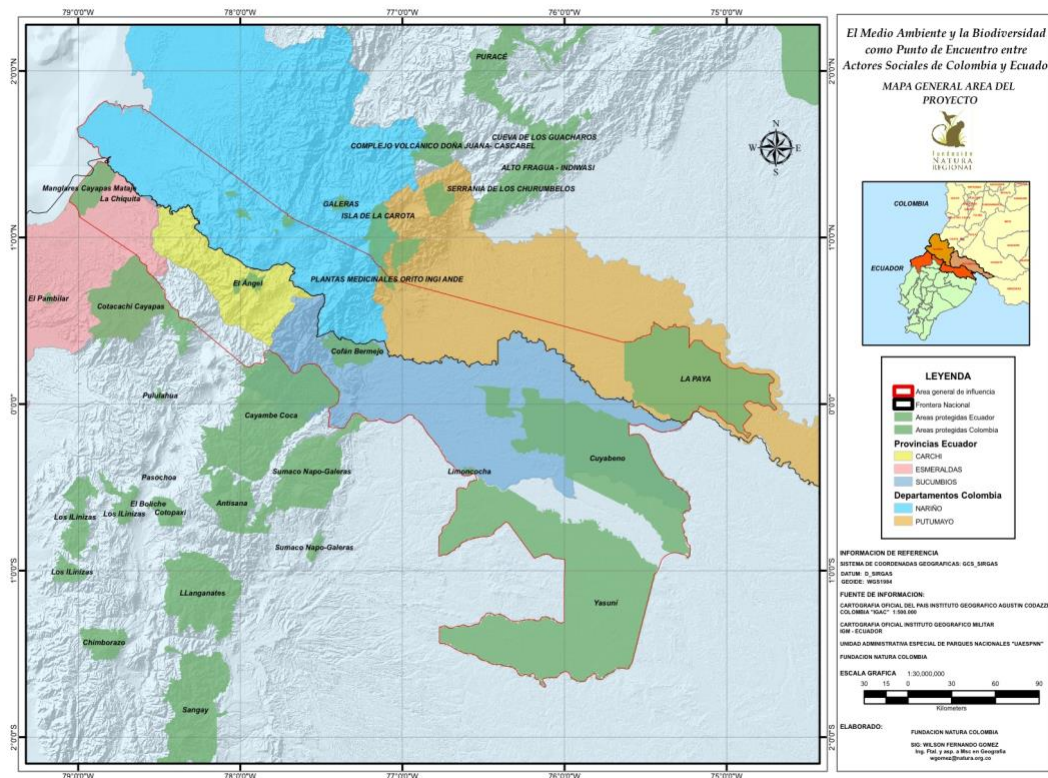
Map 1 Natural Binational Assemblage Ecuador and Colombia Border
Reproduced with permission from: Lucio and Castro-Sotomayor (2011)

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[15] Thermal floors are a system of measurement that allows us to define the temperature of a zone, according to the height above the level of the sea in which it is. This system can only be applied in the American tropic, due to its geographical and atmospheric characteristics. Within the thermal floors there are five defined levels: warm, temperate, cold, páramo, and glacial. http://www.todacolombia.com/geografia-colombia/pisos-termicos.html Translation by the author.

These ecological and geographical characteristics divide the binational assemblage into three bioregions: Andean, Pacific, and Amazonia. My use of bioregion is intended to highlight human communities' correspondence to and cooperation with more-than-human biological communities defined by particular ecological features (e.g., watersheds, mountain chains) (Worthy, 2013). [16] The Andean, Pacific, and Amazonia bioregions feature national parks, and fauna and flora reservations that blur the nation-state border between Ecuador and Colombia. At the same time, these biodiversity hubs face various environmental threats that affect twelve minority populations' communitarian territories, including Indigenous and Afrodescendants, as well as fourteen protected areas (Table 2).

Table 2 Protected Areas, Communitarian Territories, and Environmental Threats along the Ecuador and Colombia Border

Provinces/ Departments	Main Rivers	Communitarian Territories	Protected Areas	Main Environmental Threats
Esmeraldas	Mira Mataje Cayapas Muisne	Chachi Awá Afroecuadorians	- ER Cayapas-Mataje Mangroves - La Chiquita Refugee for Wild Life - Awá Kuaikeres Ethnic and Forest Reserve	- Mining - Deforestation - Palm crops - Illegal logging
Carchi	Carchi-Guáitara Mira San Juan	Awá Pasto Kichwas	- ER. El Ángel - FR. Golondrinas - Kuaikeres Ethnic and Forest Reserve Awá	- Mining - Agrochemicals - Illegal logging

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[16] According to Worthy (2013), bioregionalism was inspired by Native American intimate connections to the land. The movements' leading proponents, Raymond Dasmann (1919-2002) and Peter Berg (1973-2011), developed the conception of bioregionalism. However, bioregionalism risks falling short in substantiating the connection between human and more-than-human communities, "if the conceptualization of bioregion privileges ecological relationships automatically over other kinds of relationships" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 249, note 29).

Sucumbíos	San Miguel Putumayo Napo	Cofanes Secoyas Kichwas Shuar Siona	- ER Cofán Bermejo - FRBZ Cuyabeno	- Oil companies - Deforestation - Colonization - Illegal wildlife trafficking - Illegal logging
Nariño	Mira San Juan Guiza Miguel Guamuez	Pasto Awá Inga Embera (Eperara Siapidara) Cofán Afro	- FRBZ La Planada - FR Río Nembí - Páramo of Chiles-Cumbal	- Production systems - Illicit crops - Illicit trade - Deforestation - Palm crop
Putumayo	Caquetá and Putumayo Mocoa Orito Guamuez San Miguel San Juan	Siona Ingas Nassa Cofán Embera Awá Kichwa	- NNP La Paya - FS of medical plants Orito Ingi-Andes	- Deforestation - Erosion - Illegal wildlife trafficking - Colonization - Oil reserves

Sources: NNP: Natural National Park; FS: Flora Sanctuary; FRBZ: Forest Reserve Buffer Zone; ER: Ecological Reserve; FPR: Fauna Production Reserve. Reproduced with permission from: Lucio and Castro-Sotomayor (2011)

The environmental threats present at the border elucidate the globalization forces at play in the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of Awá people. The existence of the nation-state's territoriality is more tangible along the border as legal, politico-administrative, and economic frames of reference drastically shift by crossing the national border. These are some of the conditions that inform and shape the transboundary site where Awá binational Indigenous people are situated.

Dialogues at the border: brief institutional history.

The contemporary binational institutional framework dates back to 1990, when Ecuador and Colombia were the first Andean countries to define a Zona de Integración Fronteriza (Border Integration Zone-BIZ), which included an agreement on people's

freedom of movement.[17] However, the conflictive climate of the border informed the two

most notable instances of binational cooperation, Binational Border Commission

(COMBIFRON) and the Neighboring Commissions. Supported by the chancelleries of

each country, these entities worked as the institutional base for the actions contemplated

in the Andean Binational Development Plan (PDBA 2006-2011). The PDBA has four

action axes: productivity and commerce, organizational strengthening, social welfare, and

culture and identities. In recent years, the Development Bank of Latin America-CAF

developed a Program to Support Foreign Trade and Integration (PADIF) with emphasis

on economic, social, and environmental development at the border.[18]

The *Binational Border Integration Plan 2017-2022: Border for Prosperity and*

Good Living – BBIP (2014) is the most recent outcome of the binational dialogues and it is

the primary document framing binational initiatives. The Plan's goal is "setting the main

guidelines for the generation of policies that allow the attainment of Good Living and the

Prosperity of the population that is in the Ecuador-Colombia Border Integration Zone"

(p.12). The issuing of this Plan also signals the normalization of Ecuador-Colombian

relations once the 2008 diplomatic impasse was left behind (see footnote 2). The

Presidential Meetings and Binational Panels set by the governments, both emulated the

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[17] BIZ are "spaces formed by adjacent territorial borders between members of the Andean Community of Nations-CAN. The policies, plans, and programs designed for the BIZ aim at fostering sustainable development and border integration. Their implementation should be conjoined, coordinated, shared, and oriented to obtain mutual benefits accordingly to the specific characteristics of the countries involved" (Article 1º Decisión 501, 2001). Ecuador-Colombia BIZ is divided in (1) Strategic Development Area-Andean Region; (2) Strategic Development Area-Amazon Region; and (3) Strategic Development Area-Pacific Region (CAN, 2009).

[18] Cooperation and dialogue between Ecuador and Colombia have taken place through other institutional entities: Comisión de Vecindad Colombo Ecuatoriana, Comisión Militar Binacional Fronteriza, UN Refugee Agency (UNHRC), Comisión Mixta en materia de Drogas (Antidrogas) Colombia-Ecuador, Comité Mixto de Cooperación Científica. Other bilateral mechanisms were implemented, such as Comisión Mixta Demarcadora; Reunión de Altas Autoridades Migratorias; Comisión Mixta de Cooperación Técnica; Comisión de Seguridad y Control de la Criminalidad; Comisión de Desarrollo Fronterizo; Comisión de Consideraciones Sensibles; Comisión Binacional to address Colombian refugees in Ecuador (Ramírez, 2009)

schema of the process developed between Ecuador and Peru after the Peace Agreement signed between these two countries in 1998. On December 12, 2012, Ecuador and Colombia celebrated the First Binational Cabinet where they signed eight cooperation agreements, whose goals were to improve trade conditions to bolster the business sector, and strengthen the State's presence and its capacity to coordinate governmental entities at the border. Until 2013, these binational institutional mechanisms had included 163 meetings between technical teams, Vice-Ministers, and Ministers. In general, the goals of these meetings were to improve the information exchange between Ecuador and Colombia through the articulation of governmental agencies. Moreover, the binational agenda would address issues such as education, culture, health, infrastructure, border security, trade, transportation, and sustainable use of biodiversity (Joint Presidential Statements, 2011, 2012, 2013).

The new institutional setting at the border, however, has reaffirmed the essential role of the Colombia-Ecuador Binational Border Commission (COMBIFROM) and has restructured the Ecuadorian-Colombian Neighboring and Integration Commission (COVIEC) and its respective technical commissions. These commissions oversee implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the agreements reached on five lines of action: (1) Infrastructure and Connectivity; (2) Frontier Affairs; (3) Environmental Affairs; (4) Trade and Economic Affairs; and (5) Social and Cultural Affairs. The fifth line of action encompasses three sub-lines: (a) Indigenous and Afrodescendants; (b) Social development, health and education; and (c) Culture, patrimony and sports (Joint Presidential Statements, 2013). Finally, while keeping a focus on military solutions, the current binational plan incorporates social and environmental approaches to foster

cooperation via the advancement of five axes: (1) Equity, social, and cultural cohesion; (2) Integral security and human mobility; (3) Productivity and trade complementarity; (4) Connectivity and infrastructure; and (5) Environmental sustainability (Senplades & DNP, 2014).

The border between Ecuador and Colombia has a complex historical and political context. An unbalanced distribution of responsibilities and resources exacerbates the lack of coordination among national and local governments (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011). Therefore, there is a gap between local institutions implementing policies, and national institutions making political decisions. This disconnect in the political system has not allowed for the creation of public policies to better respond to the particularities of the border zone. Furthermore, until 2011, there was a mutual lack of coordination and dialogue between the two countries that also affected collaboration among Indigenous and Afrodescendant populations dwelling across the Andean, Pacific, and Amazonia bioregions forming the border. This disarticulation remains and renders this BBIP (Binational Border Integration Plan) to a document alien to the reality of the communities living in the border zone, where their everyday lives are affected by a social and political context marked by poverty, violence, and environmental destruction.

War and violence have marked the most recent history of Ecuador-Colombia relations.. The internal war in Colombia has forced and justified the predominance of homeland security discourses over social, cultural, or environmental approaches to the binational border. For instance, until 2004, the Colombian government implemented the Plan Colombia, which was central to carrying out exclusive militarized strategies to attack illegal activities such as smuggling, illegal cropping, mining, and arms trafficking,

developing among and across the border. This Plan encompassed several actions contemplated in previous Colombian government's plans –Plan Patriota, Plan Frontera, and Plan Consolidación. During the presidency of Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), Plan Colombia reached its full implementation enhanced by the policy known as "Seguridad Democrática" (democratic security) (Gonzáles, 2012). In 2011, the Ecuadorian government started Plan Ecuador, thought of as a social and economic strategy to respond to and contain the effects of Plan Colombia on Ecuador's territory (Carrión & Espín, 2011). As noted, the increase of Colombian refugee population in Ecuador has added a new element to the political scenario of the binational zone. More relevant to this study is the fact that, while governmental policies are ostensibly affecting only populations within their respective national territories, the conflict's effects are not exclusive of one territory and cannot be contained by the national border.

Finally, on September 26, 2016, in La Habana, Cuba, the Colombian government and FARC signed a Peace Agreement. On October 2nd, the Agreement was put to a referendum and was narrowly defeated. This result showed a political society polarized around how to construct "peace with justice" and make it sustainable after more than fifty years of violence and conflict. Fortunately, on November 30th, 2016, the Colombian Congress ratified a new peace agreement. The consequences of this Agreement on Ecuador-Colombia relationships are yet to be seen, especially considering the ongoing conversations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the still damaging presence of illegal armed forces in the zone. What is undeniable, though, is that this new legal frame will inform the binational political scenario and subsequent agendas.

Summing up, the BBIP (Binational Border Integration Plan) and the Peace Agreement are the main political agendas framing the institutional context of the Ecuador-Colombia border. While it is true that Ecuadorian and Colombian governments have focused on military solutions, the current binational plan attests to the addition of social and environmental perspectives to foster cooperation between the two Andean countries. Moreover, the environment also has a principal role in peacebuilding. The conflict in Colombia originated from a rampant land concentration; phenomenon that persists in Colombia and that is jeopardizing the ongoing process of peace.[19] Therefore, the Peace Agreement makes explicit the need to address environmental issues as essential to building peace. This claim entails thinking about the environment as an active participant in the peace dialogues insofar as the territory is also a victim of the conflict (Rodríguez, Rodríguez, & Durán, 2017).

The location of La Gran Familia Awá Binational at the border is significant insofar as the liminality of the binational zone might delineate possibilities of transnational collaboration regarding environmental issues. Focusing on initiatives and plans with a binational character may foster peaceful and collaborative relations between the two countries, which might challenge mainstream notions of (national) cultures, as well as foster new conceptions of space and place. Awá organizations and their binational conglomerate are an example of many social actors forming the new institutional context that shapes and is shaped by the relationships between the governments of Ecuador and Colombia.

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[19] The NGO Oxfam keeps information of the evolution of the peace process as well as up-to-date information of the sequels of the peace agreement. See: https://www.oxfamamerica.org/

La Gran Familia Awá Binacional: Brief Organizational History

The organizational process of *Inkal Awá*, gente de la montaña/people of the mountain, started with the constitution of the first Federación de Centros Awá del Carchi (Carchi Federation of Awá Centers), in the 1980s in Ecuador. This organization was created with the purpose of resisting the pressures coming from "invasores mestizos" (invasive mestizos) and the cooperatives that were taking over land that, according to Awá's accounts, were part of their ancestral territory. In 2000, several Awá Centers from Esmeraldas and Imbabura provinces, and the Federation in Carchi, joined forces and constituted the Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (Ecuadorian Federation of Awá Centers-FCAE). The Ecuadorian process inspired Awá living in Colombia to start consolidating their organizations as well. Awá in Colombia formed three organizations: Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA), Cabildo Mayor Awá de Ricaurte Nariño – (CAMAWARI), and Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Pueblo Awá del Putumayo (ACIPAP). According to the most recent data available, La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) is an organization constituted by these four[20] associated entities; there are 40,444 people (approx.) living in 27 communities or *centros*[21] in Ecuador, and 48 reservations or *resguardos*[22] in Colombia (Table 3.)

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[20] FCAE, UNIPA, CAMAWARI, and ACIPAP.

[21] The word *centros*, literal meaning in English "centers," suggests a political organization of the territory. The center is equidistant to its communities.

[22] In Colombia, the Indigenous Territorial Entity is *resguardos* (the closest translations to the US context would be "reservations"). The Ecuadorian equivalent of *resguardos* is the Indigenous Territorial Circumscriptions.

Table 3 La Gran Familia Awá Binacional General Information

Organization / Creation date	Province/ Department	Population	Territorial extension (ha/mi²)	Reservations	Communities
FCAE. 1983/2000	Carchi Imbabura Esmeraldas Sucumbíos	5,244	116,640/450.34	N/A	27
UNIPA. 1990	Nariño	20,200	210,000/810.81	25	N/A
CAMAWARI 1992	Nariño	10,500	107,000/413.12	11	N/A
ACIPAP IKAL AWA. 1999	Putumayo	4,500	8,670/33.47	12	N/A
TOTAL		40,444	442,310/ 1,677.74	48	27

Sources: www.puebloawa.org; Plan de Vida Camawari (2002); Actualización Plan Salvaguarda Awá (2012) Developed by the Author.

The GFAB has found ways of presenting to the national governments as well as to NGOs and non-Awá organizationst, the osmovision and ecocultural practices that support Awá's conception of territory. Awá's definition of territory is fundamental to understanding their processes of translation as territory, which is at the center of Awá's web of meanings. All four Awá organizations share and strive for four principles or pillars: *Katza su* (territory), *Wanmattɨt puran* (unity), *Tɨinta paran* (autonomy), and *Au tunto tuan* (culture and identity). These principles govern Awá's Planes de Vida (Plans of Life) or Planes Salvaguardia (Safeguarding Plans), which are constructed and legitimized by Awá's decision-making bodies —Assembly, Congress, and the Governing board (FCAE, 2016, pp. 143–144). These documents aim "to forge a process of integral development, following the needs, demands, aspirations, and possibilities of the Awá people" (Camawari, 2002, p. 11). The Plans are a benchmark for dialogues between the State and both national and international organizations, and *Inkal Awá.* However, Pineda

(2011) asserts, these dialogues have featured "strained relationships" among these actors. Additionally, while NGOs' initiatives and projects have fostered organizational processes within Awá communities, their presence and ways of collaboration also have generated a high economic dependency of Awá organizations on international aid and funding, which has sometimes limited the scope of topics and projects that can be funded at the expense of others that may be more of interest to the communities.

In the following chapters, I seek to demonstrate the importance of studying transboundary Indigenous organizations working at binational borders. I suggest that community organizations operating at nation-state borders, such as the GFAB, challenge the nation-state border's fixity through their environmental practices. I highlight the binational condition of Awá people to illuminate the constant process of disrupting dominant language and rethinking meaning as borders are spaces/places of creative dissent, which demand translation.

I organized this study as follows: chapter two lays out the theoretical assumptions supporting the decolonial option informing this study. This chapter surveys communication, political ecology, political science, and anthropology scholarship with an emphasis on discursive formations. Chapter three presents the methodology and outlines the research design. I describe the methods to gather data and justify the use of critical discourse analysis as the linguistic entry point to understand processes of translation. In the analysis chapters, I investigate how transboundary Indigenous communities construct a sense of territory, navigate global environmental discourses, and construct multiple ecocultural identities. Chapter four describes the articulations among relationships and principles that configure Awá's territoriality. In chapter five, I situate Awá's translation

of the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change to explore the system of meanings implicated in Awá's translation of these discourses. I illustrate how Awá recontextualize and emplace these discourses once they enter the discursive and material realm of Awá's territoriality. Chapter six furthers the notion of territory and territoriality to investigate the formation of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities. I illustrate how two dialectics, insider-outsider and respect-disrespect, work in the discursive positioning of these populations as restorative or unwholesome ecocultural identities.

The final chapter proposes a rhizomatic situational analysis framework to map factors, forces, and processes implicated in translating global discourses. I demonstrate the applicability of this framework by presenting an ecocultural situational analysis of the Awá binational Indigenous people. I close with some recommendations to rethink identity-based mediation in environmental conflicts, explore transversal forms of communication, agency, and dissent, and further processes of environmental peacebuilding at the border between Ecuador and Colombia.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Assumptions and Literature Review

This study approaches the GFAB (Grand Binational Awá Family) as a way to elucidate the historical processes informing Awá people's environmental discourses that shape their cultural encounters, societal formations, value systems, and communicative practices. To this end, the binational location of Awá people and their organizations is crucial. I suggest that the liminality of the border questions monolithic notions of nationality, culture, and identity/subjectivities, which eventually inform meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change. By critically analyzing the discourses deployed by the GFAB, I intend to understand how Awá people translate the global environmental discourses of sustainability, development, and climate change at the local level. These discourses are part of the civilizing project of globalization, which Awá's place-based practices could reproduce, challenge, and/or resist.

In the following sections, I present the theoretical assumptions that inform the decolonial option I embrace to elaborate my analysis. I explore the debate regarding opposite and complementary definitions of place and space. Then I present territoriality as pragmatic and constitutive environmental communication to approach Indigenous sense making of and relationships with territory, as well as to facilitate Awá's communication with non-Awá organizations and communities. Next, I review the main assumptions buttressing the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change. In closing, I revisit and expand theories of identity, and introduce and elaborate on the concept of ecocultural identity as a conceptualization that widens conceptions of human identity based mainly/only on cultural categories.

Theoretical Perspectives

A theoretical dialogue between critical intercultural and environmental/ ecocultural communication underlies this study. This conversation offers opportunities to question anthropocentrism, which eventually will compel us to revisit concepts of participation, voice, and agency in an ecological way. I understand ecological thinking as a holistic view of the world that goes beyond interaction and proclaims interdependency. Critical, political, and environmental perspectives coalesce in my attempt to interrogate some understandings of communication, culture, and nature, in a context of environmental globalization. From this vantage point, I explore four ways communication studies could take (1) to de-instrumentalize culture; (2) to (re)politicize communication; (3) to add the "eco" perspective to our understanding of the world; and (4) to "de-Westernize" communication studies. These perspectives and orientations inform my approach to how Awá organizations locally translate environmental discourses produced at the global level, and to what extent local understandings of environmental issues find their way into the global arena.

A critical perspective highlights the role of power relations in the constitution of social reality and the self. The holistic view encouraged by critical scholars allows looking at structural factors and situated experiences simultaneously. A critical take on reality aims to understand, envision, and foster ways of seeing, doing, and being that unsettle conventional meanings and practices. To this end, a critical stand seeks (1) to unveil the hidden structures that perpetuate and (re)produce conditions of hegemony and domination; (2) to awake consciousness and bring awareness to the dominant and ideological structures and material conditions that preclude individuals from becoming

agents; and, (3) to call for political actions and performances that open the possibility of resistance and social and environmental justice (Collier, 2014; Death, 2014; Denzin, 2008; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; Milstein, 2009; Nakayama & Halualani, 2010).

In terms of culture, a critical perspective questions the instrumental understanding of culture that confines it to three senses: material (e.g., art, food), behavioral (e.g., values, traditions), and functional (e.g., knowledge for problem-solving). As such, culture becomes a fixed, ahistorical, and apolitical concept that "reproduces modern liberalism tenets of freedom, democracy, and individualism" (Telleria, 2015, p. 263). A critical appraisal complicates the idea of culture by conceiving it not as "a benignly socially constructed variable" (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010, p. 6). Rather, culture is "discursively constituted, a contested location in which multiple groups identifications intersect, political and social itineraries emerge, institutional discourses are reproduced, and ideologies are implicated" (Collier, 2014, p. 9). Therefore, by approaching Awá's culture, I seek to illuminate how power relations, (colonial) histories, and ideologies influence Awá individual and group identities and their communicative practices that often maintain social hierarchies and privileges.

In correspondence to a critical view, the task of (re)politicizing communication means to resist the status quo by challenging the normalization of social norms constructed through hegemonic discursive practices. Feldpausch-Parker and Peterson (2016) assert, "communication presents a central political challenge (perhaps *the* central political challenge) to the formation and maintenance of democratic communities throughout the world" (p. 4). However, the tendency to privilege technical-functionalist approaches to communication over more constitutive ones, is a conceptual sediment that

limits some practices by reducing communication to the means of gathering and transmitting preexistent information (Graham, 2004). Following Collier (2014), I understand communication as "the means through which groups members negotiate, (re)produce, (re)construct institutions, organizations, relationships, groups' identity positions and access to resources and living conditions" (p. 20).

Further, a political perspective on communication also assumes the unavoidable presence of antagonism and conflict, as well as empowerment and agency. Communication practices alter social inertia through rhetorical inventions (Pezzullo, 2001), alternative metaphors (Milstein, 2016), or by reshaping participants' sense-of-place (Druschke, 2013). One of the possibilities of individuals or groups to perform social change and further environmental justice relies on interrupting dominant discourses (Death, 2014; Milstein, Anguiano, Sandoval, Chen, & Dickinson, 2011). By looking at the Awá organizations' translation of global environmental discourses, I demonstrate how these interruptions come to be, and to what extent they challenge the assumptions of that support Western notions of development, sustainability, and climate change. Communication has the potential to challenge, disrupt, and reshape our culturally informed assumptions of the (natural) world. Communicative practices, then, engender ways to denounce, question, and resist the ideological representations of the global ecological crisis that obscure the anthropogenic causes of climate disruption.

The third direction points toward embracing an "eco" perspective that directs attention to investigating assumptions of what is nature and natural. The "eco," in its various names —environment, ecology, biology, nature— has been incorporated via essentialization, either as context/background or ideological process (i.e., naturalization)

(Daryl Slack, 2013), or has been set outside or brought into the webs of spatial power

relations "by default" (Shome, 2003). As such, Rogers (1998) asserts, nature is seen

either "as determinant—as the active, structuring force behind human behavior—or

nature is seen as passive, as informed by social and discursive practice" (p. 261). Yet,

ideas of nature emerge from the imbrication of material and social/symbolic realms. For

instance, discursive frames reify nature by constructing it as feminine, wild, dangerous or

nurturing, peaceful or welcoming (R. Cox, 2007). Definitions of nature are not only

produced by humans' symbolic-based discursive practices; rather, Nature's materiality is

also constitutive of discursive formations insofar as nonhuman and more-than-human

existences are inextricably linked to who we think we are as humans and "only" social

beings (Grusin, 2015).

     The "eco" perspective, therefore, challenges the anthropocentric assumptions that

underlie some conceptualizations of communication and culture by taking on the

essential and difficult task of specifying what we mean by the "cultural" that emerges at

the intersection between the symbolic and the biotic (Carbaugh, 1996; Marafiote & Plec,

2006; Milstein, 2012). This imbrication is essential to understanding Awá notion of

territory. *Katza su* is the active more-than-human entity with which Awá establish

relationships of lineage, sacred, and land, all of which are foundational elements of Awá

cosmovision. According to Rappaport (2005), a cosmovision is "a modern conceptual

category that incorporates secular and spiritual behavior, mythic characters, and historical

experience into a politically effective whole" (p. 191). In this study, I am interested in

ways Awá's cosmovision could foster radical epistemologies from which Awá think,

feel, and embody their relationships with other human populations —Afros and

mestizos— as well as their relations with the entities, actants, and beings dwelling and constituting the territory *katza su.*

The idea of de-Westernizing communication studies, then, benefits from the profound ethical challenges engendered by an ecological perspective that expands and claims new spaces of reflection (Code, 2006; Jagtenberg & McKie, 1997; Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016; Plumwood, 2002). By bringing different philosophical assumptions and questions to the conversation of communication, Waisbord and Mellado (2014) state, these kind of new inquiries would "open up attention to issues that might be absent in the analytical radar of Western scholars, but are important in the non-Western world" (p. 364). Awá binational Indigenous people and their cosmovision offer a possibility to understand how Indigenous communities navigate the Western civilization project of modernity, which have positioned them at the margins of history by Othering their ways of thinking, living, and experiencing the world. As an oppositional category, cosmovision "can be comprehended only within the institutional context of antagonism between national and minority cultures" (Rappaport, 2005, p. 192). I turn to foreground the decolonial option that I embrace in my attempt to understand the implications of these antagonisms.

The decolonial option.

Scholarship on neocolonial relations —decolonial and postcolonial studies— engages directly with the question of how historical processes shape cultural encounters, societal formations, and value systems, and assume that colonial histories inform these social, cultural, and ethical dimensions. Colonialism does not refer to the existence of colonial institutions; rather colonialism is the pervasive and camouflaged existence of

hierarchical sexual, racial, class, ethnic, gender, and ecological relations that normalizes

the unbalanced distribution of material and symbolic resources among individuals and

institutions. Such distribution entails media (mis)representation (D. Lewis, Rodgers, &

Woolcock, 2014; Moser, & Dilling, 2007), the capability of influencing decision-making

processes (Hickmann, 2016; Senecah, 2004), and conditional access to funding (T.

Lewis, 2011), among others. Thus, the hierarchical system that perpetuates domination

and perpetrates oppression is an unavoidable outcome of colonialism.

Decolonial and postcolonial scholarships include a historical re-account of the

voices silenced by discriminatory discourses and practices. The believe that a single story

that explains the totality of the social world envisions a unique and inevitable end —

progress, technology, wealth— towards which the world should advance with no

question. Also, a single history perpetuates a colonial situation, "the cultural, political,

sexual spiritual, epistemic and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate

racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racialized/ethnic groups with or without the

existence of colonial administrations" (Grosfoguel, 2010, p. 74). Yet, colonialism is not a

homogeneous phenomenon. To remember and listen to these silenced voices, one must

pay attention to what Mignolo (2008) calls "colonial difference," the historical specificity

that informs the incorporation of a region or country into the colonial and global political

and economic system. Facing the undertake of singularity, the existence of subaltern

voices like the Awá's problematize and counter meta-narratives such as development and

sustainability.

Attending to the colonial difference elucidates fundamental distinctions between

decolonial and postcolonial studies, differences that are subtle but meaningful.

Postcolonial scholarship has looked at colonial histories and geographies linked to the production of North America and the British Commonwealth, which according to Shome and Hegde (2002b) has "eclipsed the theorization of postcoloniality" in the United States academy (p. 255). Studies on neocolonial relations have been developed on other national sites, which attests, on the one hand that, "the geographical scope of postcolonial studies is not a given" (Shome & Hegde, 2002b, p. 255); and on the other hand, that stories in colonial contexts beyond the British Commonwealth are essential to the understanding of the politics of postcoloniality.

The decolonial option assumes colonialism as the historical momentum of Latin America featuring the "spatial articulation of power since the sixteenth century and the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit" (Mignolo, 2008, p. 228). Latin America's[23] economic inequality, political repression, and social injustice are not only "residue of colonialism [but] a function of capitalism" (Moraña et al., 2008). The colonial difference explains why the region is neither fully integrated into nor apocalyptically isolated from the webs of capital production (Hopenhayn, 2001). Therefore, based on the colonial difference of the region, it has been argued that Latin America is experiencing not post-colonialism but *coloniality*, the perpetration and perpetuation of colonial systems of knowledge derived from colonial premises that impede the concretization of the region's own historical project (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010).

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[23] I use Latin America to emphasize the larger geographic location of my study; such location is produced by the articulation and translation of histories, knowledges, temporalities, and subjectivities. However, I am aware of the limitations and complexities of using the term "Latin America." The philosophical discussion on this matter is beyond the scope of this study, however. An insightful argument has been made by Mignolo (2005), who tracks back the origin of the idea of "Latin America" to unpack the political implications of this overarching label.

The differences between postcolonial and decolonial studies are not limited to geographic locations or historical events. They differ regarding ideological roots and ontological postures as well. First, regarding theory, coloniality and-de-coloniality "introduce a fracture with both, the Eurocentered project of post-modernity and a project of post-coloniality heavily dependent on post-structuralism as far as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 451). De-coloniality, Mignolo continues, "starts from other sources" —from the fractures of Marxism in its encounter with colonial legacies in the Andes, Mahatma Gandhi, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Rigoberta Menchú, Gloria Anzaldúa, among others. Therefore, decoloniality is "a project of de-linking while post-colonial criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 452).

The second distinction between postcolonial and decolonial studies is ontological because colonial subjects are not homogeneous. The colonial subject produced by First World settler governments, e.g., United States and Europe, differs from the colonial subject struggling in countries at the periphery of the world system, such as Ecuador and Colombia. This difference emerges, on the one hand, from the colonial difference that marks the ways countries or regions have been incorporated into the global network, for instance, as producers of information and technology or just providers of raw materials. On the other hand, while undoubtedly social hierarchies and racial divides can be found in both locations —"First" and "Third" worlds— settler populations in peripheral countries, "including [their] intellectuals, see themselves as subaltern in relation[s] to the United States" (Rappaport, 2005, p. 172). In the same token, on the colonized side, diverse subjects and differentiated levels of resistance emerge from the specific contexts

of their struggle. For instance, the media strategy used by the protectors of water fighting

the Dakota Access Pipeline, the hashtag #NODAPL, would be extremely difficult to be

performed by Awá people due to the lack of information infrastructure that limits their

ability to access and use technology, which is another element contributing to their

marginalization. This is what Walsh (2010b) means when she asserts that decolonial

ontologies embrace "coloniality as both concept and lived reality" (p. 82).

The geopolitical location of Latin America and its colonial difference, as well as

the colonial subjects emerging from it, provide the context to understand the political

character of Indigenous, Afro, and mestizo's intellectual production, which can be seen

as an epistemic (re)action to the geopolitics of knowledge that configure and privilege

global, a.k.a. Western, discourses. Although labels such as "native," "Indigenous," or

"afros" are overloaded signifiers fragmented by production, consumption, and promotion

of their "natural" relation to nature (Ulloa, 2001), conceptualizations such as territorio

(Leff, 2004), cosmovisión (Rappaport, 2005), interculturalidad (Aman, 2015; Walsh,

2015), sumak kawsay and suma qamaña (Gudynas, 2011; Radcliffe, 2012) are

manifestations of an epistemological community that defies ostensible universal

dominant knowledges and attempts to provincialize Europe and the U.S. (Mignolo,

2007).

Under this light, Latin America is a region built from ideological and

epistemological struggles that question universal ontologies culturally and historically

produced by "the West." Moreover, Latin America is the space of place-based practices

where colonial others can be deconstructed to give rise to epistemological communities

conceiving "new" processes of signification, values, relationships, and imaginaries (de

Sousa Santos, 2011). A good example of this production are the Planes de Vida (Plans of Life) developed by Awá and other Indigenous organizations, as well as by Afroecuadorian communities working at the border between Ecuador and Colombia (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011). In many ways, these Plans summon modern conceptual categories that "incorporate secular and spiritual behavior, mythic characters, and historical experience into a politically effective whole" (Rappaport, 2005, p. 191). The discursive power of these kinds of documents lays in their explicit critique of modernity. As place- and community-based documents, these Plans of Life acquire a political and ideological significance insofar as they have become an unavoidable discursive terrain in the ongoing construction of plurinational and pluriethnic national projects, as it is evident by the incorporation of sumak kawsay and suma qamaña in the Political Constitution of Ecuador and Bolivia respectively. This study assumes that translation is intrinsic to the constructions of these documents in which community organizations reproduce, challenge, and resists global environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change, which organize nature, inform human-nature relations, and shape environmental practices.

Finally, decoloniality's heuristic value stems from its delinked approach to the notion of exteriority. Exteriority "does not entail an ontological outside; it refers to an outside that is precisely constituted as difference by a hegemonic discourse" (Escobar, 2010b, p. 40). Within this outside, the Other —as oppressed; as marked by race, gender, sexuality; as poor, thus marked by class; as inanimate nature, hence target of instrumental exploitation— restlessly resides. The existence of the Other is vital to advance the Western (Europe and the United States) hegemonic project of modernity. However,

quoting Dussel, Escobar (2010) asserts, "this interpellation of the Other comes from outside or beyond the system's institutional and normative frame, as an ethical challenge[.] From this negated Other departs the praxis of liberation as *affirmation of the exteriority* and as origin of the movement of negation of the negation" (p. 40; emphasis added). Decoloniality embraces the "negation of the negation" as an ontological and epistemological liberation strategy that has the potential of *decolonizing the mind*, as many Indigenous leaders in Latin America have stated (Ross, 2014).

Therefore, considering the context and population focus of this study, decoloniality is a more pertinent heuristic option than a postcolonial approach to investigate Awá's lived coloniality at the transboundary space and place of the Ecuador-Colombia border. Thinking de-colonially and the decolonial option "are not 'new interpretive tools' but an-other thinking grounded in border epistemology [which opens a] transdisciplinary horizon" (Aníbal Quijano, quoted by Mignolo & Escobar, 2010, p. 11). Moreover, the de-colonial option implies "delinking from thinking disciplinarily" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 452). Accordingly, I put in conversation intercultural and environmental communication via translating knowledges from other disciplines beyond communication, such as political ecology, anthropology, ecolinguistics, and sociology. I detail this transdisciplinary approach and show how this "theoretical cosmopolitanism"(Craig, 2001, 2015) helps me understand, although partially, an Awá cosmovision that is inclusive of human and nonhuman earthlings. Further, I use this transdisciplinary theoretical framework to investigate how Awá organizations construct their territories, translate global environmental discourses within the structures and discourses that constitute the global environmental governance, and make sense of both

changes in the environment and their impact on Awá's ecocultural practices, relationships, and identities with/in/as nature.

The sections that follow address each of the main themes that will be developed in the analysis chapters of this study. The debate on place and space informs my approach to Awá's territory and their construction of territoriality (Chapter 4). To delve into discourses and their translation, in the second section I explicate the main assumptions of three global environmental discourses, development, sustainability, and climate change, and critically approach the structures supporting and reproducing these discourses (Chapter 5). Finally, I start the third section by discussing the analytical and heuristic potential of ecocultural lenses to expand our understanding of the social world, to then elaborating on the notion of ecocultural identity and the politics attached to its multiple formations.

The Politics of Space and Place

Within the literature of globalization, the debate on the configuration of places and spaces is essential. Place and space are dialectically constituted, but they are theoretically different. Paraphrasing Doreen Massey (as quoted in Cresswell, 2004, p. 13), it seems that approaching space and place is about *routes* versus *roots*. Spaces are *routes* of/for mobilities and temporalities that not only occur in space but also actively constitute it. From this perspective, space "is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 133). These forces are beyond the immediateness that the notion of place invokes. Moreover, the array of mobilities and temporalities turns places

into spaces of/for capital, external authority, and detached political engagement in which meanings seem to come from "outside."

Yet, places are neither wholly natural nor respond to deterministic or causal explanations that can be reduced to often imposing external forces. Place refers to *rooted* relations that construct meanings. Relations-in-place can counter global spatial forces and discourses through empowering practices and performances such as dwelling (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013; Cepek, 2011; Druschke, 2013; Escobar, 2001; Micarelli, 2015; Milstein et al., 2011; North & Cameron, 2000; Ulloa, 2001). Places, then, "can become spaces of enacted connections, performance of rituals, engagements of traditions, and sites of cultural advocacy. [Place is] an engaged space of practice" (Collier, 2014, p. 9). From a place-based view, the construction of meaning seems to come from "inside."

The underlying assumption in this discussion is that "space is a more abstract concept than place" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 8). The mutual constitution of space and place, however, makes it impossible to analyze and understand one without the other. As Creswell (2004) states, "place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power" (p. 12). Power functions, on the one hand, as a core constitutive feature of the context; on the other hand, power is exerted via ideological means. As part of the context, power deploys in/from space —thus, giving attention to global forces and international structures— or in/from place —hence, highlighting local experiences and organizations. The ideological means of power have epistemological consequences because, as Escobar (2001) argues, the prominence of space in understanding the dynamics of globalization has generated the "erasure of place" (p. 155) as a location of alternative political agencies, narratives, and economic systems.

Scholarship on globalization displays the epistemological complication emerging from the privilege spatial and global perspectives have gained at the expense of place-based understandings of ecological and cultural situations. Place-based concepts such as localism, parochialism, communitarianism, among others, have received negative connotations. For instance, in criticizing Massey's stands on space, Tomaney (2013) has pointed out that the preference of "seeing space as 'spatio-temporal event' [has led to] see[ing] local attachments as containing tendencies to essentialism, 'romanticization,' and reactionary politics" (p. 659). This undermining of the meaningfulness of the local has caricatured communities' attachments and sense of belonging as traditional and backward, and consequently, against progress; or simply localism has been accused of being "blind" for not seeing the potentialities of being incorporated into the global stage. To understand place as "the other" of space limits its conceptual and analytical scope, as well as disregards the dialectic constitution of place and space. Place is not "the other" of space. The construction of place is indeed connected to and produced by spatial logics. Simultaneously, place-based dynamics are equally important for the production of space. A global sense of place is not an oxymoron. However, the decision to emphasize place or space is, as any conceptualization, political.

The social construction of the local and the global scales of analysis are relational, contingent, contested, and embedded in power relations (Neumann, 2009).[24] The politics behind the global tends to use "aesthetics that objectifies, essentializes and fetishizes

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[24] A scale is a methodological and epistemological tool that refers to "topological rather than topographical approaches to space, and ultimately rejects the notion that regions are territorially bounded" (Tomaney, 2013, p. 660). According to Neumann (2009), the theorization of scale has been enriched by recent discussions on: (1) the interactions of power, agency, and scale; (2) socioecological processes and scaling; and (3) scaled networks (p. 403).

those [people, places] whom intends to recognize and empower" (Cooks, 2010, p. 122).

Additionally, noncapitalist forms of economic exchange are considered "outside" the

modern market economy and therefore "removed from modern society" (Lind, 2005, p.

63). The local imaginary conjures up an image of communities —Indigenous, rural,

informal, Afro—as separate from or not yet integrated into modernity, that is, as not

belonging to the global imaginary, or belonging only marginally. Therefore, to privilege

the global over the local, vis-à-vis space over place has political consequences for

communities and populations whose ground of action is their place, whether it is a

neighborhood, a city, or, in the case of Indigenous populations, their territories.

This study echoes Escobar's (2001) advocacy for conceiving "place as politically

and socially meaningful" (p. 142). To conceptualize place in political terms is essential to

understand globalization's civilizing project, as well as to unpack the grand-narratives

buttressing a seemingly homogeneous and inevitable modernity. When confronted with

notions of development, sustainability, and climate change, Awá people refer to the

territory, *katza su*, as the core of their web of meanings. As location, Awá's territory,

katza su, is simultaneously a space of extractivism and a place from/within which they

construct and articulate contested meanings, unfix subjectivities, enact emancipatory

practices, and present alternative imaginaries *to* the modern world —such as the term *wat*

milna, Awapit word for "good living." In the next section, I stress how place is related to

meaning-making (epistemology), identity (ontology), and resistance (praxis).

Places and the grounded construction of meanings.

Places and the production and consumption of meaning are inextricably bonded to

the formation of different spaces, from larger imaginaries such as region or global, as

well as zones, sites, circumscriptions, or territories. Space becomes place through sense making processes in which communication practices play a constitutive role. The communicative process of place making articulates cultural practices and entails translation of meanings (Bourdieu, 2014; Druschke, 2013; Milstein et al., 2011). Meanings that emerge from *a* place, therefore, cycle between physical signposts, historical accounts, memories of silenced or told stories, and identity negotiations (DeMaria, 2014; Rappaport, 2005; Tipa, 2009). Place making is embedded in a broad field of power relations, of which language is its linguistic manifestation. By centering place in the construction of meaning, meaning is emplaced.

According to Cresswell (2004), there are three overlapping ways to approach place. The first stems from Marxists, feminists, and poststructuralists theories and conceptualizes places as social constructions resulting from wider processes embedded in conditions of capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexism, and postcolonialism. Second, the ideographic approach to place relies on the "common-sense idea of the world as a set of places, each of which can be studied as a unique entity" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 74). But embracing "distinctiveness" and "particularity" as the definitive feature of place risks isolating places as entities whose uniqueness has been threatened by the global. The third approach, and the one emphasized in this study, is the phenomenological approach.

A phenomenology of place emphasizes the embodied and sensorial experiences that mediate our understanding of a world comprised by human and nonhuman entities, beings, and actants. To Code (2006), "places draw together the natural, the social, and the intellectual[;] they give us location from which to understand the complexity of our relations to what lies around us" (p. 60). A phenomenological approach is not interested

in place itself but rather, in the concept of place in relation to the essence of human existence. The phenomenological configuration of place facilitates entering the ecological dimension of sense making. From this standpoint, the construction of meaning is not limited to the symbolic (discursive) human realm of signification but it encompasses non-discursive as well as extrahuman references (Carbaugh, 1996; Grusin, 2015; Latour, 1993; Oviedo Freire & Estermann, 2014). Therefore, phenomenology (re)places the body at the center of experiences to counter "dissociation, our monumental forgetting of our inherence in a more-than-human world" (Abram, 1996, p. 260).

Anthropocentrism is also part of the ideological conditions informing the constitution of place. An anthropocentric perspective positions bodies in isolation from their wider living network of relationships, thus neglecting the vital embeddedness of humans' bodies within an ecosystem. However, disregarding this intimacy risks, on the one hand, seeing the body in a place that is "singularly there" and, on the other hand, overlooking the forces beyond the immediateness of the place. Therefore, in this study I take a critical phenomenological approach and conceive of place as embedded in a web of affective interactions. As Grossberg insightfully states, "It is no longer a question of globality (as homelessness) and locality (as the identification of place and identity), but of the various ways people are attached and attach themselves (affectively) into the world" (as quoted by Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 187). Therefore, place is emotional and political in a sense that feelings also are entangled with structures of power that leave an impression on bodies marked by histories that silence, erase, forget, or hurt (Ahmed, 2014), but also marked by the bodies' affections that stretch beyond the human realm (Abram, 2010).

It is from this critical phenomenological perspective that I interpret Awá's meanings of territory and their relationships with it. The notions of territory constructed by Awá people and brought to life in/through their cosmovision, render their territories as places that "bring with it an accumulation of [their] concrete, contingently emplaced experiences, emphatically grounded in [their] earthly presence" (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013, p. 6). Therefore, by exploring Awá's meaning-making of the territory, *katza su,* I attempt to understand Awá's ways of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world.

In place, the immediateness of the environment and nature significantly influences our communication practices. The way Awá communicative senses construct *katza su* and their sacred, lineage, and land relationships elucidates how "spaces are places where different life forms compete and cooperate for the right to exist biologically and discursively" (Jagtenberg & McKie, 1997, p. xii). In the same token, Haraway's (2008) assertion that "Nature is a *tropos, a trope"* (p. 67, emphasis in the original) (re)positions nature as essential to the process of sense making in which "all of the actors are not human and all of the human are not 'us,' however defined….Nature is a topic of public discourse on which much turns, even the earth" (p. 67). Place, then, is a complex and dynamic interplay among the ideas about and the materiality of the environment and nature, and the vital interdependence of humans and nonhuman dwellers of places. Places ground meaning through visual and embodied experiences intersecting with the plurality of knowledges in-place, which are inseparable from ecological and cultural relations and perceptions of self and others. Hence, the multiplicity of identities simultaneously implicates both human and nonhuman actors in the constitution of ecocultural identities.

Place and the constitution of identities.

The relationship between place and the construction of identity is at the core of social studies (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Keith, 1993). Individuals are placed beings. Individual and groups subjectivities are as multiple as the places they dwell. A sense of self-in-place is not a product of a direct link between words and things, but a process of embodiment that situates individuals and groups within geo-historical and biographical contexts in which "you exist in a modern/colonial world that has distributed the population of the planet racially, sexually and by gender" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 505, note 28). Identification, however, is not only about the self; neither it is solely about humans. In addition to the economic, social, or political systems shaping identities in place, the ecological systems must be considered in the constitution of identities. According to Milstein et al. (2011), the dominant Western sense of *self*-in-place emphasizes a more individualistic construct of self —the subject of modernity. Yet, place and identity also rely on a sense of *relations*-in-place through which nature or environment are an "immersive space that provides the grounding, experiences, and material for social relations" (Milstein et al., 2011, p. 487). This assumption is essential to my conceptualization of ecocultural identity that I address later in this review. For now, regarding the case of Awá people, it is worth noting that an ecocultural identity entails embracing and engaging with both humans and more-than-human dwellers of *katza su*. These relationships are vital to Awá's avowed Indigenous identity.

The individual body is not isolated in a place; neither, is it only present. A sense-of-place in the formation of identity is a sensitizing concept with political implications insofar as the constitution of place is contested and in intimate relation with the geopolitics of space. A geopolitical perspective allows researchers to locate the body

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historically and within multi-scale structures of power. In the current phase of extractive neoliberalism, economic forces compress different temporalities, systems of knowledge, political systems, and social organizations in a uni-dimensional capitalist worldview (Castro, Hogenboom, & Baud, 2016; Veltmeyer & Petras, 2014). Conceiving place as the location of embodied struggles for visibility and agency is likely to elucidate the profound changes in human-human and human-nonhuman relations and ethics aggravated by a market-driven logic and its most perverse version of pure accumulation and for-profit activities —either legal or illegal. In this regard, the history of *Inkal Awá* is not only the history of one people and their territories; their histories of abandonment and reconstitution of territorial boundaries are manifestations of colonization, displacement, evictions, invasions, recoveries, and legalizations. But also, as place, Awá's territory, *katza su,* is a trope of resistance.

Place as location of resistance.

Place, identity, and meaning all come together to form an understanding of resistance as praxis. These concepts are politically charged insofar as definitions of place and space influence praxis. For instance, particular types of localism, parochialism, bioregionalism, and communitarianism assume a reductionist form of ecological priority that could uncritically take-for-granted ecological relationships at the expense of other kind of relationships. Also, these type of approaches risks retreating to the immediateness of place as the refuge against the overwhelming forces of the global, as some forms of survivalism have shown to do (Plumwood, 2002). Some communitarian approaches could also invoke highly conventional configurations of community, such as family,

neighborhood, and nations, which tends to disregard intersubjectivity and the power relations shaping their configuration (Whatmore, 2009).

These interpretations of place do not argue for locating place outside the expansion of global economic and political forces; neither do they posit that closeness to the environment of a place is enough to "generate knowledge of and concern for ecological effects of production and consumption within a local community" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 77). These knowledge and concerns "require a larger network, whose formation seems unlikely to be assisted by economic autarchy" (*ibid*). To conceive of place as a location of resistance, therefore, entails understanding the geopolitics of space, as well as the anthropogenic conditions of environmental change.

First, in relation to resistance, the geopolitics of space attends to ways places become passing-through sites for capital and uprooted selves. This outlook, for instance, facilitates the formation of "panoptized spaces" of governance where territory is a "state-space" rather than a "citizen-space" (De Marchi, 2013). People living in state-spaces are likely to become invisible (Smith, 2015). In addition, panoptized spaces consolidate mechanisms to govern people's livelihood —biopower— one of its strategies being the militarization of Indigenous peoples' territories (Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012).[25] For instance, transboundary Indigenous organizations like the GFAB (Grand Binational Awá Family) operate within existing capitalist, individualist, and anthropocentric structures whose adverse effects cannot be avoided just by evoking land rights or cultural meanings of place. Hence, a global sense of place, prioritized by a geopolitical view, is

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[25] Military occupation of the Amazonia region:
http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/42542-the-us-southern-command-s-silent-occupation-of-the-amazon

not a contradiction neither it is a reactionary position; it is a blatant acknowledgement of the mutual and multi-scale constitution of the place and space configuring Awá's territory.

Second, to fully understand resistance, an ecological or environmental perspective on issues regarding place and identity are paramount, especially when in some analyses of the politics of place ecological concerns are usually absent (Tomaney, 2013). An ecological perspective has contributed to expanding approaches to peacebuilding (Gorsevski, 2012), urban activism (Broad, 2013; DeMaria, 2014; Singer, 2011), and community building (Anguiano, Milstein, De Larkin, Chen, & Sandoval, 2012; Tarla R. Peterson et al., 2016; Rodriguez, 2012; Smith, 2015). Adding an ecological perspective opens up possibilities to understand dissent not only as a logical/rational strategy in countering power; but also, dissent as a type of performance that (re)places emotions and the body at the center of the political realm (Ahmed, 2014; Shome, 2010). Therefore, resistance is one way of performing dissent, etymologically that is,

> '*dis-sensus'* to feel or sense differently. So, dissent continues a political
> praxis that is rooted in the way people perceived and feel the world; it
> arises from sensual perception, from people's experiences of themselves
> and of relations of contact and domination that refuse to conform to the
> images induced by disciplinary power. What's more, *dissensus* is
> engendered from clashing conceptions of well-being and the way in which
> well-being is pursued. (Micarelli, 2015, p. 21)

As DeMaria (2014) states, "resistance is written in landscapes" (p. 174). Yet, resistance is also enacted by the bodies of those who dwell in places at the crossroads of

global and local antagonist and complementary forces. These forces converge into Indigenous territories in the form of illegal mining and logging and monocrops. These extractivist activities pierce Awá's territory and transform Awá's relationships with land; hence, putting Awá cosmovision at stake. Further, the convergence of the global and local implicates new arrangements regarding the relationality that informs Awá's identities, meanings, and alternative resistive maneuvers. To understand these transformations, it is necessary to understand territory.

Territory and the "Politics from Below"

Communities build senses of self- and relations-in-place upon endured connectedness that eventually fosters engagements, grounds action, and nurtures change. These relationships and connections open ways to "local earth stories" (Plumwood, 1997, p. 342) that enliven spaces and construct them as places of meaning, identity, and resistance. By conceiving place in this way, scholars advocating for the relevance of place in global politics seek to challenge a project of modernity built upon a dualistic thinking that locates agency, voice, and empowerment in what Giddens (2003) described as the "empty space" and "empty time" of the global. In this nowhere/everywhere space of the global, place becomes "increasingly phantasmagoric, that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them" (Melkote & Steeves, 2015, p. 110). In the epistemological contention that privileges the global over the local, vis-à-vis space over place, redirecting our attention to territory is subversive, particularly in the case of Indigenous populations.

The vindication of territory is one way to address what Escobar (2001) calls the "politics of scale from below" (p. 161). The history of capitalist's expansion is filled with

ideological and epistemological strategies that have been used to diminish the power of the local in favor of a global market economy (Hughes, 2005). In contrast, the politics of below conceives of place as a political and epistemological location of grounded meanings, dynamic cultures and identities, and global impact strategies. To valorize the local does not presume to supplant the global but rather, to acknowledge the existence of multiple modernities that collide to form what Escobar (2001) defines as glocalities,[26] "cultural and spatial configurations that connect places with each other to create regional spaces and regional worlds" (p. 166). As an analytical concept, glocality sheds light on how local struggles are simultaneously places of political and sensitive understandings of peoples' connections and spaces of networks formation where unpredictable geo- and bio-politics converge. Territory is one manifestation of glocality from which Indigenous peoples re-signify Western(ized) worldviews.

Some scholars have argued that, as an analytical term, territory is a concept specific to Latin America (López, Robertsdotter, & Paredes, 2017), and as such it is ubiquitous in the political discourses of Indigenous and Afrodescendant communities organizations and social movements. The polysemic use of territory enhances its ideographic power on forming positions and planning land rights-based strategies (Latta & Wittman, 2012). Further, the hybrid conceptual construction of territory reveals multiple ways of constructing space or spatiality. Spatiality is not limited to understanding how space is constructed by places filled with meaning and identities, but

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[26] Robertson (1992) has been credited with coining the term *glocalization* to describe a process of deliberatively indigenizing or adapting foreign culture for local purposes (Melkote & Steeves, 2015, p. 35). Indigeneity or to indigenized "is a position that draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, one that emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle" (Peet & Watts, 2004b, p. 38).

also requires exploring how shifting fields of power configure a space. Hence, spatiality is a political process of meaning-making, identity negotiations, and conceptualizations of place. When a space is named territory, a territorial perspective of space emerges.

Territorio (territory), in the sense Indigenous and Afrodescendant communities define it, "is the locus of peoples' desires, demands, and claims to construct their own worlds-of-life and to reconfigure their identities through both their cultural ways of revaluing natural resources, and their strategies to re-appropriate nature" (Leff, 2004, p. 125). Territoriality is a perspective on space that focuses on how Indigenous and Afrodescendant communities exercise symbolic and political control of their territories. It is also a view on their relationships with other beings, entities, and actants that are part of and constitute the territory. Ultimately, territoriality is a strategic construction of space produced via spiritual, material, and political dimensions at three different scales: body, territory, and nationalities (Ulloa, 2015).

Within a territory these three scales intertwine and mutually influence each other sometimes configuring sui generis relationships. For instance, from a Marxist perspective, Cepek (2011) argues that Cofán, Indigenous people living in the Ecuadorian Amazonia, have been able to forge a "critical consciousness" about their participation in environmental conservation projects. He shows how these Indigenous people perform an "alienated labor" that prevent Cofán from "merging their sense of self with the logic" of research-based conservation projects (p. 502). This performance informs Cofán's sociability and relationships within the community, as different labor produces particular subjectivities. The "job of monitoring," for example, implies the mediation of money, which causes distress within the community (not every member can work for the

conservation project). In the role of "monitors" in search for data, Cofán "walk" the biological reserve —a space produced by international conservation discourses. On the contrary, in their role of "hunters," Cofán "dwell" the territory —a place produced by embodied experiences that reproduce cultural bonds within the community. Cofán people, Cepek argues, have been able to resist an external logic by reframing and reworking it in communal and dialogical spaces.

Drawing parallels between Cofán and Awá indigeneity, I investigate to what extent Awá perform marginality as agency and not as result of an external condemnatory demotion (Micarelli, 2015). Some of the Awá's discourses and practices (e.g. their integral farm) suggest that their otherness could be approached as a lived exteriority that allows Awá to actively and intentionally stay "at the margins" (Cepek, 2011; Mignolo, 2007; Rappaport, 2005; Ulloa, 2001). Territory, therefore, is the location of transformative practices and a site of (grounded) resistance and emancipatory projects (Coleman & Tucker, 2011; Coryat, 2015; Devine-Wright, 2009; Escobar, 2010a; Ignatow, 2008; Kauffman & Martin, 2014; Paavola, 2005; Walsh, 2015). At a zone that is territorialized by the material and symbolic presence of nation-state boundaries, this study seeks to contribute to and advocate for (re)locating power in-place, as "place, after all, is the site of the subaltern par excellence" (Escobar, 2010b, p. 53).

Performing resistance entails emergent identities, coalitions, and alliances across scales —from local to global— as well as beyond national boundaries (Boström, Rabe, & Rodela, 2015; Hegde, 1998; Martin & Wilmer, 2008; T. Perreault, 2003). In exploring *Inkal Awá*'s territoriality, I show how their relationships with the sacred, lineage, and land, are embedded in specific geopolitical junctures that Awá people negotiate within

the webs of their cosmology in which territory is vital. By focusing on how Awá

binational Indigenous people construct their sense of territory at the local level, I am not

dismissing the global. On the contrary, looking at Awá's territoriality could help

elucidate and recognize the works of global forces in the constitution of Awá's identities,

relationships, institutions, and discourses. Moreover, I critically approach the GFAB

(Grand Binational Awá Family) to examine to what extent Awá organizations represent a

decolonial option that illustrates the existence of locations that are not produced

exclusively by capital and modernity (Escobar, 2012; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; Walsh,

2015). This exploration, thus, contemplates some ways to move beyond —and not merely

against— globalization via political and epistemological strategies of resistance and

dissensus.

Translation, as communicative practice and historicist inquiry, is one of the ways

individuals, groups, and organizations navigate the "postmodern spaces of the

transnational" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 75). Focusing on translation is a useful entry to

understand the conditions of Indigenous people's glocality. By critically looking at how

the GFAB translates the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability,

and climate change at the local level, this study aims to illuminate the intricacies that

arise at the intersection between the local and the global and how they inform alternatives

to modernity emerging from place-based knowledges and practices that directly

interrogate mono-logical global discourses.

Global Nature: Structures and Discourses in Translation

Global environmental governance was structured after World War II under the

parameters set by The Washington Consensus from which the International Monetary

Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), and World Bank emerged as normative international institutions with global range. Unfortunately, these organizations prominently respond to neoliberal economic logics that shape the current historical moment labeled globalization (Arrifin, 2007; Mitchell, 2003; Scott & Dingo, 2012). The contemporary global governance has not been able to avoid the North-South divide, which informs developmentalist discourses that still position countries in the "Global South" as subjects of aid. As Ariffin (2007) pinpoints, environmental concepts such as common good, bilateral or multilateral concessional aid, and global stewardship demonstrate the colonial roots of the global environmental governance structures. Also, the current institutional layout of global governance focuses on intergovernmental relations at the national level, and therefore, does not reflect the multilevel dynamic interaction among actors and their discourses (Arrifin, 2007; McAfee, 1999). This inaccuracy has led scholars to call for the reformation of these international political institutions that configure global environmental governance. One of the reasons for this call is because this governance structure mainly furthers economic globalization at the expense of local economic dynamics and structures. In its more radical sense, the call also summons the creation of organizations at a smaller scale than the nation state (Brand & Görg, 2008; Peet et al., 2011). However, without a profound shift in the political mindset behind the global governance institutional apparatus, it is likely that environmental globalization continues to propagate universal ways of being. In addition, the ostensible neutrality and apolitical posture of international aid and foreign intervention, usually framed as development, sustainability, and more recently, climate change, also risk continuing reproducing GDP-ideologies of progress and well-being.

A critical approach understands global governance as a hegemonic discourse that articulates means of production, social group identities, and ideologies within specific geographic locations. These interrelations cut across multi-layered spatial and temporal scales, and reflect the different fields of force implicated in the reproduction of histories, geographies, ideologies, and discourses (Murray, 2014). Discourse is a regime that encapsulates "the heterogeneous assemblage of techniques, mechanism, and knowledges aimed at 'conducting people's conduct,' as well as 'to shape the field of possible actions of others'"(Foucault, quoted by (Lövbrand & Stripple, 2014, p. 112). As meta-narratives, global environmental discourses reveal neocolonial dynamics insofar as they construct nature as Other, facilitating the positioning of nature as a singular strategic asset, investment, and/or entity of management (Scott & Dingo, 2012). Therefore, the global character of contemporary environmental discourses parallels the configuration of international structures of governance.

Development, sustainability, and climate change are global environmental discourses, a set of statements that produce symbolic and material conditions of human and nonhuman existence within institutional structures that constitute and are constituted by systems of knowledge and social practices. Further, different and competing environmental ideologies inform constructions of human/nature relationships that are reproduced, resisted, or challenged by communities' *local natures*.

Global environmental discourses enable the material conditions for epistemic domination and the silencing of local voices. Paradoxically, this creates the conditions to foster the "reactivations of relational ontologies and the redefinition of political autonomy" (Escobar, 2012, p. xxv). The processes of translation performed by

representatives of Awá organizations shed light on the treacherous circulation of global environmental discourses among these organizations and the works of development, sustainability, and climate change discourses as part of the hegemonic project of modernity. In the following sections, I present the core assumptions and debates regarding development, sustainability, and climate change to explore how Awá binational Indigenous people deconstruct and rearticulate development, sustainability, and climate change. Particularly, I am interested in the meanings of these discourses in relation to the territory *katza su* and within territoriality.

Development.

Of all global environmental discourses, development is arguably the most entrenched in the heart of modernity. The idea of development has remained at the center of a powerful but fragile semantic constellation that has naturalized ways of being, acting, feeling, and moving that dispel human and nonhuman relationships as vital interdependency; thus, exacerbating visions of anthropocentric isolation and hubris. Scott and Dingo (2012) use Appadurai's term "megarhetoric" to describe the way development, as discourse, is "propelled by taken-for-granted assumptions about development's goals, functions, and effects" (p. 5). The material effects of these megarhetorics are transnational. In what follows, I review the three assumptions underlying the dominant paradigm of development that shapes institutional structures and pervades international dialogues, which eventually affect economic, social, and environmental policies.

First, development's epistemological assumptions fuse rationality and progress, both framed by international institutions as universal positives to strive for economic

growth (mainly read in terms of gross domestic product-GDP). There is a materialist bias that conflates a higher standard of living with unsustainable levels of consumption, an equation that extols a purely economic view on how (rationally) to achieve progress and well-being (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). However, scholars have argued that framing development this way works against broader notions of prosperity and, in many ways, curtails vernaculars that may deconstruct and possibly redefine Western notions of development (Micarelli, 2015; Pal & Dutta, 2013; Ulloa, 2001; Walsh, 2002; Whitehead, 2014). The Awapit word, *wat mɨlna*, that I explore in this study is an example of such a (re)signification of development into something not limited to economic growth —often represented by access to and production of sumptuary material goods. In addition, there is a positivist scientific method imbuing mainstream ideas of development. Development and modernization are constructed as synonyms insofar as the imprints of development —e.g., mega infrastructure projects such as dams, transcontinental highways, or high-speed technology infrastructure— are seen to advance the (singular) world toward an end of material and technological bonanza.

The second round of assumptions presents a temporal and technological bias. A commonsense rhetoric is implicit in the predisposition of conceiving development as a linear process, that is, "a movement or progression from an economic, social, and cultural state of weakness and danger to one of strength and security" (Scott & Dingo, 2012, p. 5). Highly influenced by social evolution frames, Melkote and Steeves (2015) argue that development's evolutionary perspective reifies the grand narrative of progress through a "biological metaphor" that presents development as linear, inevitable, and even desirable.

Finally, the third set of assumptions supporting the dominant paradigm of development is political and historical. The construction of development as value-free leaves out considerations regarding development knowledge—or more correctly, "what counts as serious or legitimate knowledge about development" (D. Lewis et al., 2014, p. 11). Framing development problems as "technical problems" and not as political ones depoliticizes the discourse of development (Waisbord, 2015) and disavows the center-periphery geopolitics that continue to shape the transference of knowledge and access to resources (Hopenhayn, 2001). This view on global flows has been highly criticized, especially since decentralized networks have transformed the political, social, and economic realms of the world stage (Hickmann, 2016; T. Perreault, 2003; Taylor, 2004; Young, 2007). Yet, a "center-periphery" metaphor —which emerged within the meta-geographical pattern of the Cold War— remains in the discourse of international development and legitimizes capitalism as the only way to address poverty and deprivation via governmental technologies or interested global foreign aid (Barbanti Jr., 2006; Lind, 2005; Roy, 2010).

Capital-based neoliberal development initiatives, for instance, dismantle national and local economic spaces in the name of the global integration (Roy, 2010). The metaphor of "salvation," in which transformation "comes from outside," furthers development as "corporate investment, supranational organizations, commodity markets, and conspicuous consumption" (Scott & Dingo, 2012, p. 2). These international interventions have resulted neither in the expansion of local markets nor in the consolidation of democratic systems (Bumpus & Liverman, 2011). Rather, the metaphor of "salvation" exacerbates the intersections between discourses of poverty and discourses

of development, whose interdiscursivity eventually limits communities' political and economic possibilities of self-sufficiency by representing "the poor" as victims and disempowered (Dogra, 2014). Racism and Eurocentrism also factor into development. As Lind (2005) asserts in the case of Ecuador, poor indígena, chola, or negra women "were erased" from initial development projects and marked as a cultural "ethnic other" while "European cultures remain the unmarked norm" (Lind, 2005, p. 60). This ethnocentrism reproduces the developed-center/underdeveloped-periphery dichotomy.

Metaphors have a strong connotative force. As such, metaphors illuminate ways and forms of life (Larson, 2011; Milstein, 2016). Institutions using a discourse of development that draws from metaphors such as "salvation," "center-periphery," or "biology/evolution," reproduce colonial arguments of civilization and a mythological purpose of humans' manifest destiny (Merchant, 1995). In the vernacular of international development, these metaphorical entanglements form a sound rhetoric that is unquestioned, and therefore, has become part of the "terrain of conceptions and categories on which practical consciousness of the masses of the people is actually formed" (Scott & Dingo, 2012, p. 431).

Yet, development must be critically analyzed in historical and ideological terms as one of the discourses supporting cultural imperialism through economic means, and not only as a descriptive approach or technocratic solution (Waisbord, 2015). As a political concept, Western notions of development situate the economy at the core of (individual) human experience —and worth— which is part of the rhetoric of modernity and the manifestation of a biopower that produces cultural identities whose construction is always contested (Escobar, 2012; Mignolo, 2007). By engaging with these

contestations and discursive ambiguities created by the interrogation of modernity's

grand narrative, it is possible to problematize and deconstruct the concept of development

by directly approaching the messy realm of politics —racial, gender, ethnic, ecological,

and so forth— that constitute policies as "important sites of struggle and resistance"

(Lind, 2005, p. 17).

Scholars have tried to maneuver the intricacies of the meaning of development to

make it more politically and socially oriented. For instance, Melkote and Steeves' (2015)

definition of "development as social change," or Escobar's (2012) well known definition

of "postdevelopment" are examples of this meaning-making shift.[27] However, while these

concepts signal possibilities of carving out new ways of communication, meaning-

making, and practices, their analyses seem to struggle with abandoning capitalocentrism

as they still situate capitalism at the center of their understanding of development

narratives and the subjects they constitute. Capitalocentrism[28] devalues or marginalizes

possibilities of non-capitalist development —e.g., subsistence economies, biodiversity

economies, Third World forms of resistance, cooperatives, and minor local initiatives,

solidarity economies, etc., some of which are practiced by Awá people.

As "subjects of development," Awá Indigenous people are not outside of

modernity, but they are a product of it (Escobar, 2012). This positioning demands a close

critical evaluation. As I show later, Awá cosmovision, as other Indigenous political and

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[27] The prefix 'post' indicates the notion that "the economy is not essentially or naturally capitalist, societies are not naturally liberal, and the state is not the only way of instituting social power as we have imagined it to be" (Escobar, 2010, p. 12). As an epistemological project, postdevelopment (1) decenters development as a social descriptor; (2) questions development knowledge, practices, and expertise; and (3) critiques the ideas of growth, progress, and modernity. The heuristic power of postdevelopment constructs 'development' as the object of critique; thus, fostering debates on and actions for alternatives *to* development.

[28] Capitalocentrism differs from Capitalocene insofar as the latter challenges society-nature and capital-nature dualisms. These polarities are present in and sustain capitalocentrism (Moore, 2015).

cosmological positions, could be considered a strategy to counter the centrism of capital that positions alternative economic systems as "opposite, subordinate, or complementary to capitalism, never as sources of a significant economic difference" (Escobar, 2001, p. 154). Awá's translation of the discourse of development, what they translate as *wat mɨlna*, articulates traditional knowledge and cultural power nurtured by their cosmovision. However, Awá can also construct the social problems and solutions of development from the epistemological and ontological political worldviews that disregard their traditional knowledge, and thus justify exploitation, leading, for instance, to advance artisanal mining or logging. But, development is not the only global environmental discourse Awá translate in their interactions with the Western world. Practices associated with sustainability add an historical perspective to the discourse of development by bringing into consideration the environmental consequences of the so-called progress.

Sustainability.

Global environmental change and sustainable development have been the grand narratives of environmental politics since the 1980s (Stevis, 2005). To make development sustainable entails meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987, p. 16). The concept of sustainable development, contrary to the conventional history of the term, did not begin with Our Common Future, the Brundtland's World Commission on Environment and Development Report issued in 1987. According to Dryzek (2013), development and sustainability "have been joined occasionally since the early 1970s, originally as a discourse for the Third World" (p. 148). The underlying argument is that sustainable

practices, such as farming techniques based on local or Indigenous knowledge to support organic food production systems, allow humans to live within the limits of the natural system (Litfin, 2014). But what differentiates modern definitions of sustainable development from previous ones, is that science and politics converge to produce global institutional practices applicable at all spatial levels —global, regional, and local (Anshelm & Hultman, 2015).

In the formation of the term, "sustainable" is an adjective added to a market-laden concept such as development. The discussion around sustainable development is vast and includes intersections with issues of gender (Foster, 2011), Indigenous knowledge (Tarla Rai. Peterson, 1997), and structures of colonialism (Arrifin, 2007; Bumpus & Liverman, 2011), among others. The relevance of these themes in understanding what sustainability is, makes compulsory to redefine or extend the parameters of the concept, on the one hand (Brand & Görg, 2008; Nielsen, 2010), and to push toward the complete abandonment of the idea of sustainability, on the other (Grosfoguel, 2010; Gudynas, 2011; Walsh, 2002). By bridging notions of development with environmental consciousness, uncritical references to sustainable practices camouflage the commodification of nature. In its updated version, the discourse of sustainability appeals to the physical limits of nature in the face of an ostensibly beneficial extractivism and endless economic growth that underlies development narratives.

Three assumptions support the discourse of sustainable development: (1) economic and material growth are the main criteria to evaluate development/progress; (2) technology can "stretch" the limits of use of natural resources; and (3) capitalism, as a self-equilibrium system, is capable of coping with environmental issues found on the way

to development (Whitehead, 2014). Based on the first assumption, economic growth is seen as a precondition to prevent or stop environmental damage. This affirmation infers that poverty is the leading cause of environmental harm. At first glance, the poverty-degradation equation could be supported by the involvement of some Awá families in activities such as cultivating illegal crops, artisanal mining, and illegal logging. However, Awá participation in these harmful environmental activities must be understood within the larger geopolitical context of the binational border and as one of the consequences of an increasing process of acculturation. In other words, the almost logical intersection between poverty and environmental degradation must be questioned because the emphasis on "the poor," as the cause of nature's degradation, neglects the political economy of a capitalist system in which the concentration of wealth, based on large scale extraction/degradation, is the primary source of environmental destruction and should be the target of critique and condemnation (Carmin & Agyeman, 2011).

A strong technological bias underlies the second assumption of sustainable development discourse. Based on the "sustainable yield" —the possibility to continue extracting without reducing the base of the natural capital— advocates of mainstream sustainable discourses naïvely reassure that it is possible to have both environmental well-being and profit growth based on extraction and consumption.[29] Further, backed up by Western scientific knowledge, sustainability is presented as objective and neutral. Critics have pointed out that this kind of definition represents "a geopolitical compromise between the environmental and international development agendas" (Whitehead, 2014, p.

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[29] However, the second law of thermodynamics, entropy, is the chief scientific proof that shows the impossibility of this 'yield' because the Earth is a closed system whose energy cannot be fully restored after use. Resilient ecosystems are also part of this closed system; hence, absolute resilience is not possible either. This reality makes more fragile our human existence on Earth.

266). In other words, sustainability is a political concept, and therefore, Awá's reinterpretations of it are political as well.

The third assumption, in many ways, encompasses the former two. In the mainstream discourse of sustainable development, capitalism is taken-for-granted; hence, advocates of this discourse overlook structural factors as the initial conditions for environmental degradation. For instance, within the current political-economic structure of hedonic consumption of products that demands endless extraction of natural resources, the wealthy "are able to rely on their residual assets [and] are more inclined towards the pursuit of short-term needs" while "poor populations" are associated with destroyed ecologies despite the fact that people in positions of greatest social disadvantage are those who plan most carefully for the future (Whitehead, 2014, p. 259). At the global scale, lacking a critical appraisal of the concept of sustainability deployed via the mainstream environmental vernacular, results in a misleading equivalence between non-capitalist underdeveloped countries and environmental degradation that eventually legitimize the assertion by which to sustain the environment requires maintaining capitalism as the hegemonic economic system.

Looking at the hegemonic character of sustainable development discourse sheds light on the politics of sustainability. Instead of challenging and addressing the structural elements that affect peoples' environmental conditions, some sustainable practices maintain an "equilibrium" that often implies ostracizing social and environmental justice movements from the political debate by (re)presenting them as "against progress." The difficulties these anti-establishment groups face to denounce the structural economic roots of the ecological crisis is a result of the mainstream framing of discourses of

sustainability, development, and climate change. Ultimately, democratic systems might be in jeopardy as the potential closure on the debate around sustainable development has become highly contested (Dryzek, 2013; Nielsen, 2010) and, as I show in the next section, contested deliberations have tainted climate change definitions as well.

Climate Change.

Climate change, as a discourse, is relatively new. On June 23, 1988, in Washington D.C., in front of the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, James E. Hansen, Chief Scientist NASA Godard Institute for Space Studies, coined the term "global warming." During the administration of George W. Bush, however, Frank Luntz pushed the term "climate change" to win the political debate on the environment. Climate change, Luntz stated, "is less frightening than global warming [and] had a nice connotation —more swaying palm trees and less flooded out coastal cities. 'Change' left out any human cause of the change. Climate just changed. No one to blame" (Lakoff, 2010, p. 71). Since then, the discourse of climate change entered the political realm and currently shapes the politics of the Earth.

Climate change is a global environmental discourse circulating within the structures of global environmental governance. Drawing on risk society and post-colonial theory, Anshelm and Hultman (2015) explore the discourses present at the UN Conference on Climate Change held in Copenhagen in December 2009 (COP15). They identified four competing discourses: industrial fatalist, green Keynesianism, eco-socialist, and climate skepticism. These discourses (in)form in the contemporary global environmental arena, and in many ways, they also represent the current state of the art in the debates on development and sustainability. *Industrial Fatalist* is the dominant

discourse that frames climate crisis as "merely a temporary disturbance in civilization's industrial modernization process" (p. 12). Accordingly, industrial fatalists advocate for marginal changes in the current industrial capitalist society and their processes (e.g., production, distribution, and consumption), and they frame radical changes as menaces to capitalist productivity. In tandem with both development and sustainability, advocates of this discourse favor economic growth as a means to overcome poverty and conditions of underdevelopment, which are seen as leading causes of the current environmental crisis. Industrial fatalists stress that decision-making regarding the environment should remain at the global level via international negotiations among states.

The second discourse on global climate change, *Green Keynesianism,* portrays climate change as a symptom of a crisis in the rich industrialized world's economic system. Green Keynesianism directs attention to the need to change behaviors and values in industrialized economies, especially regarding consumption practices. Those changes, however, occur within the margins of the market, which is conceived, from a social democratic stand, as the engine of wealth creation. Hence, as long as strong government institutions properly regulate the market to reduce markets' inherent dysfunctions, "the economic system can be kept more or less intact" (Hickmann, 2016, p. 13)

Climate Skepticism is the third discourse on global climate change. Skeptics deny the anthropogenic causes of climate change and reject the need for drastic shifts in any of the political or economic principles buttressing the organization of Western capitalist society. They denounce a faith-based belief in climate science that, according to climate skeptics, distorts public opinion and dangerously affects environmental policy.

Finally, the *Eco-Socialist* discourse assumes that climate change is a symptom of the pathological "GDP growth ideology" of industrial capitalist society. Eco-socialist discourse, Anshelm and Hultman (2015) demonstrate, includes elements of environmental justice absent from Green Keynesianism and Industrial Fatalist discourses. Advocates of the eco-socialist discourse attempt to redirect attention to the structures of the world economy whose intrinsic "spatial fix" (Harvey, 2001) —capitalist expansion via the creation of new markets and/or the incorporation of domestic markets into the global economy— is considered the root of rampant patterns of environmental injustice (Carmin & Agyeman, 2011). So far, the eco-socialist discourse is at the margins of the discursive field of mainstream environmental international forums. However, movements around climate justice are "growing louder" because developing nations feel, and are threatened by, the harsh and increasing manifestations of climate change such as spreading drought, agricultural instability, sea level rise, and hurricane risk.

The global, a.k.a. international, character of the discussion on climate change evolves in tandem with a scientific jargon that seems to alienate populations on the ground, where the effects of climate disruption are experienced firsthand. Increasingly, voices have been claiming for a more place-based understanding of climate change (J. R. Cox, 2010; Devine-Wright, Price, & Leviston, 2015; Döring & Ratter, 2017; Groulx, Lewis, Lemieux, & Dawson, 2014). Moreover, scholars are also turning to traditional ecological knowledge (TEK[30]) to postulate not only solutions but also ways of

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[30] Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is understood by Indigenous people as "the process of *participating (a verb)* fully and responsibly in such relationships [between knowledge, people, and all Creation (the 'natural' worlds as well as the spiritual), rather than specifically as the knowledge gained from such experiences. For aboriginal people, TEK is not about understating relationships; it *is* the relationship with Creation… Equally fundamental from an aboriginal perspective is that TEK is *inseparable from the people who hold it*… This means that, at its most fundamental level, one cannot ever really 'acquire' or 'learn' TEK without having undergone experiences originally involved in doing so. This being the case, the

understanding the concept of climate change itself (Cochrane, 2014; Figeroa, 2011; Kronik, 2010). Therefore, climate change is not only a scientific problem, but a social and political problem as well. Climate change is a matter of power that involves individual and collective efforts simultaneously (Priest, 2016). Within Awá's territory, spatiality is relational and social but also ecological. The translation of the concept of climate change performed by Awá people from this space and within this place delinks Awá's conceptualization of climate change from scientific knowledge and language. Thus, through translation, Awá construct a phenomenological understanding of climate change that involves not only the physical transformation of the geographical space, due to flooding for instance, but also refers to shifts in ways of thinking and being that fuel the drastic changes that continue to worsen.

In sum, development, sustainability, and climate change, index the common environmental problems of the world. The global status of these ideas results from an assumed universality of the tenets that support them. Moreover, diverse groups privilege these dominant discourses that circulate seemingly uncontested in different institutional instances of the global environmental structures. The discourses' applicability across multiple localities functions as proof of a kind of perspective that favors the global over other scales of analysis. This emphasis taps into transnational networks to generate an agreement on the global nature of environmental destruction, that usually fails to recognize and reconcile the differentiated environmental responsibility members of the

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only way for TEK to be utilized in environmental management is to involve the people, the TEK holders…Once separated from its original holders, TEK loses much of its original value and meaning" (McGregor 2008, pp. 145-146. In Figeroa, 2011, p. 238). Anishanbe scholar, Deborah McGregor, developed this definition of TEK, which also can be considered an exercise in translation.

international system (nation-states) have. However, at the core of the debate, and often unquestioned, remains a value system that reproduces a kind of human hubris that complicates, even shuns, the possibilities of thinking otherwise.

The politics of nature deploys development, sustainability, and climate change as discursive formations. To understand these global environmental discourses, we need to look at the sort of subjectivities and practices produced at the intersection of neoliberal capitalism and unequal transnational relations informed by colonial histories. The construction of new ways to understand global discourses, whether environmental, political, economic, or cultural, must focus on investigating peoples' local responses to the modern processes fostered by these global discourses.

De Sousa (2011) calls for a new "social grammar" to weave "sociability, private and public spaces, culture, mentalities, and subjectivities" (p. 24). How do people and their practices translate these discourses at the local level? Do they reproduce, challenge, or resist them? What are the sites from where communities perform these translations? Where is the location of these performances? What kinds of subjectivities emerge from these performances? I argue that a new social grammar is needed for conceptualizing identity. An expanded definition of identity includes those identifications that emerge and become salient when stressing the environmental dimension of globalization. This new grammar for identity aims at re-positioning the ecology of place at the center of our understanding of intercultural relations. A focus on an ecocultural identity might help us open new paths toward agencies nurtured by earth-narratives orchestrated by a multiplicity of human and nonhuman voices.

Expanding the Boundaries of Identity: Theorizing Ecocultural Identity

The way identity enters the realm of politics is as multiple as the identities that are formed and negotiated in our interactions. The salience of one identity over another is contingent to a context fermented by histories and stories that interweave our social world through dialogue, tensions, and misunderstandings. This complicated web connects us all in many subtle and explicit threads. Despite the previous patterns registered in seemingly similar encounters, interactions with others have unpredictable outcomes. In facing others, there are always interstices into which our identities may unconsciously fall or be forced to enter, initiating a process of negotiation of the uncertainties enshrined in the existence of my encounter with that who is not me. A political perspective on culture, a constitutive force of communication, and a questioning of privilege in the negotiations of our identities, all are significant contributions of critical appraisals on identity (Collier, 2014; Collier, Hegde, Nakayama, & Yep, 2001). Although meaningful, these considerations also reveal a human-centered bias in the definition of culture and communication as they are conceptualized mainly in relation to other humans. As scholars have argued (Carbaugh, 1996; Code, 2006; Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016; Milstein, 2012), the human-centeredness intrinsic to intercultural relations tends to undermine, or maybe completely forget, the ecological dimension of our human selves and the environmental conditions in which identities arise.

Anthropocentrism does not come as a surprise if we consider the close link between intercultural communication and cultural studies, however. Daryl Slack (2013) argues that cultural studies' core concepts —discourse and apparatus/dispositive— are mainly anthropocentric insofar as they reify or undermine nature. The favoritism toward

the human, and the essentialization of nature as inanimate, both hinder possibilities of interpretation and analysis of relationships that exceed the human realm. This shortsighted view becomes more explicit especially in circumstances when the voices and agencies of the more-than-human-world envelop the cultural interactions that constitute humans' identity negotiation processes. I address these negotiations by briefly discussing what I regard as a conventional approach to identity in the intersecting realms of culture and politics. Then, I elaborate an ecological perspective on identity and show how the ecocultural lens widens the scope of cultural identity by including the ecological and environmental dimensions of identity.

Revisiting politics of identity as usual.

The momentum for revisiting notions of identity or for constructing a new grammar to engage the politics of identity from an ecological perspective is unavoidable. As the anthropogenic causes of environmental disruption are less alien to even the most privileged groups, it is necessary to connect the eco dimension with conventional ways of approaching identity in the political and cultural realms. Light (2000) defines politics of identity as "a politics where agents ground their self-conception as political agents in some aspect of their identities" (p. 60). He establishes a distinction between the subject's identity and the object of their politics, what he calls the "subject-object constitutive profile of identity" (p. 62). The subject/object articulation defines two forms of identity based on their performances in the political arena. *Attached* identity politics[31] refers to the

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[31] I am aware that the term "identity politics" is problematic as the right-wing rhetoric currently uses the term to dismiss, as incendiary and divisive, any discussions on race, sexuality, or ethnicity, and other cultural identities. Also, identity politics have been intentionally framed in reductionist and confrontational fashions by the media, for instance. I keep the term because Light uses it in his analysis. I will avoid using this term after addressing Light's arguments and instead use "politics of identity.".

"politics of a claim to a thick connection between a politicized identity trait and the object of the politics of that identity" (e.g., feminism as politics of women) (p. 64). On the contrary, *detached* identity politics "is not necessarily conjoined to some material or personal aspect of political identity, nor are the traits they politicise the object of their politics" (e.g., male feminists) (p. 64). Environmentalism as a kind of environmental identity, Light argues, is a detached political identity insofar as the politicized object of identity —nature— does not correspond to a material trait of the subject. Light, however, conceives the possibility of an attached environmental identity that is likely to emerge if a radical view of human ontology challenges the human/nature distinction, which can overcome the subject/object gap; thus, leading to conceive the subject's identity as co-extensive with nature.

If an environmental identity requires a radical ontology, as Light (2000) accurately states, the foundation of environmentalism's identity politics is very narrow. In the same token, if *only* empathy toward nature is needed to constitute an ecological-based identity, then, to gain political ground, environmentalism must unite with other progressive forms of identity politics. In my reading, these evaluations have two shortcomings. First, a radical ontological shift is not exclusive of an environmental identity. A race-based politics of identity, for instance, must challenge the reified superiority of one race over another, which demands to question the biased ontology that supports racism. Likewise, an ecological-based politics of identity questions anthropocentrism and challenges human exceptionalism (Grusin, 2015; Hodden, 2014). The same ontological exigency must be applied when assessing gender, disability, age, or any other sociocultural constructs implicated in unbalanced power relations,

discriminatory discourses, and oppressive hegemonic ideologies.

Furthermore, Light's ontological request undermines the extensive literature that demonstrates the political power of care and empathy for nature. Ahmed (2014) has made a compelling case for the politics of emotions by asserting the social power of affections, which can become the site of collective politics. Emotions, Ahmed argues, function as active means of making and intervening in the world as well as the foundation of sustainable political action. Similarly, Shome (2010) states, "structures of feeling or affect are one of how power and subjectivity are articulated, reproduced, resisted, mobilized" (p. 163). The radical ontology in the constitution of an environmental identity, therefore, occurs when the micropolitics of personal feelings coalesce with the politics of empathy and care for nature. This coalition is also deeply embodied because the environment is not *outside* but *in* my body, what Bell (2004) defines as "invironment—the zone of the body's perceptual dialogue with nature" (p. 108).

The second shortcoming refers to Light's suggestion of an attached identity politics standing by itself while a detached one requires coalitions. He posited that regarding political effectiveness, activism based on an (detached) environmental identity is less powerful than gender- or race-based activism. His evaluation of environmentalism's political potency and impact seems to disregard that environmental movements "represent a new form of political action, since their ecological strands can connect disparate groups, across class, ethnicity, and gender" (Robbins, 2012, p. 217). Furthermore, any political position needs to find strategies to form multi-scale alliances and coalitions to be effective (Escobar, 2010a; Micarelli, 2015; Ulloa, 2001).

From this perspective, the weak or narrow effectiveness ascribed to ecological-based actions and movements is limited to Western environmental subjects whose identification with and relations to nature, Light (2000) rightly states, "has often been, and still is, primarily white and middle class" (p. 74). For instance, non-Western environmental movements and political positions are deeply rooted in cultural references whose ecological ontologies are already radical for Western ecological rationalities (Acosta & Martínez, 2011; Cepek, 2011; Gudynas, 2011; Smith, 2015; Walsh, 2010a). Awá's territoriality is an example of a radical ontology as their territories, and the nature constituting them, is inseparable from Awá's sense of self and identity. From the consubstantial attachment to the territory, in Light's words, Awá would be enacting an attached environmental identity. Hence, the leap from philosophical stand to political action seems to go through reflecting on to embrace the ecocultural identities that have become more relevant as the global and local ecological crisis is more pressing than ever.

An ecological perspective on the politics of identity.

Investigations on identity have privileged the cultural, focusing on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and age as discursive formations that shape and are shaped by societies. Yet, humans are not simply racialized, gendered, sexualized, ethnicized beings. Humans are also material beings "*of* nature" with differentiated agencies and voices, and ways of communication (Hodden, 2014). The voice of nature soundly manifests, among other ways, through experiential knowledges and practices, sense-of-place, and identity, as well as social organizations, political processes, and non-human voice (Depoe & Peeples, 2014). An ecological perspective expands the concept of agency by signaling how nature exceeds humans' symbolic boundaries that attribute to

nature an observed position and a passive involvement. Nonhuman actants play a constitutive part in the evolution of human history (Carney & Rosomoff, 2009; Duvall, 2014). Nature's materiality is agentic (Haraway, 2008; Jansen, 2016; Latour, 1993); an assumption that allows an approach nature as "an intended center of value, and an originator of projects that demand my respect" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 56).

A broader understanding of agency that includes human and animal activity, as well as other nonhuman factors, "does not eradicate human agency" (Dürbeck et al., 2015, p. 122). What it does, though, is to recognize intentionality in both human and more-than-human. Therefore, agency should not be understood only as part of economic and (inter)cultural systems, but also within ecological systems.

The exploration of Awá's identifications demonstrates that humans are ecological and cultural beings. In this study, I seek to demonstrate how nature percolates into the political realm[32] (Latta, 2014) via the enunciation of Awá's territory, *katza su*. Awá's territoriality is the realm of signification in which, via translation, Awá recontextualize and emplace global environmental discourses. Through these processes, Awá enact and negotiate their ecocultural identities that emerge and intersect in intercultural encounters with their human and nonhuman neighboring communities.

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[32] Ecuador's 2008 Political Constitution is a good example of how Nature becomes a political location for individuals or groups upon which to build a stronger and more encompassing political ground and traction. The incorporation into the Constitution of Pachamama (Mother Earth) and the definition of Nature as a *subject* of rights (Articles 71 and 72), stems from an Andes Indigenous cosmovision represented by the Kichwa words Sumak Kawsay (buen vivir/living well). Sumak kawsay's epistemology and ontology challenge foundational Western principles of development by emphasizing relationality, integrality, complementarity, and reciprocity between humans and nature. See Acosta and Martinez (2011), the edited book Hidalgo-Capitan, Guillén, and Deleg (2014), and the Special issue in the Journal *Íconos* (2014) published by FLACSO, Ecuador.

Defining ecocultural identity.

An ecocultural identity comprises the materially and discursively constructed positionality, subjectivity, perception, and practice that inform one's emotional, embodied, ethical, and political sensibilities regarding the more-than-human world.[33] An ecologically infused politics of identity is not a separate corps of politics but rather a struggle that acknowledges the constitution of a subject of nature. To understand the formation of ecocultural identities, it is necessary to talk about ecological subjectivity and environmental identity in tandem.

First of all, subjectivity is "a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity[,] that particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short- or long-term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being" (Hall, 2004, p. 3). *Ecological subjectivities* elicit nature as the location of enunciation, a "site, a habitat, a medium of ecological interaction and encounter" (Code, 2006, p. 27), from where the self speaks, feels, knows, learns, and communicates who the self is in relation to humans and more-than-human others. Hence, within/from nature, ecological subjectivities could be thought and brought into consciousness by embracing lively and intentional elements and processes of wider ecosystems (Hutchins, 2013; Milstein, 2016; Weiss & Haber, 1999). Therefore, *N*ature becomes the political platform for a participatory co-evolution and constitution of ecological subjectivities within the cultural itineraries and "temporalities of struggles" (Collier, Hegde, Lee, Nakayama, Yep, 2001, p. 223) that overlap, compete, morph, and converge to give rise to ecocultural identities.

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[33] In her work, Tema Milstein has critically engaged and expanded the concept of ecoculture (see references list). This specific definition emerges from an ongoing work in which Tema and I are currently collaborating.

An ecocultural identity is a *subject of nature* who articulates nature-based livelihoods with global and local discourses, practices, and norms (Agrawal, 2005; Cepek, 2011; Davidov, 2013; Latorre, 2013). Ecocultural identities emerge within institutional structures that govern the environment by organizing nature, which shapes individuals' and groups' relationships with/in/as nature. Therefore, an ecocultural identity is historical, discursive, material, and temporal, and is contingent upon the dialectical process involving the formation of ecological subjectivities and environmental identities. The uniformity and fragmentation of ecocultural identities parallel the contested notions of nature spread throughout a spectrum of environmental ideologies oscillating from instrumental to ecocentric (Corbett, 2006).

In this study, I focus on two kinds of ecocultural identities. First, a *restorative ecocultural identity,* which is mutually constituted by a self who conceives of nature as the locus of thought and consciousness and recognizes the intrinsic value of nature, and a social being whose practices are primarily eco- or bio-centric. An *unwholesome ecocultural identity* undermines or completely disregards nature as a source of knowledge and awareness, and therefore tends to reproduce anthropocentric practices that render nature as mainly instrumental; thus, conditioning nature's value to its sole use as a resource to exploit. These are, of course, the extreme poles in the spectrum of ecocultural identities that are informed by environmental ideologies that compete and overlap, thus, shaping our understandings of the world and situating humans within it. An unwholesome ecocultural identity deepens the human-nature divide via asserting human exceptionalism. On the contrary, in its restorative mode, an ecocultural identity questions anthropocentrism by entering on a quest to interconnectedness.

In chapter seven, I present the ecocultural relations among Awá, Mestizo, and Afro populations, as an example of the vital material and symbolic role that the nonhuman *katza su* play in the formation of Awá's identities, discourses, institutions, and practices. I demonstrate how the ecological subjectivities and environmental identities of Awá, mestizos, and Afrodescendants are constructed in Awá organizations' official documents, as well as in the process of translation of the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change. Furthermore, identity issues are at the core of environmental conflicts (Tarla R. Peterson et al., 2016; Tarla R. Peterson & Frank, 2006). Accordingly, I argue that to better understand environmental conflicts, researchers-practitioners should consider ecocultural identities as the salient identifications implicated and being negotiated in these conflicts.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This study looked at the politics of nature embedded in environmental globalization. Informed by a decolonial standpoint, I used a critical and interpretive qualitative approach to investigate how the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change, circulate among the Grand Binational Awá Family (GFAB), one of few transboundary Indigenous organizations located at the border between Ecuador and Colombia.[34] By exploring Awá organizations' translation of these global environmental discourses, I attempted to understand Awá's relationships with their territories, situated knowledges and meanings, and ecocultural identities. Research is a political act to generate knowledge to enhance "utopian politics of possibility that addresses social injustice and imagines a radical democracy that is not yet" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. xiii). As such, this investigation sought to understand the complexity of the Awá situation in order to offer ways to unpack discursive conditions that may support injustice, deepen inequality, and perpetuate exclusion.

For this study, I collaborated with Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (FCAE) and Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA), the largest Awá organization in the Colombian side. National governments' relations inform FCAE's and UNIPA's organizational situation. However, referring only to national histories is insufficient to understand the process of translation performed by Awá representatives within these organizations. Accordingly, I first situated my analysis within the Awá organizations' histories and the Indigenous cosmovision that constitute them. In the vast literature approaching Indigenous people, the notion of territory is at the heart of Indigenous

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[34] Other Indigenous people with binational organizations are Cofán and Éperas (Senplades & DNP, 2014).

sociopolitical, cultural, and environmental struggles, and claims for rights and recognition. Therefore, the first research question was: *How does La Gran Familia Awá Binational (GFAB) understand, construct, and reproduce their relationships with their territories?*

After mapping out the elements of Awá's thoughts, practices, and connections with the territory *katza su*, I directed my attention to the discursive practice of translation to explore what happened when global environmental discourses enter the realm of signification of Awá's territoriality. Thus, the second research question guiding this study was: *How does La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) translate the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works?*

Translation here is not limited to a reproduction of meaning across different languages (i.e., from sustainability to sustentable/sostenible) nor it is narrowed to the linguistic structure of the languages involved in the translation from Awapit to Spanish and from Spanish to English. Nor was I focused on the ethnophysical nomenclature[35] of places (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013) used by Awá people to describe and interpret their territory. Although linguistic and interpretive cues of the process of translation are implicit, I considered them to be too limiting to adequately explore and unravel the works of colonialism in its discursive forms of development, sustainability, and climate change.

Following Briziarelli and Martínez-Guillem (2016), I approached the normative aspect of language from both a functional and political point of view. Thus, I conceive

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[35] An ethnophysical nomenclature includes "verbal renderings of landscapes, water, plants, animals, and bodies" and its practices of "place-naming, verbal depictions of place, 'spatial deixis' or the expressive references (e.g., through ''here'' and ''that'' and pointing) to immediate physical circumstances" (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013, p. 11).

language as "a mechanism of disciplinization and oppression of linguistic communities/groups/classes over others, but also an essential aspect of social organization that coordinates, organizes, and can even, to a certain extent, emancipate" (p. 49). Therefore, I understand translation as (1) an historicist inquiry of sociopolitical, economic, and environmental structures; and (2) as a communication practice that has the potential to motivate subaltern political strategies and techniques (Briziarelli, 2017). As a non-dominant language, the use of Awapit in the translation of global environmental discourses entails an epistemological and ontological challenge. Epistemologically, Awá's construction-via-translation of the meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change, evokes histories of colonization, acculturation, and knowledge oppression that exceed the human realm as discourses, perceptions, and practices and includes the more-than-human realm. Regarding ontology, the translations performed by Awá organization elucidate the formation of ecological subjectivities and environmental identities that mediate Awá's "humanature alignments"[36] (Milstein, 2009, 2011, 2016) as identity is not only formed by human/human relations but also by human/nature relationships.

The dialectic relations between discourse and practice are never explicit as discourse is infused with ambiguity. However, the moment meanings are fixed, it is possible to elucidate the effects of discourse on the formation of human-to-human and

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[36] Regarding the use of humanature, Milstein (2011) states: "I use the compound terms humanature and ecoculture throughout my writing as a way to reflexively engage human and nature, ecology and culture, in integral conversation in research as they are in life. These symbolic moves are turns away from binary constructs and notions of 'the environment' and turns toward lexical reciprocal intertwining. These moves are in league with Haraway's (2008) use of 'naturecultures' to encompass nature and culture as inter-related historical and contemporary entities" (p. 21, note 1)

human-nonhuman relations. I assumed cultural identities are intrinsically ecological and illustrate how the Awá territory's environment and nature are constitutive of Awá's identity. Grounded in their territoriality, Awá's translation of global environmental discourses implicates competing and overlapping ideologies and sense of self- and relations-in-place that inform Awá's identity as both ecological and cultural. Therefore, the third question asked: *What are the politics of identity, ecocultural identities and discursive positionings, that emerge from the translation of development, sustainability, and climate change within Awá's territoriality?*

In answering these three questions, this study pursued to contribute to the growing transdisciplinary decolonial body of scholarship focusing on exploring ways of thinking, feeling, and living otherwise. In the following section, I survey the assumptions underlying the discursive approach of this study; then, I present a framework to map the situation and facilitate the analysis of communities' or organizations' meaning-making and interactions. Then, I describe the processes and techniques used to generate data, which included conducting in-depth interviews and collecting official and public texts and artifacts. I close with some reflections on approaching border as method.

Exploring through Discourse: Praxis and Language

I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the linguistic entry point to understand Awá's engagements with the meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change. A wide range of studies has applied CDA. Sumares and Fidélis (2011) identified studies that applied this method of discourse analysis to topics such as ecological modernization, urban planning, democracy, and identity and sustainability management. CDA has been applied also to studies on environmental conflicts (Ihlen, 2006; Linnors &

Hallin, 2001; Usher, 2013) and policy making (Woodside-Jiron, 2011). As both

methodology and method, CDA has contributed to illuminate how texts (re)produce

representations and identities, relationships, and practices of both humans and nonhuman

(Stibbe, 2014). I approached the complexity of the GFAB's (Grand Binational Awá

Family) translation by critically analyzing the discursive entanglements (interdiscursivity

and intertextuality) articulated in the global discourses of development, sustainability,

and climate change.

      Discourse analysis is the study of texts —oral, written, audiovisual, performed, or

web-based— to understand the relationships between language use and social practices.

The spectrum of discourse analysis encompasses critical and noncritical approaches. A

noncritical, a.k.a. interpretive discourse analysis, Gee (2004) states, "tend to treat social

practices solely regarding patterns of social interaction" (p. 33); thus, giving emphasis to

the utterances in relation to situated meaning-making, task, or function. On the contrary,

a critical approach conceives discourse as a social practice that is constitutive of and is

constituted by structures embedded in a web of unbalanced power relations and

competing ideologies implicated in the reproduction of hegemonic systems of oppression

and domination (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2001)

      Discourse is a social practice that fixes meaning within a domain or field

producing both closure and possibilities of change. The emphasis on either closure or

change has engendered a range of critical approaches to discourse. However, there are

two common and interweaving theoretical threads connecting the array of critical

approaches to discourse analysis (James Paul Gee, 2004; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002;

Tracy, Martínez-Guillem, Robles, & Casteline, 2011). First, influenced by post-structural

theories, scholars using CDA assume that social and cultural structures are partially

linguistic. Language is neither a fixed, nor a uniform social structure/fabric as it is

constantly (re)created through interactions. Second, influenced by Marxism, critical

approaches criticize the liberal idea of the autonomous individual. Without falling into a

trap of structural determinism (Williams, 1977), critical approaches to discourse favor

structure over agency. However, critical views vary in their approaches to discourses,

representing a spectrum of the analysis of discourse that stems from whether the

emphasis is on the structural forces or the possibility of agency (Jørgensen & Phillips,

2002). In line with the critical tradition of discourse analysis, I approached Awá's

translation of development, sustainability, and climate change as a way to understand

how Awá organizations work through the ideological forces of modernity and the

structures of environmental governance to create alternatives aligned or not to their

Indigenous cosmovision and identity.

The Spectrum of Discourse Analysis

Critical examinations of discourse use theory in various ways. I demonstrate these

differences by looking at two approaches: discourse theory, chiefly represented by the

work of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, and critical discourse analysis, with Norman

Fairclough as one of the leading scholars. Both frameworks of analysis differ in (1) the

production and the degree of agency granted to the subject; and (2) the possibility of

social change.

First, based on Althusser, there are two ways of interpreting the production of the

subject. On the one hand, a subject is a "free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author of

and responsible for its actions" (Hall, 2004, p. 86). Alternatively, a subject can be a

"subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and it is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his [sic] submission" (*ibid*). Discourse Theory (DT) adopts the second view in which "the 'subject before subjectivation' is always in danger of being swallowed by a 'discursive identity' on the one hand, and by the 'subjectivity of the agent' by the other" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 289). Laclau and Mouffe's hyper-discursivity, Briziarelli (2017) states, could be

> a kind of 'vulgar' historicism [that] inevitably liquefies [history] into a
> relativistic and structurally undecidable flux of events. Thus, in Laclau and
> Mouffe's discursive understanding of reality, there is no a priori
> foundation on which all knowledge and action —qua philosophy of
> praxis— can be based. (p. 14)

To this perspective, therefore, the articulations between knowledge and discourse are oversaturated with power, leaving no room for subversive stands or alternatives of resistance.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), on the contrary, conceives the subject as a source of initiatives and capable of action. Contrary to DT, whose faithful application of Foucault's work leads to the understanding of power as always and only productive, CDA assumes that "power necessarily produces its own resistances or that it produces knowledges and discourses that are themselves invariably productive" (Martínez Guillem, 2013, p. 200). Fairclough contends with DT's hyper-discursivity by acknowledging the existence of non-discursive elements and paying attention to other (material) elements of the social realm. The subject's possibilities of agency are

contingent not only to the possibility of changing the discourse, but also to the material conditions in which discursive practices occur (Fairclough, 2012).

Second, social change is also conceived differently depending on the discursive approach. DT scholars heavily rely on Foucault's subjectivation, which demotes the subject from constitutive to constituted (Agrawal, 2005; Cepek, 2011; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Hence, subjectivation, as well as the disciplining that accompanies it, constrains agency by incorporating in the processes of producing subjectivity the appearance of change (Martínez Guillem, 2013). To Laclau and Mouffe, change occurs in the antagonism ever present in discursive formations. Antagonism creates ambiguities that reveal the intrinsic ideological aspect of discourse. As an ideological device, discourse aims to remove ambiguities through closure —"a temporary stop to the fluctuations in the meaning of the signs" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 28). Discursive closure reduces the possibility of change because without ambiguity language becomes normative, and therefore, hegemonic.

Scholars utilizing CDA reflect differently about (social) change. Contrary to DT, scholars using CDA conceptualize ideology as distinct from discourse. By looking at how ideology works through discourse, it is possible to understand ways in which certain discourses become more acceptable than others; thus, normalized, uncontested, and universal/global. The conflation of extractivism with economic growth in some notions of development is an example of unchallenged ideological discourses. Yet, if Laclau and Mouffe's conceptualization of discourse infers that language (discourse) can by itself complete hegemony, to Fairclough, the function of ideology in fixing meaning is contingent to the multifarious discursive articulations that are likely to emerge from the

dialectical relations between structures and practices. Therefore, change becomes a possibility in the articulation of discourses, that is, in the interdiscursivity of texts (Fairclough, 2003). Contingency is intrinsic to any discursive articulation, and it offers the possibility of creative and alternative ways of meaning-making which may ignite what for Martínez Guillem (2013) is missing, "the ability to conceive power dynamics in a way that allows envisioning social transformation" (p. 199) To this end, the author continues, "our understanding of power needs to recognize the *difficulty*, not the impossibility, of creating alternatives" (p. 200, emphasis in the original). One of these alternatives is encapsulated in Awá Plans for Life. These documents contain Awá's voices of resistance and demonstrate how subaltern subjects re-imagine and deny the closure furthered by global environmental discourses. In sum, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory focuses on how discourse works; Fairclough's CDA, on the contrary, emphasizes the use of discourse as a resource.

In this study, I engaged Awá texts —e.g., plans and interviews—from a critical approach in the tradition of Fairclough's discourse analysis. I show how within the discursive field created by Awá's territory and territoriality, Awá organizations' texts fix the meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change while simultaneously opening possibilities for change via a resignification that challenges the closure implicit in the use of these concepts. This interpretation, however, signals some of the main critiques endowed to critical approaches to discourse.

Critics on critical discourse analysis.

Breeze (2011) identifies three major criticisms of CDA. First, politics and ethics are implicated in critical approaches to discourse; accordingly, critical researchers'

"targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice" (as quoted in Stibbe, 2015, p. 191). From this position, unpacking the works of discourse aims at raising awareness and fostering social change. Critics argue that the asserted political commitment of CDA scholars could affect scientific criteria and research's objectivity, leading to misinterpretation of the data or the interpretation of the data as having explicit political purpose. These criticisms assume that objectivity endows validity to the study; yet, "validity is not like objectivity" (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 120). The rigor of objectivity lies on the assumption that the method allows researchers to be neutral; thus, separating method from researcher. To critical scholars, the researcher does not use analytical tools; rather, the researcher *is* the tool of analysis. Therefore, contrary to objectivity, validity is the "conflation between method and interpretation" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 120). The rigor of validity is based on the interpretation of the text as well as on the recognition of the influence researchers assumptions and identities might have on the findings; hence, the need for reflexivity. By acknowledging a political stand, CDA scholars strengthen validity insofar as the site/text does not exist independent from the researcher. It is in this sense that researchers perform the method, and not only use it.

The second criticism of CDA refers to its theoretical eclecticism. Such heterogeneity, critics claim, parallels an "unsystematic application of methods" (Breeze, 2011, p. 502). While this could be true for DT's lack of a systematic method to approaching social reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), CDA's attention to the formalities of the language also allows directing attention to the specificities of context and the historical evolution of a text (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Ironically, the third

criticism is CDA's overemphasis on context. The dialectical relation between text and

context is not solely a philosophical commitment but a political claim (Fairclough, 2003;

Wodak & Meyer, 2001). As Code (2006) argues, "the implication that text and context

are separable —that text is best explained when it is inserted into or returned to context,

but the two are distinct— bypasses their reciprocal constitutive effects" (p. 5). Therefore,

questioning the separation between text and context is vital as the interplay between text

and context demands both describing and explaining the dialectics between everyday

practices and political/cultural projects within—and in inextricable relation to—

ecological conditions. To engage these projects and conditions, in the following section I

present the framework I used to look at structural factors and situated experiences

simultaneously.

A Rhizomatic Framework for Situational Analysis

      A reference to contextual factors does not make an analysis necessarily critical.[37]

As a researcher, I approached the binational location of Awá organizations based on two

premises. An etic premise conceives the site-as-a-field and highlights the theoretical and

conceptual assumptions researchers bring to the site. An emic view recognizes the site-

as-a-scene; thus, it focuses on the situated experiences that emerge in the site/location

(Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The inextricable text/context relationship is central to the

extent that it illuminates the glocality (Escobar, 2001) that the GFAB (Gran Binational

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[37]For instance, Carbaugh's (2007) cultural discourse analysis (CuDA) mentions five investigative modes, distinct yet complementary. These include theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical analyses. Out of these modes, he considers that "the first three—theoretical, descriptive, and interpretive— are necessary for a cultural discourse analysis, while the last two are possible, if not always necessary" (p. 171). This focus does not suggest that issues of power or ideologies cannot be addressed by following CuDA's premises as Milstein's work has shown (see reference list).

Awá Family) navigates and negotiates, particularly in liminal spaces such as nation-state borders. By looking at the communication practice of translation performed by the GFAB, I attempted to explore how the discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change (re)produce ideological systems of meaning that sustain or question larger structures of economic, social, and political power configuring the global environmental governance deployed at the Ecuador-Colombia borderland.

The rhizomatic framework for situational analysis (Figure 3) draws heavily on Collier's (2014) framework for community engagement and intercultural praxis; however, the organization of the connections and the spaces in between the roots and intervals of the rhizome are my interpretation.
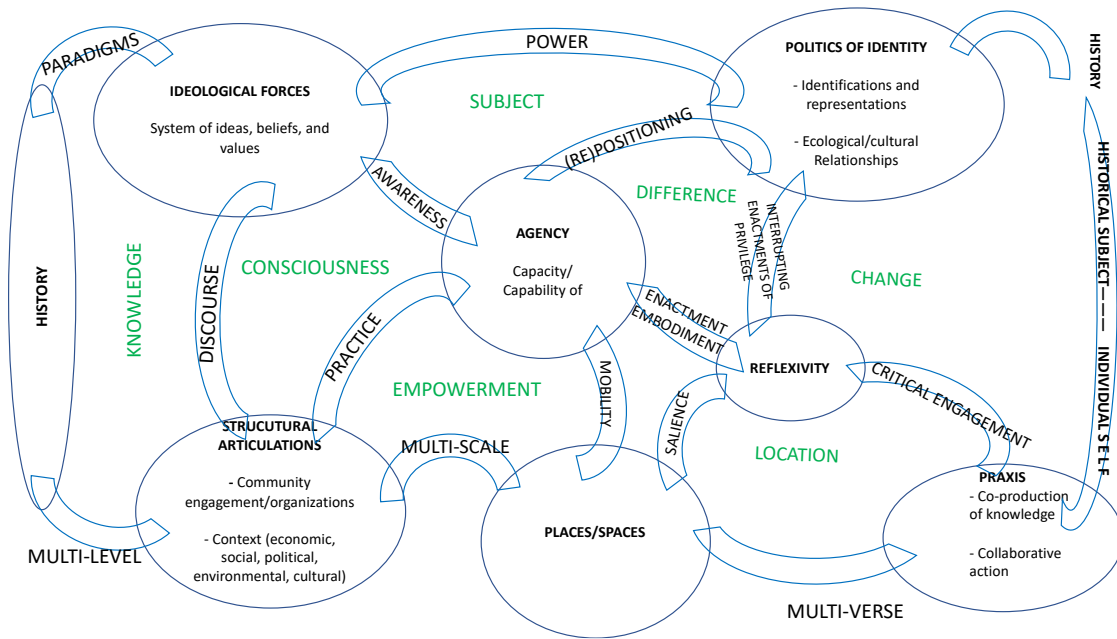
Figure 1 A rhizomatic framework for situational analyses

The entry point to this encompassing framework is the discourses connecting the ideological forces and the structures that (re)produce competing and/or complementary

paradigms of knowledge deployed by diverse actors —individuals, groups, or organizations— at the micro, meso, and/or macro levels. The degree of agency these actors have is contingent to the scale —local, national, regional, and/or global— and the place/space —neighborhood, community, or territory— where actors are able to utilize (or not) the material and symbolic means through which particular praxes can be performed. Through communication practices, actors construct shared social spaces and negotiate diverse and multiple identities, which influence possibilities of collaboration and co-production of knowledge in which researchers' histories, ideologies, and identities are implicated as well.

Applied to this study, this situational map emphasizes the ecological and environmental dimension of these connections, considers nonhuman voices and agencies, and focuses on the formations of ecocultural identities. The ecological and environmental expansion of this framework seeks to respond to Milstein's (2012) call for greening communication. The framework intends to facilitate the evaluation of specific situations and identification of new articulations that might offer practical proposals of critical engagement to attain justice, equity, and inclusion for both human and more-than-humans. In the following section, I describe the methods of data collection as well as their implications to researchers doing fieldwork.

Data Collection: Conducting In-Depth Interviews with Emphasis on Translation

I approached Awá organizations as site of contestation, conflicts, and multiple interests, as well as sites of resistance, creativity, and hope. The interviews with some of their members were the main discursive data of this study, and as such, I took them as "pieces of interactions in their own right" (Nikander, 2012, p. 398). Furthermore,

interviewing is not only a "tool" to gather data, it is also a "site for the production of meaning" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 14) insofar as it elicits social actors' ways of language-use in stories, accounts, or explanations. Interview texts help to understand social actors' unique experiences, knowledges, worldviews, and cosmovisions.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), a transboundary Indigenous organization working on the border between Ecuador and Colombia. I collaborated with two Awá organizations: Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (FCAE), and Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA) from Colombia. Interviews were conducted in Spanish with community leaders who fell into the category of elite. I defined elite as a person who has significant influence in the organizations and whose source of authority is not necessarily only political or economic, but also cultural or traditional. This distinction is vital insofar as Awá's organizational history shows a separation between the traditional authority (e.g. the elder) and the "formal" authority (e.g. president of the organization) (Pineda Medina, 2011).

This distinction is often problematic among Awá people. For instance, elders speak Awapit language, and therefore, Awá communities and their organizations position them as those who hold and keep Awá stories and traditional practices. However, this cultural status does not always translate into positions of power within the organizational structures, as elders usually lack formal education, most of them do not speak Spanish, and live deep into the territory, making their contact with non-Awá communities very limited (Camawari, Unipa, & Acipap, 2012). Accordingly, during my fieldwork, I used a snowball sample starting from the president of each organization who was located in the urban centers —Ibarra in Ecuador, and Pasto in Colombia. They introduced or directed

me to other members in several places of their territories such as Lita and San Lorenzo, in Ecuador, and Predio el Verde in Colombia.

To evaluate the possibilities of doing this study, I conducted preliminary fieldwork at the end of November 2016. The binational border is still a militarized "hot spot" despite the recent peace agreement signed by the Colombian government with the Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia-FARC in November 2017, and the peace negotiations initiated at the beginning of 2018 with the National Liberations Army-ELN. These circumstances demanded special ethical sensitivities as Awá people are considered a "vulnerable population" by the Colombian and Ecuadorian governments. Therefore, I had to obtain special IRB approval to perform these interviews (See Appendix B. Consent Form).

The fieldwork took place during the month of April 2017. Originally, I proposed twelve interviews, distributed equally among the four organizations forming the GFAB. Unfortunately, a "natural" event made impossible to conduct these interviews. Approximately two weeks before my trip, I read in the news that a terrible flood had devastated the city of Mocoa, capital of the department of Putumayo, Colombia. The Colombian Awá organizations Association of Indigenous Councils of the Awá People of the Putumayo (ACIPAP) and Main Council Awa of Ricaurte (CAMAWARI) are located around this geographical area. I contacted Rider Pai, president of UNIPA, to know about the situation of these Awá communities. His reply was one of despair and concern[38] as he described the extreme dire situation of the disaster zone. Needless to say, I could not go to Mocoa to conduct the interviews. By the time I am writing this section, the conditions

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[38]   This   is   one   of   several   news   articles   about   the   flooding   in   Mocoa:
http://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/factores-que-causaron-la-gigantesca-inundacion-en-mocoa.html

in Mocoa are still harsh and inhabitants of the zone are still in need of assistance. Assuming that the flooding is directly connected to an abrupt change in the ecology of the place, this event makes me wonder, to what extent climate disruption is affecting research, specifically environmentally related research, in locations that are affected by and are vulnerable to the effects of these ecological unbalance?

In the end, I conducted seven in-depth interviews ranging from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes. According to McCraken (1988), the number of participants is not the issue at hand in interviewing research techniques; what is important is that the interviews allow the research-practitioner to reach exhaustion. Exhaustion is a recurrent linguistic reference present in all interviewees' systems of meaning. Five out of seven interviewees were bilingual —Spanish and Awapit; however, all the interviewees were able to identify the Awapit words used to translate development and sustainability: *wat mɨlna*. Regarding the translation of climate change, contrary to Spanish speakers, bilingual interviewees compounded several Awapit words in their processes of translation of climate change; therefore, there are not one or two Awapit words, like *wat mɨlna*, able to translate the Western notion of climate change. The implications of the absence of concise terms to translate climate change go beyond the linguistic realm; this nonexistence could be read as showing the narrowness of the dominant discourse of climate change to understand a phenomenon that, in Awá's interpretations of climate change, encompasses ethical ontologies (e.g., respect) and not only technological consolations (e.g., roads). The reappearance of similar Awapit terms in each interview was revealing, though, not only because the recurrence was evidence of saturation, but

more importantly due to the web of meanings that the identification of these terms pictured (For details of these terms see Glossary of Awapit Terms).

I used "directive questions" to unravel Awá stories in an unconstrained manner. At the same time, I encouraged interviewees to directly address the three main concepts at the core of this study. I used "compare-contrast" questions to highlight the differences between conceptualizations of development, sustainability, and climate change (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) (See Appendix C. Interview Guide). However, I revisited some of the questions and incorporated key terms that emerge from my initial interview interactions (Denzin, Lincoln, & Charmaz, 2011). For instance, instead of asking about notions of "good living," I incorporated the terms *wat mɨlna, wat puran,* or *wat usan*, the Awapit translation of good living. I also replaced the Spanish word "mestizo" with the Awapit *wisha*, since interviewees used this term to refer to peasant neighboring communities or non-Indigenous organizations. Further, after the third interview, I started using the word *wisha* as an avowed identity during the interviews, as I was positioned as such in several moments during the interview's dialectical process. An example of the reinterpretation of the questions is: "How would you explain the Awá notion of *wat mɨlna* to a *wisha* like me?" This dialectical performative move allowed me to recognize myself as "a proper object of narration" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 10), as well as to reflect "about 'how the self illuminates the social' and how reflections about the social are an 'implication of the knowledge systems, paradigms, and vocabularies we employ' (Madison, 2011, p. 129)" (Collier, 2015, p. 211).

Throughout this study, I use interviewees' real names and positions within the organizations. Participants filled out an information sheet in which confidentiality options

regarding names and organizational affiliation were given (See Appendix D. Information Sheet). I decided to offer these options based on my previous experiences working with similar communities in which community members used spaces of public participation as a platform to denounce governments' negligence. Besides, apart from the specific information about the translation process, the criticisms to political entities and the description of groups or institutions affecting their territories have been made public via Awá organizations' community-based reports and diagnoses. Participants decided not to select a pseudonym, and all stated that their names and affiliation could be used. As one interviewee professed off record, "everything is transparent, no?" Therefore, Table 4 shows the interviewees' information as registered in the information sheets.

At the time of my fieldwork, people in elite positions were all men. Awá organizations' reports and community-based documents collected as secondary sources mentioned the importance of women's role in the preservation of Awá culture via customs and stories shared within the "family's domestic nucleus" (Camawari et al., 2012). From audiovisual web material about Awá people reviewed as part of my fieldwork preparation process, I knew about the existence of "lideresas" —women in leadership positions— within Awá communities. However, knowledgeable of the possibility that structures of patriarchy have also built up within Indigenous communities, it did not surprise me to find only men in these positions. An in-depth analysis of gender issues in Awá organizations is beyond the scope of this research; however, it is a theme worthy of attention.

Table 4 List of Awá Elite Interviewed

N-	Name	Position	Place of the interview
Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador – FCAE			
1	Olindo Cantincus	Active member; former president of the organization	Quito
2	José Jairo Cantincus	Active member; Council of the Center of Mataje Alto	San Lorenzo
3	Florencio Cantincus	Current President of the organization	Lita
4	Filiberto Pascal	Director of the Bilingual Intercultural Community Education Center Moises Cantincus	Lita
Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá – UNIPA (Colombia)			
5	Rider Pai	Senior Councilor UNIPA (President)	Pasto
6	Olivio Bisbicus	Territory and Biodiversity Coordinator - Awá Gran Sábalo Indigenous Reserve, La Pinam-Nutria UNIPA	Predio El Verde
7	Eduardo Cantincus	Economic and Production Counselor	Predio El Verde

I had the opportunity to talk informally to the women of the households I stayed at during my fieldwork. In that conversation, they told me that projects directed to women (e.g., handicrafts) were not supported by the Awá organization and "the organization let the project close." Also, I witnessed that a building designated as a Center for Women's Health was closed and not in use. The observed predominance of Awá men in leadership positions, as President, Counselor, or Coordinator, as well as my informal conversations with community members, suggest that despite Awá women's courage and "recognized" vital role in the continuity of Awá's cultural heritage, women

seem to benefit less from Awá organizations' strategies to improve their living conditions in the territory.

In addition to gender, there is another methodological consideration. While the organizational position held by the interviewees is important for understanding some of their statements, I am aware that because of intersectionality —"the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (McCall, 2005, p. 1771)—the "self" is not homogeneous. There is no single subject speaking because interviewees' responses are "informed by voices of other subjectivities" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 24). As interviewers, therefore, researchers cannot tell (not with absolute certainty at least) who is speaking, and whose voice has been recorded. Therefore, in translating these voices researchers should assume insurmountable blind spots springing from the knowledges that are in competition in order to fix meaning. It is, therefore, at the level of interpretation where the implications of intersectionality for the process of translation are illuminated insofar as translating entails the evocation of different histories and experiences that collide and bend, turning translation into one way (of many) to making-meaning in inter-ecocultural encounters. When analyzing the data, I considered this methodological uncertainty emerging from the multiple "voices" that possibly manifest during the interview.

In the analysis, I move between interview texts and secondary literature produced about and by Awá communities. More than half of the secondary data was collected during the fieldwork. Some of these documents included:

- Community-based reports and audiovisual materials:
  o Documents

- Plan de Vida Awá, Camawari 2002. Nariño, Colombia

- Actualización del Plan de Salvaguarda Étnica del Pueblo Awá, Camawari, Unipa, Acipap, 2012. Nariño y Putumayo, Colombia.

- Plan de Vida de Vida de la Nacionalidad Awá 2017-2013. Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (2017)

- Historia del Pueblo Awá del Ecuador. Awaruspa anña pura ikuaturkin. Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (2017)

- İnkal Awá Katza Kual Wat Uzan. Plan de Vida de la Gran Familia Awá Binacional – GFAB (2016)

o Audio and Video

- La Voz del Mundo Awá. Radio Programs. Colectivo de Comunicaciones Camawari y Corporación Chacana.

- Documentales del Pueblo Awá de Nariño. UNIPA, Camawari, Cerpa, & UNHCR

- Thirteen videos collected from YouTube regarding Awá people in Ecuador and Colombia. (Appendix E. Online Videos)

- Official or institutional documents produced by national and local governments:

o Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir 2013-2017, Ecuador

o Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2014-2018, Colombia

o Plan Binacional de Integración Fronteriza Ecuador-Colombia 2014-2022

o Agenda Nacional para la Igualdad de Nacionalidades y Pueblos (ANINP) 2013 – 2017. Senplades (2013)

I approached these official documents as "sites of claims of power, legitimacy, and reality" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 232) that contain spatial, temporal, and practical contingencies associated to the texts' construction, interpretation, and use. Along with the interview texts, secondary materials are the entry point to uncovering environmental ideologies and competing meanings of sustainability, development, and climate change.

Emotions, ecology, and culture in the researcher's interpretation of data.

The site, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state, "is not a given formation; rather it is constituted through the researcher's interpretative practices" (p. 16, note 10). However, although I had read these documents to inform my approach to Awá organizations, the fieldwork engendered a different perspective to interpret them. Ahmed's (2014) words are representative of my emotional engagement with the text:

> So I read through the document. Admittedly, it hurts to read the words.
> They move on me and move me. The stories, so many of them, are stories
> of grief, of worlds being torn apart. So cruel, this world. It is a world that I
> live in. I remind myself of that. Yet I also live in a very different world.
> Each story brings me into its world. I am jolted into it. I try to turn away,
> but you hold my attention. These are stories of separation and loss. These
> are stories of pain. My response is emotional: it is one of discomfort, rage,
> and disbelieve. The stories hit me: unbelievable, too believable,
> unbelievable and yet lived. (pp. 35-36).

Awá's stories and their current material and symbolic conditions are legacies of colonialism and manifestations of marginalization, discrimination, and violence. This is not a "world that I live in," my only and meaningful difference with Ahmed's confession.

In the worlds into which I translate myself—the Ecuadorian mestizo world, the educated abroad world, the urban world, the Spanish-speaking and Anglophone worlds, and other worlds in which I fragmentarily exist— I have not experienced the intense injustices Awá people have lived as racialized others, ethnic minorities, and casualties of a war that is not theirs. Neither have the immediate ecologies on which I depend been shattered by the extraction of natural resources as the effects of the ecological disruption are-not-in-my-backyard.[39] This is my environmental privilege[40] that allows me to think from a healthy ecology about the sickness of another. This privilege adds up to the others I navigated in my interactions with Awá elites within the transboundary site where this research took place.

Conducting these interviews entailed critical engagements with these emotions to prevent me, as much as possible, from romanticizing the site and the people by interpreting and creating an "ecological native" that is ahistoric and whose identity is "naturally environmental" (Ulloa, 2001). Moreover, being reflexive demands mindfulness about the epistemological interruptions that could emerge in the intercultural encounters with the respondents, as well as from/within the ecologies that influence these encounters.

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[39] Environmental justice groups who work toward making visible the intersection of race and environmental hazards initiated the idea NIMB. In challenging environmental racism, NIMB's first meaning stands for a place-based way of denouncing the environmental and health risks of industrial pollution (Vanderheiden, 2016).

[40] Environmental privilege "is embodied in the fact that some groups can access spaces and resources, which are protected from the kinds of ecological harm that other groups are forced to contend with every day…. If environmental racism and injustice are abundant and we can readily observe them around the world, then surely the same can be said for environmental privilege. We cannot have one without the other; they are two sides of the same coin" (Park & Pellow, 2011, p. 4).

A critical appraisal of the intercultural relations between interviewee and interviewer renders interviews as a political relational process of negotiation of multiple cultural identities (Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Parker, 2002; Fontana, 2002). Accordingly, my interaction with Awá people cannot be reduced to the "evaluation of meaning and truth to a simple identification of the speaker's location" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 17). In introducing myself, for instance, I tried to position myself primarily as "researcher" and "student," and then as "mestizo." However, giving emphasis to these identities is no guarantee for those identifications to be the salient ones in my interactions with Awá elites, neither would they prevent Awá from ascribing me identities that exceed my avowed identities as researcher and student. Therefore, interviewing implicates different and multiple ontologies that intersect or diverge within a context embedded in power relations, competing knowledges, and social inequalities (Briggs, 2002) in which sometimes researchers are ascribed with more agency that s/he has. For instance, in narrating a UNIPA's education project of creating a bilingual university, one interviewee said:

> So, friend, José Castro, who comes to visit us from the neighboring
>
> country of Ecuador, and [others who have come] from other countries, like
>
> you, at this moment, you are doing your doctorate, you come to visit us
>
> and take this initiative [to the State], this life dream of us, the Awá.
>
> Because research does not simply have to be in a written document, right?
>
> Because, for us, a research, a community's projection, should contribute to
>
> [the education] process that we have, as it is the legacy of our path to
>
> living well in the Awá [territory]. (Olivio Bisbicus)

As part of an academic institution, to Awá people I was always-already an "external actor" associated to "economic interests of capitalist nature" (FCAE, 2017, p. 25). However, my connections to the academy also positioned me with a degree of power I did not expect. Collier (2014) states, "it is extremely useful for research/practitioners to think about their assumptions and expectations related to [communities, groups, or individuals'] levels of agency" (p. 232). In this particular case, however, the assumptions about levels of agency involved not only the community's power but also the researcher's capacity to bring change. When returning to the field, I must be aware that my chances of continuing my collaboration with Awá organizations could depend to what extent I fail or succeed in fulfilling these expectations. The dialectical ascription of agency should be forefront in the negotiation of identities, especially to scholars who contemplate continuing working with the communities who welcome us, researchers.

Finally, the ecologies that influenced these encounters are fundamental to my interpretations of the texts supporting this study. The movement across national borders and different geographical spaces complicated my relations to the sites I visited and engaged with during my fieldwork. Transporting my body from the New Mexican high-desert, to the Pasto highlands in the Andean Mountains, to the cloud forest in Lita, Predio El Verde in the tropical Andes, and back, was an *ecological translation* that influenced my positionality not only in relation to the interviewees but also in relation to the ecology of the places where I conducted the interviews.

Formations of identity should not be understood only within economic, social or political systems, but also within material and ecological systems (Code, 2006; Dürbeck, Schaumann, & Sullivan, 2015; Grusin, 2015; Hodden, 2014). Human interactions with a

lively and intentional nature add an "eco" intersection to the participatory cultural co-evolution and constitution of individual and groups' identities. For instance, surrounded by the cloud forest and overwhelmed by an enveloping rain, I caught myself ascribing a "romantic gaze" (Takach, 2013) over the mountain, heart of Awá's territory. Hence, I risk "sanctifying nature as sublime," that is, seeing "Nature [as] the reflection of [my] own unexamined longings and desires" (Cronon, in Takach, 2013, p. 220). The transformative potential of qualitative critical research lies in being evocative, reflexive, embodied, partial and partisan, and material (Pelias, 2011). Becoming aware of this ecological translation allowed me to keep the ecology political, as well as my communication critical. From here, I performed the analysis of my data.

Data Analysis: A Tridimensional Model for Critical Discourse Analysis

To illuminate Awá organizations' communication practice of translation regarding development, sustainability, and climate change, I applied Fairclough's (2003, 2012) tridimensional model to analyze both the secondary data and the interviews with elite members of the GFAB (Grand Binational Awá Family). I conducted a manual first and second order coding (Saldaña, 2013).[41] In the first-order coding, I looked at general ideas and patterns that can be clustered in categories and themes. This coding nurtured the first dimension of the discourse analysis as I paid attention to the linguistic characteristics of the *text* —grammar, vocabulary, and metaphoric tropes. I identified Awapit words used to translate and make sense of global environmental discourses and

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[41] There are two ways of operationalizing this coding. First, to use a qualitative data analysis software that imports, sorts, and analyzes large amounts of non-numerical information (e.g., NVivo). Second, a 'paper cut and cluster' manual way; I performed the latter.

highlighted ways Awá compared and contrasted their understanding of development, sustainability, and climate change to those of the "Western" world.

In the second-order coding, I engaged with an iterative deductive and inductive analysis. Through induction, I looked at what emerged from the texts, technique that revealed the ecocultural positionings of Awá, Mestizos, and Afro communities, for instance. A deductive approach allowed me to identify links among these emergent categories and connect them with broader conceptual categories forming the theoretical frameworks of place/space, local/global, development, sustainability, climate change. The second coding supported the second dimension of discourse analysis in which I looked at the *discursive practice* of translation. I identified to what extent Awá's relationships and social practices were influenced by the meanings emerging from the (re)signification of development, sustainability, and climate change. I highlighted the interdiscursivity between local definitions of development, sustainability, and climate change as they engage with the vernacular of the environmental globalization rhetoric (e.g., the 2016 United National Agenda for sustainable development).[42] To draw attention to the ecology, society, and history informing the order of discourse within Awá's territoriality, I looked for articulations that were either "creative" —an opportunity to challenge hegemonic discourse— or "conventional" —which reinforce previous language arrangements—(Fairclough, 1992). In the process of coding, I was cautious of not falling into "confirmation bias," a tendency that risks turning the pattern found in the text into a predetermined schema that the researcher may use to disregard features that do not fit the

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[42] http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/

pattern. To deal with this bias, I performed a "double reading" looking for examples that both confirm and contradict the pattern (Stibbe, 2015).

After organizing the codes and their discursive links, I turned to the third dimension of the CDA model, *social practices*, and concentrate on showing the three functions of discourse. The identity and relational functions of the discourse are exposed in how texts construct Awá's ecological subjectivity and environmental identity in relation to mestizo peasants, Afros, national and local government, and NGOs. I addressed the ideational function of discourse by exploring Awá's system of ecological knowledges and meanings. I identified how Awá cosmovision (1) influences enactments of Awá's Indigenous identity; (2) inculcates Awá, mestizos, and Afros ecocultural identities; and ultimately, (3) how praxes associated to these ecocultural identities impact the physical space of their territories.

A final consideration regarding the analysis: I conducted the interviews in Spanish. It is worth noting that some participants were bilingual, Spanish and Awapit, and they spoke Spanish using a grammar structure different from the one I learned during my formal education. This consideration shaped the way in which I approached the interview texts. First, while the transcription is literal, I sometimes needed to add or subtract specific words to form a grammatically structured sentence and clarify some of the interviewees' statements. I consider these grammatical arrangements the first stage in the process of interpretation as the interviewees' (re)definitions of global environmental discourses were made via the thought process of bridging the languages (Spanish and Awapit). Second, the linguistic level is more prominent in the translation from Spanish to English, which also presented challenges because the process of translation may have

altered the meaning of some statements. Fairclough (1992) avows that the use of translated data is one source of difficulty for textual analysis. He stated, "discourse analysis papers should reproduce and analyse textual samples in the *original language, despite the added difficulty for the readers*" (p. 196; emphasis added). Accordingly, I transcribed the complete interviews in Spanish, but I translated into English only the quotes used to write the analysis.

Border as Method

The prominent presence of the Ecuador-Colombia border could incline the analysis toward conflating culture and nation in order to explain the differences between Colombian Awá and Ecuadorian Awá. This conflation is tempting but misleading, as it uses a reductionist view of culture (Ono, 2010). Nation-state borders are sites where "territoriality is most explicitly enacted in the contestation, production, and communication of identities" (Shome, 2003, p. 45). Furthermore, as Micarelli (2015) states, "the trope 'Indigenous community' deployed in the development vocabulary, obscures, and consequently fails to engage, the complex texture of social identities which Indigenous process of organization are predicated. This also reveals a legacy of a static nation of culture" (p. 210). Awá's cultural itineraries cannot be explained only in national terms because Awá are not a monolithic ethnic entity whose history and culture could be read as one belonging to the nation of which they are a part.

Following Mezzadra and Neilson's (2013) conceptualization of the border as method, I approach the Ecuador-Colombia border as an "epistemological device" whose liminality demands a ceaseless de/construction of spaces and time, reconfiguration of places, and (re)articulation of hierarchies and stratifications. The border as method, these

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authors assert, "is above a question of politics, about the kind of social worlds and subjectivities produced at the border and the ways that thought and knowledge can intervene in these process of production" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 17). In other words, the border itself is not an "object" already present but rather, a relational production. Understanding the historicity of the binational Indigenous people Awá, therefore, entails looking at the constitution and presence of transversal forms of communication, agency, and dissent (Brooten, 2014).

While there are borders everywhere, at the binational site, the "national" character of the border suggests that these forms would differ from those performed by inland populations. One example is transboundary protected areas[43] that have fostered initiatives such as Parks for Peace — "areas formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and natural and associated cultural resources, and the promotion of peace and co-operation" (Sandwith, Shine, Hamilton, & Sheppard, 2001, p. 3). This kind of environmental approach to national border zones illuminates how natural/geographical elements could become a "green bridge" between regions and countries (Thorsell, 1990). While the environment is not the sole element influencing community formation, ecological boundaries are fundamental to understanding social and political practices that could promote the emergence of spatial imaginaries with the potential of circumventing geographical binaries of distance-proximity, global-local, and outside-inside (Whatmore, 2009).

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[43] The World Commission of Protected Areas defines Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA) as "An area of land and/or sea that straddles one or more boundaries between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas and/or areas beyond the limits of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed co-operatively through legal and other effective means" (Sandwith, Shine, Hamilton, & Sheppard, 2001, p. 3).

At the border between Ecuador and Colombia, the global/local nexus influences a binational setting affected by violence, dire social conditions, inchoate political institutions, and environmental degradation fostered by market-driven policies and practices. Globalization is a political and epistemological project that shapes discourses, practices, and social interactions. The economic, political, and social dimensions of globalization have been the focus of academia for understanding the global arena. However, it has become more evident that the ecological and environmental dimensions are essential to comprehend the full scope of the global phenomenon. To conceive of the environment as a constitutive dimension of globalization entails thinking of how ideas of nature and humanature relationships influence the economic, political, and social realms. The interplay among dimensions interrogates the ostensible uniformity of globalization while drawing attention to the varied conditions of local realities. Therefore, paying attention to Awá's binational condition is central to understanding the nuances between the conceptualizations of development, sustainability, and climate change among Awá individuals and organizations. Awá's translation entails (re)significations and (re)articulations of these global environmental discourses, constituting a linguistic entry point to the larger sociopolitical and environmental context of the relations between Ecuador and Colombia.

Chapter 4 Awá's Territoriality: A Genealogy of Thought, Practices, and Relationships

I remember the rain. The sound of water splashing on the zinc roof. A rhythmic and powerful rain created a veil between me and the forest that Olivio Cantincus, the Director of UNIPA's Indigenous Reserve, so vividly described as "allá."[44] The watery curtain distorted the forest in an impressionist fashion, simultaneously blurring the contours and subtly insinuating the trees' bark, leaves, and branches forming the canopy that shelters Awá people. I let the feelings created by my romantic gaze on the cloud forest settle in. I looked up and saw nothing but thick clouds painting a spectrum of gray, white, and dark blue (like a bruise, I caught myself thinking) that for a moment reminded me, nostalgic, of the clear blue skies of the current place where I dwell. Living in the desert gives rain a halo of humid comfort that awakes with the smell of wet dirt. I was enjoying the colorful images of my memory whose fleeting manifestations were entertaining my thoughts. For a moment, I could not listen to what my interviewee was saying, and I was not sure if this was because I was daydreaming or due to the increasingly enveloping cacophony coming from the depths of the forest. The voice of nature. Suddenly, a single thunderclap brightened the puffy ceiling. A flash of lightning made me reactively open my eyes. "He is Pamba, the grandfather"—an eight-year-old girl's wise and humble eyes found mine. She knew I was fascinated: I have heard the voice of one of Awá's spirits. It was not just a thunder anymore. At least, not while in the Awá's territory.

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[44] The term "allá" literally translates as "over there." However, in the context of Olivio's account this word acquired profound evocative power. I will elaborate on it later in the chapter.

Until that moment, *katza su*, the Awá's territory, was an abstraction described and diagnosed in government official documents, NGOs reports (including one I co-authored several years ago), and Awá organizations' community-based participatory documents. I had a mediated glimpse of the geography and ecology of this space by watching videos uploaded and created by Awá individuals and organizations, and social groups interested in Indigenous and human rights. I listened to their claims and struggles, their tearful losses, their frustrations with the governments' abandonment, and their justified rage. But also, I learned about Awá's language and people, about their involuntary involvement in war, and their recovery, resistance, and resilience. Yet, I was afar. After a month traveling the border, I was in Awá's territory, feeling its humidity on my skin and a salty sweat running on my forehead. An ecological embodiment situated me in that place. The consciousness of being over there —allá— gave my body the experience of fullness. If only for a moment. "Next time I would like to take you to the communities," Olivio said. Intrigued by the possibility of visiting other communities, I asked, "When can we go?" "No," he replied, "They are walking around. It is not safe." The irregular armed forces are the "They;" those who have marked Colombia history for more than fifty years or their remnants formed after the Peace Agreement signed a few months before my arrival.

At the scale of the body, my romantic gaze obscured the fact that I was not only in the cloud forest but also at the border zone between Ecuador and Colombia; on the side of a road; half-way between Pasto and Tumaco, the latter, a Colombian city infested with drug cartels, illegal logging and mining, and increasing levels of violence. All of these are features of a transboundary zone that has gone through long periods of militarization, state's neglect, and rampant extractivism.

In this chapter, I explore Awá's territoriality to understand how La Gran Familia Awá Binational (GFAB) understands, constructs, and reproduces their relationships with the territory *katza su*. Indigenous people's bonds to territories is a complex web of spiritual, epistemological, social, and cultural dimensions, enveloped in ecological knowledges that spring from their interactions and communications via stories and practices grounded in ancestral lands. These deep connections to the land are common to Indigenous people across the globe despite the historical particularities among them (Ulloa, 2013). To understand territory and territoriality, I start by presenting an overview of Awá history up to the point of their contemporary binational condition. I focus on the forces that have altered the materiality of Awá's territory as it is articulated, willfully or reluctantly, to the webs of a global economy shaping the Ecuador and Colombia binational border, and therefore, Awá's territorial dynamics. Next, by analyzing Awá's Planes de Vida and Planes de Salvaguardia, I explore how Awá organizations —FCAE and UNIPA— exercise symbolic and political control over their territories. These Plans encapsulate Awá cosmopolitics sustained by their relationships with the sacred, lineage, and land. The cosmic intimacy with a territory entails Indigenous people's main strategy of cultural survival and their politics of identity (Bryan, 2012; Escobar, 2010a; Leff, 2004; Micarelli, 2015; Surrallés & García Hierro, 2005). Accordingly, based on these intimate connections, I elaborate on the concepts of cultural governmentality and territorial governance as two interrelated instances of Awá's territoriality. I conclude by setting the stage for translating development, sustainability, and climate change, in relation to Awá's territory, *katza su*, and within the confines of Awá's territoriality.

The Awá Binational Indigenous People: A History of Dispossession and Shared Struggles

The history of *Ɨnkal Awá,* gente de la montaña/people of the mountain, is the history of the territory. Awá's narrations register the disappearance, shifts, and reconstitutions of the boundaries of their ancestral territories, *katza su*, as manifestations of colonization, displacement, evictions, invasions, recoveries, and legalizations. The stories inform, in many ways, the positions Awá organizations have taken to carry on dialogues with both national governments, Ecuador and Colombia, and against other ethnic populations (Afro and Mestizos) (Camawari, 2002). Awá's historical itineraries as Indigenous people, and later as binational Indigenous people, are part of the broader region's history evident in three significant moments in Awá's history: (1) the Spanish arrival to the "new continent" and the configuration of colonial structures of power; (2) the Thousand Days' War that reordered the Colombian nation-state; and (3) the armed conflict between the State and irregular armed forces that marks the contemporary Colombian history. This temporal schema is only one of many ways to approach the complexity of Awá's history. By highlighting these events, I intend to draw attention to a common denominator, a phenomenon that is primordial to understand Awá's contemporary positions and struggles as binational Indigenous people: forced displacement.

The arrival of the Spanish settler colonizers prompted the first forced displacement. According to Álvarez (2016), the closest ancestors of Awá are the Sindaguas.[45] Unfortunately, these people scattered and thus were easily subjected to the

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[45] According to Alvarez (2016), Awá descend from Sindaguas. He narrates, "since 1984 the population begins to recognize itself as 'Awá.' The changing of denomination begins to occur from a meeting held in Ecuador

"encomiendas," a system of exploitation during the Spanish conquest in the XVI century. By the endo of this century, Sindaguas' sociopolitical structure disappeared; however, a few of them went into the jungle to resist exploitation, epidemics, and sickness, and to "avoid conflicts with the Afro-descendent population who also was escaping from slavery" (FCAE, 2017, p. 28). Fleeing Spanish domination, Sindaguas' abandonment of their ancestral territory, while difficult, was strategic. By emigrating into the "jungle" or "deep into the mountains," these people used the forest as a "natural defense" to survive the violence generated by the "white men" (Camawari, 2002, p. 5).

The second displacement suffered by Sindaguas originated as a corollary of La Guerra de los Mil Días (Thousand Days' War, 1899 – 1902). The war lasted 1,130 days. When it was over, the materialization of the violence in Sindaguas' territory pushed them closer to the border with Ecuador. The consolidation of the Colombian nation-state —a regional process initiated after the colonial wars for independence from Spain— again pushed away these Indigenous people from their recently reconfigured territory. In the early 1900s, the Colombian government accelerated the implementation of policies aimed to consolidate its political dominance and control of the national territory. These policies exacerbated land concentration, a phenomenon that was impacting the rural areas of the country. Without any consideration of ancestral ownership by Indigenous people, Colombian local governments supported the colonization of land that appeared, to them, terra nullius. During the decades from 1920 to 1940, there was a great migration of scattered Sindaguas families escaping from violence, pressures from land grabbing, and

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in order to create a political Indigenous organization. Also, another definition emerged: 'Ïnkal Awá,' which means people from the jungle (FCAE, 2017, p. 28).

deplorable living conditions due to the State's marginalization and negligence. In 1925, some Sindaguas families unwillingly relocated to the other side of the San Juan River or Mayasquer River, the natural border between Ecuador and Colombia. These families settled in the basin of the River Guiza (Bisbicús, Paí, & Paí, 2010, p. 23).

The crossing of the national border is the turning point in Awá's contemporary history as the forced mobilization created Colombian and Ecuadorian Awá. The national border radically changed and continues to shape Awá's indigeneity. Awá (bi)national condition informs and engenders differentiated engagements and struggles about identity, discourses, relationships, and institutions.

The internal war in Colombia is the cause of the third forced displacement of Sindaguas communities. In the early 1950s, Marxist inspired groups took up arms against the unequal distribution of land, which was considered by these groups an overt manifestation of state violence. Scholars consider the concentration of land as the genesis of the current internal conflict in Colombia because it justified the emergence of arms groups in rural localities as a mechanism of countering the State's abuses (Arjona, 2016). The original purpose of these rebel groups was to claim their rights, defend their lands, and protect mestizo peasants from the institutionalized abuse performed by terratenientes (landowners) sponsored by national and local political institutions. The indifference of the Colombian state to address this inequality accompanied by the government's negligence, both exacerbated the confrontations between peasants and landowners. Underlying the internal war in Colombia is the consolidation of the State as the central apparatus of the political system insofar as its continuity, and therefore, the government's permanence relies on the legitimate control of violence. In the early 1960s, as the

conflict aggravated, groups such as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/

Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia (FARC) or Ejército de Liberación

Nacional/National Liberation Army (ELN), gained control over some parts of the

national territory. The lack of control, or even absence of the State in some regions of the

country, defied the Colombian State's political legitimacy. In the summit of the

confrontation in the 1980s and 1990s, FARC, ELN, and other insurgent groups controlled

significant parts of the Colombian territory (Arjona, 2016).

Awá people were, and remain, alien to the political reasons for the Colombian

armed conflict. However, Awá are not impervious to the consequences of this war, which

has impacted Awá communities in several ways. For instance, Awá changed their

denomination from "people from the *jungle*" to "people from the *mountain.*" This change

of labels was not the first time Awá needed to redefine their denomination[46] but, in this

occasion, as José Jairo Cantincus recalls, replacing "jungle" by "mountain" was

necessary because "people from the jungle" was the name with which other communities,

and even the Army, came to identify the guerrilla operating in the border zone. Hence,

the Awá needed a new Spanish denomination to differentiate themselves from these

irregular armed groups. Furthermore, irregular armed groups started piercing Awá's

territory. Ironically, the cloud forest's canopy and foggy landscape that once worked as

Awá's natural defense and escape from foreign threats —Spanish colonization and an

urban-based civil war that impacted rural territories— now are utilized by illegal groups

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[46] Alvarez (2016) narrates, "People who passed by the road that communicated Barbacoas with Pasto, began to call them 'kwaiker.' The terms kwaiker or coaiquer had a derogatory meaning, to counteract it, since 1984 the population begins to recognize itself as 'Awá.' The changing of denomination begins to occur from a meeting held in Ecuador in order to create a political Indigenous organization. Also, another definition emerged: 'Ìnkal Awá,' which means people from the jungle" (FCAE, 2017, p. 28).

to erect and camouflage their military camps or drug labs. The recent presence of drug-cartels and their proven association with irregular groups, obscures and even erases the original political purposes of claiming for land-rights, endeavor that drove the armed uprising of the 1960s decades. Further, the confrontation between the Colombian state's war against drug cartels and irregular armed forces is shaping the field of power at the binational border. This situation also explains why the Colombian government has prioritized military mechanisms and responses over social, cultural or environmental alternatives of conflict resolution (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011). Militarization is likely to return to the border due to recent events that have fired up once again in the Ecuador-Colombia borderland.[47]

While this disturbed political conjuncture has impacted Ecuadorian Awá, the Awá on the Colombian side experience major effects. The war trapped Colombian Awá communities in a conflict that is not theirs. The Colombian government, however, asserts that communities such as the Awá are inevitably implicated in the conflict and should collaborate to solve a war that is not taking place "in the mountains, it is not being carried in a clear field. It is carried in inhabited areas, in communities. The communities are part of the state, and as such, they have to collaborate, or this is not going to end" (Juan Carlos Lara. Coronel Brigade XXIII. V6[48]). Being located at the crossfire, some Colombian Awá communities ended up in forced confinement (V1) while others abandoned their communities to escape from the massacres, FARC, ELN, paramilitaries,

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[47] For an account of the events affecting the Ecuador-Colombia border visit: http://www.elcomercio.com/tag/frontera-norte

[48] Throughout this study, when I use quotes from a video posted in YouTube, I add V# to signal the number of the video source of the quote. See Appendix E. for a complete list of the videos.

and even the Colombian Armed Forces[49] were perpetuated on Awá people and other

Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The Awá situation became, and is, a

humanitarian situation. The massacres and dire social and security conditions forced Awá

families, who lived deep into the forest, to move toward the boundaries of their own

territory and closer to roads or urban centers (Camawari, 2002). Colombian Awá families

were displaced but remained within the limits of their collective territory. The

displacement within the limits of Awá's territory is what I term intra-displacement.

Inkal Awá's history is a reprehensible testimony to injustice, inequality, and

exclusion, which are perverse patterns throughout the history of Indigenous and other

minorities populations around colonized regions. The displacement across national

borders, as well as the intra-displacement, marks Awá's contemporary history. To Awá

people, these forced displacements were and continued to be life-or-death survival

decisions, in particular for Awá communities on the Colombian side. In addition,

confinement and intra-displacement are the most recent crude manifestations of an

internal conflict that has disbanded Awá population. This situation has led the Colombian

government to consider these Indigenous people in the path to physical and cultural

extinction (Camawari et al., 2012; Stonich & Chernela, 2001). Amidst the harsh

circumstances of war, Awá organizations are a survival action. The Awá binational

organizations, the GFAB, could be seen as an opportunity to strengthen Awá's

commitments and support their endeavors to defend and protect the territory *katza su*.

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[49] One of the darkest periods of the Colombian war was a series of events known as "false positives," "unlawful killings of civilians made to look like lawful killings in combat" (Alston, 2009, p. 5). These events happen during the Presidency of Alvaro Uribe 2002-2010.

Awá's Territoriality: Territorial Governance and Cultural Governmentality

The national border constitutes the condition of *Inkal Awá* as binational

Indigenous people. Even if the Awá people contest the separatist border as a "mestizo

invention" (Olindo Cantincus), it is undeniable that in material and symbolic ways, the

national border divides Awá's contemporary historical itineraries. By living in two

different nation-states, *Inkal Awá* became members of different national imaginaries, and

therefore, subjects of different institutions, laws, and histories. Awá are subaltern subjects

whose ethnic position has been continually re-defined by—and in relation to—nation-

states; the latest of which is the denomination of Awá and other Indigenous people

separated by the border as "transboundary ethnicities" (Senplades & DNP, 2014, p. 46).

Awá constitution as binational Indigenous people and the glocal dynamics of the border

zone inform Awá's territoriality, that is, ways they exert symbolic and political control of

their territories. Deployed at three different scales —body, territory, and nationalities—

(Ulloa, 2015), and configured by sacred, lineage, and land relationships, territoriality

weaves an Awá's cosmovision in which territory is vital.

The geopolitical locus of enunciation: Awá's definitions of the territory katza su.

In Awapit, the native Awá language, territory is *katza su,* meaning casa

grande/big house. *Katza su* is the vital space, "origin of life, of people, animals, plants,

water, wind, day and night" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). Territory displays several

possibilities of signification. *Katza su* is central to Awá's mythological origins as it

enshrines the sacred sites that collect Awá's memory. Awá's territory is the space of

creation and meaning. As "cosmos-environment," k*atza su* is the continuity and

transformation of life where the Four Worlds meet to become, (1) *Maza Su, Ishkum Awa*:

the world below, people who eat smoke; (2) *Pas Su, Awaruzpa*: the world where Awa

live; (3) *Kutña Su, irittuspa*: the world of the Dead; and, (4) *Ampara Su, Katsamika*:

Gods' world (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 7, 204). The equilibrium in Awá's territory

depends on the interdependence among these worlds. When the four worlds coalesce into

the territory, the natural and spiritual realms become indivisible, and this indivisibility

becomes the foundation of the Ley de Origen or Derecho Propio, the Origin Law or Own

Right, which is

> the word of the elders on how to live in harmony with the mountain. [The
>
> word] indicates how to work in the jungle, at what time, with what beings
>
> we can relate to, among other mandates. This law is oral and transmitted
>
> from generation to generation [; the law] is where the spirituality of our
>
> Indigenous people is shown (FCAE, 2017, p. 34).

As a pillar of Awá's cosmology, the Origin Law informs the four principles

guiding Awá organizations' cosmovision: (a) *Katza su*: Territory; (b) *Wanmattɨt puran*:

Unity; (c) *Tɨinta paran*: Autonomy; and, (d) *Au tunto tuan*: Culture and Identity (PV-

FCAE p. 23). Similar to other Indigenous cosmovisions (Rappaport, 2005), the Awá's

principles of co-existence incorporate secular and spiritual behavior, mythic characters,

and historical experience to solidify Awá's political standpoints and actions. In Awá

organizations' political project, territory

> is a physical and symbolic space in which different beings coexist and
>
> share common spaces, sometimes entering into situations of conflict. The
>
> reproduction of Awá life, including the Ɨnkal-Awá, depends on the success

of the negotiations among these beings and respect for the rules that

govern the mountain (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 61).

The Awapit word *awá* means "people." In the statement, "the reproduction of

Awá's life, including the Ɨnkal-Awá," adding *Ɨnkal* to the more encompassing word *awá*

recognizes a human awá who shares with plants, rivers, mountain, animals, a sense of

belongingness to the mountain, as all beings —human and more-than-human— are *awá*

co-living in the *katza su.* The distinction between *Awá* and *Ɨnkal Awá* is blurred in Olivio

Bisbicus' enunciation of the territory:

> We, Awá, live [in the jungle]. *Allá* are the animals, *allá* the tigers, jaguar,
>
> *allá* are the ocelots, *allá* are parrots [,] *allá* are the sacred site, the spirits,
>
> invisible people, people who are there in the jungle, people of the
>
> barbacha,[*] people of the big tree, river people, people of wind, mountain
>
> people, the ancestor grandfather who always likes to stay in the mountain
>
> ranges, people of the moon, people who communicate, connect with
>
> nature, the spirits of the ancestors, and ourselves too. We talk to nature;
>
> we communicate.

Awá's ability to "talk to nature" animates nature through communicative practices. Their

ways of being reveal an animistic understanding of the world (Descola, 2013) whereby

the Western ontological discretion that separates human and nonhuman entities is

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[*] The Awapit word for barbacha is *Tipuj*. Barbacha is the name of an epiphyte plant that grows on and hangs from trees with a shape of hair or beards. According to Arcos (2013), "barbacha refers to the similarity that this plant could have with the facial hair that grows on some man and is generally known as a beard" (p. 51). The plant is central to Awá's origin: "When that barbacha reached touch the earth, he took the human figure; he became the first man to populate in those forests and was called <u>Atim Awá</u>. That man learned to live in the 'mountain' to eat its fruits, fish, and hunt animals; this First Awá was characterized for having a great height, dark skin and nose large, but his main gift was being able to talk to trees." According to Arcos, *atim awá* is "the first man that existed on the face of the earth in the Awá world. He is also identified as Auca, unbaptized man, man who did not eat salt" (Arcos, 2013, p. 51).

challenged. This distancing works as foundation for the construction of shared principles that govern Awá's sociability with the more-than-human word. Furthermore, the Spanish word "allá," as used by Olivio, has an evocative power that the English "over there" does not convey as this word signals a physical location that is afar or detached from the speaker. I kept the word "allá" to stress how Olivio's reference brings closer the life happening in a space that is beyond physical reach but that simultaneously is familiar and proximate. The evocative use of allá not only backgrounds the spatial/geographical bond, and thus, it summons what is in that space beyond our physical reach but whose pronunciation convers a place into territory by Olivio's meaning-full enunciation. Allá is also a place in which animals and spirits dwell, and with whom Awá communicate. Awá's territory is a cosmological thread that connects natural and spiritual realms. This cosmology legitimizes the cosmovision supporting Awá's territoriality that includes and considers the more-than-human world.

Awá's sociability, therefore, is not restricted to relations among humans. This premise underlies the prescriptive power of *katza su* in Awá's relationships with the more-than-human with whom Awá coexist within the territory. Human-More-than-human relationships are built out of respect. Therefore, the relationships with different beings and entities of nature are constantly negotiated and are based on mutual[50]

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[50] I make this assertion with caution for two reasons. First, more exploration is needed in order to understand how the mountain's respect is felt, seen, understood, and embodied by Awá people. Second, I assume that in the philosophical realm exists the discussion about the principle of "respect" being mainly or only a human principle. However, this literature was beyond the scope of my exploration. Future research could address this issue and delve into Awá's understanding of respect in relation to and as part of the territory. Also, based on their common root "resp," it would be interesting to investigate the possible discursive connections between respect and responsibility insofar as these terms are key to global environmental discourses at the international level. Respiration, on the other hand, could be a word play to highlight one of the ways voice comes to be: from the throat and out with the air we respired to turn it into sound.

respeto/respect for the norms that rule their interactions, hence, "regulating the material and symbolic use of nature [and] balancing the coexistence of all of them" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 61). As I show in detail later in my interpretation of Awá's translation of climate change, "respect" is an ethical principle that informs Awá's political decisions because "the notion of the human being as the only being responsible for making decisions about the future of nature is alien to the Awá cultural logic" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 61). Therefore, encompassed by the enunciation of *katza su,* nonhumans are included in the process of decision-making. Contrary to the Western perspective, Awá understand "territory and nature as autonomous, living and active subjects of the decisions that affect them" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 113). Such agency of the nonhuman is explicit in Awá's enunciation of the territory. The agentic character attributed to territory is fundamental in the construction of the articulations between relationships —sacred, lineage, and land— and principles —*katza su/*territory, *wanmattɨt puran*/unity, *tɨinta paran*/autonomy, and *au tunto tuan*/culture and identity— that configure Awá organizations' structures and performances to exert symbolic and political control of the territory.

Mapping Awá's Territoriality: A Pragmatic Approach to Awá's Plan for Life and Safeguards Plans

Territory and Awá become one, for there are not distinctions between their substance and the mountain's substance. Awá's identity is not cited *in relation to* the territory instead Awá *is* the territory. Territory is at the center of Awá cosmology from which stories revive to legitimize Awá's uniqueness as Indigenous people, and therefore, their self-determination as a distinct ethnicity. Territory is the cornerstone of Awá's

identity as Indigenous, and is grounded in their territories because "an Awá outside of their territories risk losing their cultural identity and, therefore, their Awá being" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 65).

With this premise, Awá organizations have carried on the construction of Plans for Life (Ecuador) and Safeguard Plans (Colombia). The Grand Binational Awá Family (GFAB) refers and use these community-based documents as political instruments to "guarantee [Awá] physical, cultural and spiritual survival" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 6). Awá communities participated and continue to participate in the construction of these documents that diagnose and denounce the situation of systematic violation of Awá people's fundamental and collective rights; hence, they echo transnational voices around Indigenous rights based on ancestry and ethnic uniqueness. These Plans explicitly state Awá's claims and positions regarding Indigenous rights; they also frame Awá organizations' performances and relationships with national governments, NGOs, and neighboring communities. Both Plans encapsulate Awá's cosmopolitics that frames how La Gran Familia Awá Binacional understands, constructs, and reproduces their relationships with the territory *katza su.*

In the following sections, I present my interpretation of Awá's territoriality. I largely based my interpretation on Awá's Plans, as territoriality was not the focus of my interviews. However, in thinking on how to situate translation, my main concern in this study, it became essential to first understand Awá's governance before entering interpretation and analysis. Hence, I identify the elements and articulations configuring Awá organizations' symbolic and political control of their territories. I elucidate Awá relationships with the sacred, lineage, and land, which sustain these controls, and

highlight ways these relationships have varied and affected the consolidation of the Awá principles of *katza su/*territory, *wanmattɨt puran*/unity, *tɨinta paran*/autonomy, and *au tunto tuan*/culture and identity. Finally, I illustrate one of many forms Awá organizations could further their territorial governance and cultural governmentality.

Wanmattit puran and au tunto tuan: Awá organizations' symbolic control of katza su.

Awá organizations' symbolic control of the territory relies on the reproduction of sacred and lineage relationships with *katza su*. Sacred relationships recognize the independent agency of an animated world with whom humans share responsibility, communicate and interact respectfully. In Olivio Bisbicus' words:

> This is why it is important to highlight that environmental communication, for us, Awá, [comes] from our language, through orality, through history, through walking the ecological trails and the jungle. Everything we have around our territory is life. We, people, have life, trees are life, trees are people, plants are people, leaves are people, and everything that exists in the ecosystem is life, it has life. That is why we have to take care of it; we have to protect it.

A sense of communion springs from a relational ontology based on the recognition of a shared substance with all beings. This consubstantiality, the ontological premise of animism, is the essence of Awá's ethical mandate of respect that informs their interactions with the beings, entities, and actants that constitute and are constituted by the territory. Awá's environmental communication —"a communication through the symbols and the communicative senses that we establish with the spirits of nature" (Bisbicús et al.,

2010, p. 15)— identifies places and names them; thus, filling the space "allá" with meanings.

The identification of sacred places is central to the symbolic control of the territory. Sacred places are the material and symbolic bridge to Awá's lineage. Sacred places are "where the mythical heroes, men[*] and animals, realize the creation and continue to maintain life" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). Awá's relationships with the sacred produce territory as the space of a mythical origin of life. Sacred spaces are central to the permanence and survival of Awá's ancestral history of struggles against displacements, which reveals and explains Awá's situation in the present.

Awá's lineage is inextricably intertwined with their avowed identity as an ethnicity with a distinct culture. Therefore, the symbolic control of the territory attempts to invigorate and consolidate the principles of *au tunto tuan*/identity and *wanmattɨt puran*/unity and culture. To do so, I identified Awá organizations' units of action — central components to operationalize territoriality and around which decisions are made— and suggest that they should be at the core of negotiations and dialogues Awá establish with the government, NGOs, and other Indigenous and nonIndigenous organizations and their neighboring communities.

In exerting symbolic control over Awá's territory, education and family appear to be the units of action through which Awá organizations seek to strengthen sacred and lineage relationships. Regarding education, it is worth differentiating between the "formal

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[*] The word "men" is a literal translation from "hombres." However, it is possible to speculate that "hombres" could be a Spanish translation from the Awapit "awá," which means "people" and not only "men." With the data I collected, I cannot be certain about this interpretation. This is also an example of how the ambiguity in the translation opens spaces to speculate about gender relations among Awá; a theme that will be briefly addressed in other parts of the analysis in which gender becomes more explicit and leave little room for ambiguity.

education" offered by government institutions, and the "informal education" in which family is paramount. On the one hand, Awá simultaneously reproduce and resist the government's forms of education. For instance, Awá consider that "in Western education, knowledge is not acquired through direct experimentation with the environment and nature" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 132). Furthermore, this kind of formal education is seen as restrictive insofar as the classroom is "a context characterized by its physical limitation" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 146). Therefore, a classroom is not practical to engender environmental/ecological knowledge because "it is the interaction with Mother Earth that is responsible for teaching what [Awá] need to survive (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 148).

The informal education, on the other hand, originates in the "family nucleus through traditional practices such as agriculture, hunting, and fishing that, in direct interaction with the territory, [are practices that] have been responsible for strengthening Awá's ancestral knowledge" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 123). Family is the space of education in intimate relationship to the animated natural world that is invited into the domestic space:

Since childhood, our environment teaches us to read: leaves, trees, rivers, etc. We know where the snake, the spider, the guatín live by reading the signs and signals that are interpreted by us and by all the Indigenous peoples[.] The Katza su is the university; there reside all the knowledge transmitted in signs and signals. (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 138)

The notion of the link between nature, territory, and the more-than-human world seems to be commonplace among some other Indigenous inhabitants of the Colombian Chocó to

whom "the forest is a familiar extension of a human house, and in it, they engage in ritual exchanges of energy with animals and with the spirits that rule there" (Descola, 2013, p. 26). Therefore, Awá find, construct, and live knowledge through vital relationships with/in/as nature. Awá learn from and teach with nature. At the heart of this informal education are women, who are conceived of as "the platform of cultural continuity" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 184). Women own, preserve, and diffuse Awá's ancestral knowledge (see Chapter 4 for methodological considerations on gender issues in Awá organizations' structures). Therefore, women's role is vital in the symbolic control of the territory as they orally recreate and transmit their native language Awapit and the Origin Law to younger Awá generations.

Finally, the symbolic control of the territory in both units of action, education and family, depends on the possibility of maintaining and strengthening the

communication and oral tradition as a strategy to guarantee [Awá's]

survival as an Indigenous people, to resist and walk in the footsteps of the

elderly [who] advise that we should dwell with our eyes wide awake and

our ears open to see the way and listen to the warnings of nature, be

attentive to learn what she teaches us in different moments and

experiences of life. (Bisbicús et al., 2010, p. 33).

Awá's environmental communication is essential for constituting the territory as a symbolic place. Dwelling is an ecocultural practice that is inherent to naming the place. Awá's dwelling of their territories is marking the space with meaning and signaling the physicality in which sacred and lineage relationships are reproduced and revitalized as a foundation of their transboundary ethnicity: "Trochar together to follow the footsteps of

our elders and walk where they walked, as a Grand Awá Family" (FCAE, UNIPA, CAMAWARI, & ACIPAP, 2016, p. 1). A "trocha" is a narrow path or a shortcut. Here, "trochar" is used as a verb to refer to the action of creating or marking a trocha; therefore, this statement suggests opening a path to learn how "to look, to walk, to do, and to transmit each of these [habits and customs] to the young people and children, who are part of the new generations" (Bisbicús et al., 2010, pp. 15–16). In the context of the binational people Awá, dwelling is a critical political praxis insofar as it

> strengthens [Awá's] minga[*] of thought, find solutions to our problems and
> exercise an autonomous government based on the special Indigenous
> jurisdiction. It is also to guide and deepen self-government, to promote
> spaces of gender and equity (Bisbicús et al., 2010, p. 29)

Dwelling has been interrupted and altered by war, as well as by environmental and economic forces that unevenly materialize in Awá's territory, however. Countering these forces demands strategies to control politically Awá's *katza su*.

Tiinta paran: Awá organizations' political control of katza su.

Awá' s political control of the territory depends on their relationships to land. It is worth noting, though, that Awá differentiate between land and territory. Territory "is the space that generates culture, where [Awá] recreate, transform and maintain. [Territory] is the vital space because without it you cannot think of life, of existence." On the other hand, la tierra, the land, "is palpable, what we can see, grasp, sow, where we build our

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[*] Minga is a native word widespread among South America Indigenous people to refer to work done together as community. See https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/joan-pedro-cara-ana/manifesto-minga-of-thought-communication-and-Indigenous-people

house, put down seeds" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 60). This difference is significant insofar as it helps to understand why while territory "is not negotiated," land is more likely to be incorporated into the dynamics of the market as a unit of production.

Awá's community-based plans are thorough diagnoses of the current situation of Awá's territory regarding land rights. Land struggles have caused several complications to Awá's organizations. First, the increasing loss of land results from an accelerated process of (environmental) colonization by the State via mega-infrastructure projects and land allocation to agricultural enterprises (mainly monocrops such as palm). Second, while losing land could be interpreted as an external factor, the redistribution and allocation of land are internal dynamics that respond to changes in Awá's demography and economic priorities. The growing population of Awá communities exerts pressure on the territory because, as Florencio Cantincus explained, "the productive areas, the cultivation areas, will expand a little more." Internal demands for productive spaces, however, have evidenced an uneven distribution of land, even though its concentration was initially seen as part of the process of appropriation and configuration of the territory:

> José Jairo Cantincus: Even we, Awá, are guilty because as Awá we never settle for having one hectare of land, but five and up. There are some who have up to 100 hectares.
>
> Me: Is 100 hectares a lot for a family?
>
> JJC: Yes, for me it is a lot[.] What happens is that our elders mentioned that those who arrived first grabbed all [the land]. Nobody was the owner. They found it as an empty territory. After that, Awá family is reproducing

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and then filling those spaces [across the territory]. So, in that way [the elders] did the distribution of lands[, but] the people who arrived first have more land.

The current dynamic of land distribution within Awá's territory is one of the sequels of historic intra- and inter-displacements that uprooted Awá from their "original" ancestral lands. The forced movements and relocations have compelled Awá to periodically constitute and reconstitute their bonds to (new) territories —which eventually had to be recognized by the national governments. The symbolic action of reconstituting the territory required a lot of effort from Awá people to once again (re)create their relationships of lineage and sacred in a land that, as "empty spaces" —a sort of Indigenous terra nullius— needed to be filled with and take over by meaning.

Therefore, it is possible to interpret the need to address the issue of redistribution of land among Awá families and communities as a reactive decision in the face of shifting demographics. On the contrary, the allocation of land to economic activities is a proactive strategy that entails engaging with competing discourses of private property. As I detail later, the discursive work that entails translating the idea of private property differs according to the national location of the Awá organization, with the Colombian side being the most prone to question the Western notion of private property.

Awá organizations' political control of the territory attempts to invigorate and consolidate the principles of territory and autonomy. The principle of territory, *katza su,* precludes the formation of organizational structures built upon the ideal of individualism because "the life of an individual can hardly occupy a place of greater importance than the territory" (Rueda, 2006, p. 52; quoted in Camawari et al., 2012, p. 174). Autonomy,

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tiinta paran, is the most political principle in Awá's organizational constitution and public actions. As an "ancestral heritage" derived from the Origin Law, autonomy demands "strengthening Indigenous forms of organization through the support of traditional authorities," which entails to sustain Awá's "authority to make own decisions" (FCAE et al., 2016, p. 25, 19). These statements are aligned to those expressed by transnational Indigenous claims of self-determination, demands present in the six "autonomy mandates"[51] stated in Awá's Plans, which guide the operationalization of the political control of the territory.

Two units of action appear to be central to how Awá organizations could exert their political control of the territory: territorial borders and Indigenous guard. Awá's struggle on establishing territorial borders cannot be understood without referring to more extensive notion of land-rights. The obstacles Awá face regarding the legal recognition of their Indigenous territories are not an exception in the landscape of Indigenous claims for self-determination. Unfortunately, by entering the realm of land-rights, land enters the discursive realm of private property in which land is enveloped by the discursive regime of the market. The struggles over the meaning of land are not ignored by Awá' people. Awá conceive the use of private property as an imposition consequence of a history of colonization and dispossession as well as "a defense mechanism of [their] territory" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). Land as private property alters Awá's relationships with land by "forcing leaders and traditional authorities to penetrate within the State-Indigenous

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[51] These mandates include: (1) Strengthening Awá organizations' structure and political representation; (2) Maintaining and fostering co-living and dialogue among Awá organizations and communities; (3) Exchange and strengthening of the government's own systems to exert management and control over the territory; (4) To unify and consolidate proposals of economy and production use and harnessing of natural resources; (5) Establishing strategic alliances with Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups at the national and international level; and, (6) Prior consultation of any plan, project, or program to be initiated in the territory. (FCAE et al., 2016, p. 25-28)

Communities framework" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). In addition, territory enters this framework in the form of Circunscripción Territorial Indígena/Territorial Indigenous Constituency (TIC) in Ecuador and Entidad Territorial Indígena/Indigenous Territorial Entity (ITE) in Colombia. In Ecuador, Indigenous lands and territories are

> physical spaces ancestrally obtained and that currently are their habitat of cultural development, their self-government, and their relations with the national State. The national State recognizes culturally differentiated territories, within the framework of justice and equity" (SENPLADES, 2013a, p. 17).

In Colombia, the Regime of Resguardos

> collected the form of land tenure that some pre-Hispanic communities had, which consisted of the collective property of the territory and the individual use of part of the land; a system that allowed and allows the periodic redistribution of the parcels among the comuneros, avoiding the accumulation of land in the hands of a few, called 'segregation' according to 'own right' or 'Indigenous law'. (Camawari, 2002, p. 8)[52]

The inter-textual configuration of these definitions encompasses international legal frames, such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, N-169. Article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples specifically refers to Indigenous "right to the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired" (Mohamed, 2007).

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[52] In Colombia, the *Indigenous Territorial* Entity is "resguardos" (the closest translation to the US context would be Native American's "reservations"). The term "comuneros" refers simply to members of the community.

In my reading, these denominations to the territory, TIC and ITE, are examples of an Awá discursive resistance to convert to the hegemonic land-territory divide that a Western notion of private property conveys. Within the frame of territory, land is collective not individual property, which is inextricably connected to the notion of ancestral rights. [53] Hence, Awá inflect the meaning of private property on the basis of their cosmological links to the *katza su*. However, while the recontextualization of private property within Awá's territoriality might make harder to set land and territory as distinct, Awá's ambiguous understanding of the term private property could still facilitate the incorporation of land into the logic of the market. It is likely that relations of production predominate over and inform lineage and sacred relationships with the land. The discursive incursion of the alien idea of private property, therefore, could negatively affect the principles of *katza su* (territory) and *tɨinta paran* (autonomy).

Awá's deployment of a strategic discursive move in the use of private property reveals the uneven and frictional relationships between the nation-state's territorial claims and Indigenous' land-rights. As part of this discursive strategy, I suggest that one way of reducing the ideational power of private property, and thus discursively resist it, is that Awá organizations drop the Spanish words "parcela/plot" or "finca/farm" from their Spanish organizational documents, a.k.a., Plans, and use the Awapit word *sau* instead. *Sau* is the productive unit that guarantees food security for families and communities; moreover, *sau* is the base of trueque (exchange of products), a significant interaction that

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[53] The Colombian Political Constitution, Articles 63 and 329 state "Indigenous resguardos are inalienable, imprescriptible and indefeasible and they are also collective private property of the Indigenous communities" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20), and whose political authority is the cabildos (city halls is the closest English translation). In Ecuador, the notion of collective property is also core in the definition of Awá's Indigenous territories, as stated in the Agreement N-004 of January 23, 2006, granted by the Ministry of Environment (FCAE, 2017, p. 32), which is in accordance to the Constitutional mandate (SENPLADES, 2013a).

helps solidify filial relationships.[54] As *sau*, the land is also *ainki su*, "small space," connotation that brings into the interpretation the notion of *katza su,* whose alternate translation is "big space."

The second unit of action in Awá's territorial governance is the Indigenous guard. This unit refers to autonomy and sovereignty. By being located at the border zone, Awá's territory enters the geopolitics of war as a strategic scenario for the Colombian armed forces to deploy their counterinsurgency tactics. The Indigenous guard is an organized non-violent resistance of Indigenous people facing violence and war in their territories. In the Awá's case, the Indigenous guard is a peaceful response to the dominant discourse of homeland security that informs evaluations and approaches to the Ecuador-Colombia border zone and justifies the securitization of Indigenous spaces (Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012).

Awá seems to indistinguishably use the words "Indigenous guards" and "environmental guards." However, these terms are different. Usually, the configuration of environmental guards is linked to the formation of environmental management projects such as river banks (e.g., Mira-Mataje river bank, Ecuador-Colombia binational project of water management). On the other hand, Indigenous people understand the organization of Indigenous guards as a result of and response to a colonial history that goes back to the Spanish conquest. The Nasa Indigenous Guard has served as an example of a nonviolent, active, and collective cultural resistance amidst the war conditions created by the internal Colombian conflict. As such, the Indigenous guard is "an autonomous response whose purpose is to initiate and support a process of de-construction of the official institutional

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[54] "El trueque/barter (food exchange) such as: planting corn and beans by hand irrigation; the yucca, the chiro, the banana, the sugar cane and the fruit trees" (Camawari, 2002, p. 14)

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structure and its violent powers, as well as a process of re-construction of the

[Indigenous] ethnicity" (Sandoval, 2008, p. 7). What is a foundational tenant to either of

these Indigenous guards, however, is "weaving the fabric of communitarian

communication" (Olivio Bisbicus).

In sum, Awá's territoriality is the way Awá organizations exert political and

symbolic control of the territory *katza su.* The symbolic and political control are based on

the reproduction of Awá relationships with the sacred, lineage, and land, which constitute

and enliven the ancestral history of Awá via: (a) the identification of and ritualization in

sacred places; (b) Awá's relational ontology and animistic connections to the territory;

and, c. their understanding and approach to their livelihoods. The interplay among sacred,

lineage, and land relationships, informs and is informed by the four principles supporting

Awá organizations' performances: unity, culture and identity, autonomy, and territory.

The articulations between relationships and principles configure Awá's territoriality.

Exploring these articulations illuminates how La Gran Familia Awá Binational (GFAB)

understands, constructs, and reproduces their relationships with the territory *katza su*. In

the final section, I present visualization of Awá's territoriality as a pragmatic and

constitutive environmental communication that could contribute to Awá organizations'

agency in their collaboration and communication with governments, NGOs, and other

Indigenous and nonIndigenous neighboring communities.

Territoriality as Environmental Communication

What is the purpose of mapping out Awá's territoriality? Awá are not part of

mainstream Indigenous politics in comparison to other ethnicities (e.g., Shuar, Achuar,

Otavalos). However, Awá have created an archive of historical accounts that so far

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includes: Plans for Life and Safeguard Plans, radio programs, documentaries, television

programs (broadcasted in YouTube), audiovisual material posted in YouTube, and books.

The Plans in particular, are valuable and legitimate diagnoses developed by Awá

organizations using community-based methods of participation.[55] These documents have

been built via orality, a tradition that, albeit weak, survives amidst Awá communities.

These diagnoses are written in a narrative style supported by an exhaustive reading of the

political constitution of each country and official national and international reports. This

narrative style, while valid in registering the outcomes of the participatory process, is not

that useful in spaces of decision—or policy—making processes that respond to efficiency

in Western time. Therefore, the need to create a graphical visualization of Awá's

territoriality that represents the articulations among relationships and principles, as well

as communicates and highlights the central relevance of territory, *katza su*, for the Awá

people. As Olindo Cantincus stated when referring to FCAE's (Federation of Awá

Centers of Ecuador) collaboration with NGOs:

> I think that to explain a little better [what we want], we would have to
>
> sketch a little more, also to order [our thinking] a little to make understand
>
> those who want to finance us. Because, you know, sometimes you have to
>
> put together a short clear summary to say, "this is what we are
>
> understanding." And it would be good to be able to explain that.

Environmental communication, Pezzullo and Cox (2018) assert, is "the pragmatic

and constitutive modes of expression —the naming, shaping, orienting, and negotiating—

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[55] During these processes, on both sides of the border, Awá organizations have received support from national government as well as from national and international NGOs.

of our ecological relationships with the world, including those with nonhumans systems, elements, and species" (p. 13). Awá's territoriality and its graphic representations (figure 2 and 3) fulfill the pragmatic function of educating, alerting, and persuading other Indigenous and nonIndigenous organizations about Awá's cosmopolitical standpoint. As such, a visual representation of Awá's territoriality could help to illuminate ways Awá organizations understand, construct, and reproduce their relationships with the territory *katza su*.
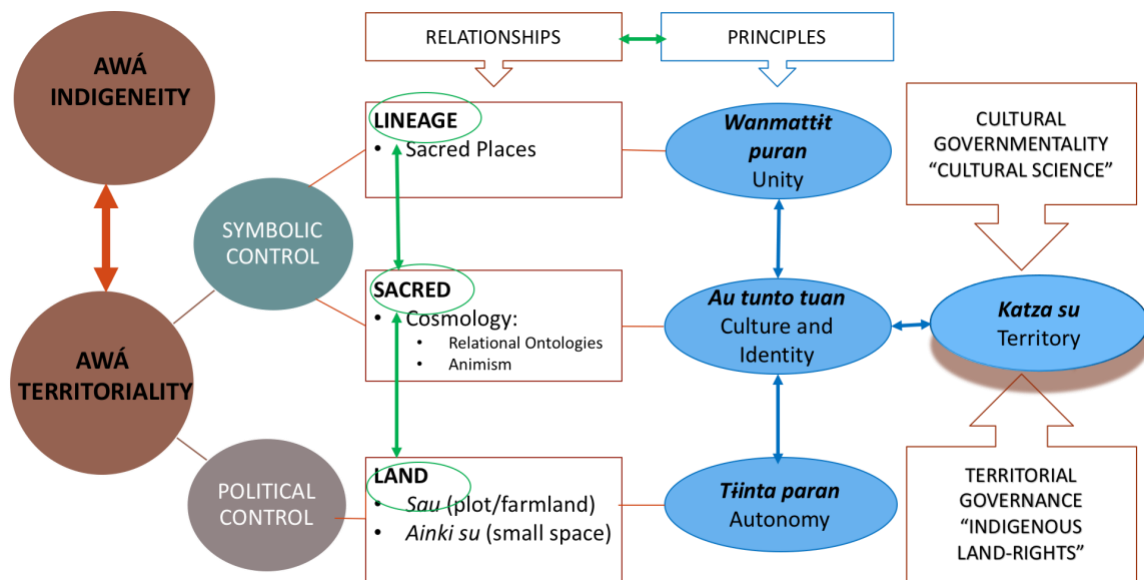
Figure 2 Awá's territoriality: relationships and principles.
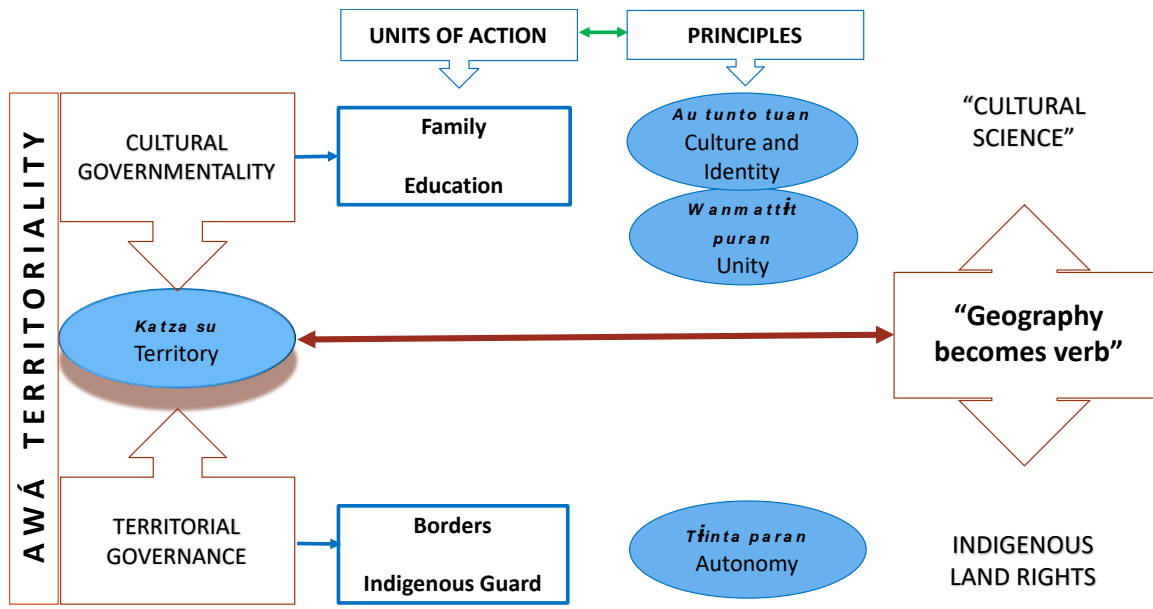
Figure 3 Awá's territoriality: operationalization

The operationalization of Awá's territoriality is displayed via the articulation of

relationships and principles in terms of cultural governmentality and territorial

governance. I understand cultural governmentality as the operationalization of the

symbolic control of the territory aimed at preserving, restoring, and revitalizing lineage

and sacred relationships with the *katza su*. Family and education are the primary units of

action in the exercise of this control as they further the principles of unity (filial

relationships) and culture and identity (intercultural bilingual education). Awá lineage is

inextricably intertwined in the permanence and survival of their territories as they are the

memory of, "the facts and practices lived by the elderly, whose knowledge or cultural

sciences was acquired after a long trajectory of balanced and harmonious relationships

with nature" (Bisbicús, Paí, & Paí, 2010, p. 15). The ultimate purpose of Awá's cultural

governmentality is the production and legitimation of a "cultural science" built upon the

protection, revitalization, and passing on their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

Their TEK privileges an environmental communication performed through "communicative senses" that allow interrelations with the more-than-human world — plants, animals, mountain, rivers.

Territorial governance, on the other hand, is the operationalization of the political control of the territory aimed at demarcating, consolidating, and defending land relationships that guarantee not only the reproduction of filial and sacred relationships with the *katza su* but also their legal status in front of other populations and institutions. Borders and Indigenous guard are the units of action to exert this control and solidify the Awá's principle of autonomy. The ultimate purpose of Awá's territorial governance is to establish a political position in relation to the government, neighboring communities, and other entities, on the basis of rights over the land concerning Indigenous territories or resguardos.

Cultural governmentality and territorial governance simultaneously function to consolidate the principle of *katza su*, territory. Territory is the foundation of Awá's cosmovision. Therefore, territoriality is the political praxis of Awá's indigeneity, that is, a positioning that draws upon their cultural science (historically sedimented practices, a.k.a. TEK), landscapes (sacred places; the cloud forest), and repertoires of meanings (four principles). Culture as a political project is to enunciate. By enunciating *katza su* "geography becomes verb" (Leff, 2004, p. 125). Hence, culture is enunciation that either reproduces, challenges, or resists global environmental discourses presented as universal, objective, and self-explanatory. The enunciation of territory not only frames the way Awá translate development and sustainability but also creates the order of discourse in which these translations are plausible. Territory is the discursive continuity needed to approach

Awá's process of translation enmeshed in the geopolitical context of the Ecuador-Colombia binational border.

In an exercise of pragmatics, introducing Awá's territoriality as a starting point of discussion would make clear, for instance, that the territory has a say in dialogues and possible decisions that might affect the cloud forest covering the mountains in which Awá dwell. Further, territoriality could help frame the implementation of projects in Awá's territory. Accordingly, Awá organizations should demand external organizations to articulate their proposals to the units of actions —education and family in the symbolic realm, borders and Indigenous guard in the political realm— thus, supporting Awá's cultural governmentality and territorial governance.

Territoriality is constitutive too. Territory functions as rhetorical topoi in the constitutions of Awá's indigeneity. In exerting symbolic and political control, territory becomes the common place, "a place of return in changing circumstances" (Olson, 2010, p. 5). As constitutive of meaning, territoriality is the discursive field of signification within which Awá organizations, FCAE and UNIPA, situate the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change, to understand and (re)construct them. Therefore, in Awá's cosmovision, territory is the political interlocutor of Awá people in their relations to the state, NGOs, neighboring populations, and other institutions. As an analytical concept, however, articulation alone is not enough to understand how the political and symbolic control of the territory is exerted by Awá organizations. What my elaboration so far attempts to show is that to understand territoriality we must look at articulation and translation in tandem.

Final Conceptual Remarks: Territoriality and the Creation of Continuity

In their critique of Laclau and Mouffe's notion of articulation, Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) state that articulation "monopolizes the field of meanings and names the only possible way of conceiving and/or practicing hegemonic and counter hegemonic politics." Moreover, these authors continue, "articulation disconnects as well as connects different social elements, demands, and situations. But unlike translation, it cannot do both at the same time" (p. 289). Articulation momentarily and partially captures the social struggles via interlocking pre-fixed entities —states, organization, groups, and identities— connected in a chain of functions or roles; therefore, articulation is prone to abridgements. On the contrary, translation is "the practice of creating continuity" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 289) at the singular disjunctive momentum of the border. Therefore, translation and articulation are not exclusive but complementary insofar as articulation is the normative mechanism of translation.

In the case of the Awá binational Indigenous people, territoriality is the normative mechanism produced by the articulation among relationships and principles implicated in the configuration of cultural governmentality and territorial governance. In dialectical relationship to articulation, translation is a heuristic device to approach Awá's territoriality by looking at how the four principles founding Awá's cosmovision —unity, culture and identity, autonomy, and territory— translate into sacred, lineage, and land relationships. Therefore, territoriality is useful to situate Awá's process of translation within the geopolitical context of the binational border. Hence, Awá's territoriality is transnational insofar as Awá's Indigenous condition is binational.

These articulations configure a territoriality that is contingent to the degree of impact war has had on the communities living in the territory. Furthermore, while contested, Awá's binational condition materializes in the differentiated effects the state of war in Colombia has had on Awá people. An example of how the national border functions as a buffer against the effects of war on Ecuadorian territory, is the disparity in the proliferation of illegal crops and its trade network, monocrops such as palm oil, and extractives enterprises such as mining. While less invasive on the Colombian than on the Ecuadorian side due to the warfare scenario, these activities affect the biodiversity of the territory and the health of surrounding communities. Also, the presence of these enterprises, in particular, palm and logging enterprises, is creating conflicts with neighboring communities of mestizos and Afros. To understand Awá's territoriality as transnational entails reflecting on the "border as method" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) to elucidate the geopolitics of language at play in transboundary sites.

Understanding Awá's process of translation, therefore, demands to situate global environmental discourses in Awá's transnational territoriality, that is, Awá's translations of the concepts of development, sustainability, and climate change are inextricably related to the pervasiveness of the violence of war that impacts Awá *katza su*. Within Awá's transnational territoriality, territory functions as the rhetorical commonplace that allows translation by offering some continuity in the permanent disjunctive momentum of the border.

In the next chapter, I situate the global environmental discourses of development and sustainability within the meanings and practices that weave Awá's territoriality. I show how, in dealing with the Colombian internal conflict and its effects on the Ecuador-

Colombia border, territory functions as a convergence node of signification whose meanings are bifurcated by war. To demonstrate the workings of convergence node and bifurcation point as analytical concepts, I focus on some of the discursive engagements and struggles Awá organizations face in the process of constructing and consolidating their territoriality. Ultimately, I aim to illuminate the deployment of global environmental discourses as ideological mechanisms that facilitate and advance broader modernity and modernization processes that affect Indigenous ecological knowledges, practices, languages, and repertoires of meaning. By looking at La Gran Familia Awá Binacional's (GFAB) translation of the discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change, I seek to investigate Awá's discursive maneuvers that possibly engender delinked meanings and ignite innovative practices at the level of the communities with which UNIPA and FCAE work.

Chapter 5 The Geopolitics of Language: Awá's Translation of Development, Sustainability, and Climate Change

"We need to speak the language of the donors," a friend of mine always says when we are crafting a new proposal. In environment-related projects, what "speaking the language of the donors" usually means is using terms such as "sustainable development" to frame top-down initiatives brought by facilitators often funded by agencies of international aid (e.g., Fundación Natura Regional, an NGO for which I worked). One of the debates within the NGO community has to do with the lack of time and space for conducting previous consultation to the communities about their needs that could inform a stronger collaboration to advance and improve communities living conditions. Recently, institutions and organizations have incorporated climate change as the new term that must be referred to as the broader framework of any environmental project. These concepts shape environmental initiatives, but they are not the dilemma. What is problematic, though, is the uncritical use of these terms based on assumptions seen as translatable across contexts and whose meanings are unequivocal regardless of specific situations and languages. Like other terms, however, environmental concepts are the product of competing paradigms that have become dominant in a field of specialized knowledge and structures of governance in regard to our ecological condition.

In this chapter, I approach Awá's meaning-making of development, sustainability, and climate change at the intersection of territory and war in transboundary sites. I investigate how La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) translates the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works. To this end, I construct two

analytical concepts, convergence node and bifurcation point, to understand ways of signification implicated in the communicative practice of translation and to approach the geopolitics of language at work in transboundary sites via translation as a historicist inquiry. Then, I explore the discursive maneuvers and competing meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change emerging from/within Awá's transnational territoriality. I show how, through translation, Awá's organizations recontextualize and instrumentalize the notions of development and sustainability to respond to their needs of operationalizing the symbolic and political control of Awá's territory. Regarding climate change, I demonstrate ways Awá's translation of climate change emplaces this concept; thus, constructing a phenomenological place-based meaning of climate change that relocates power by acknowledging Awá's traditional ecological knowledge.

Within Awá's transnational territoriality — the way Awá organizations exert political and symbolic control of the territory *katza su*— I emphasize Awá's ecocultural discourses that emerge or can be revitalized and fortified to address the environmental pressures in the transboundary conflict zone where Awá binational people are located. With territory at the center of Awá's web of meanings, territoriality is fundamental to understand Awá's processes of translation. A cohesive discourse regarding their principles of territory, unity, culture and identity, and autonomy seems to underlie Awá's cultural governmentality and territorial governance; there is also a consensus on the importance of Awá's territory for their physical and cultural survival. However, a closer look at the dynamics implicated in the symbolic and political control of Awá's territory elucidates why while Awá's territoriality discourse seems similar across borders, its

operationalization is not. Hence, I attempt to shed light on the effects of national borders

on the meaning-making processes of communities dwelling these liminal spaces. The

disparity in the implementation of Awá's strategies to further their territoriality raises

questions about the reliance of environmental initiatives on conventional notions of

sustainability and development, as well as about the extent to which conceptualizations of

climate change can maintain its scientific posture when working with communities on the

ground.

Conceptualizing Convergence Node and Bifurcation Point

I situate Awá's processes of translation in the geopolitical situation of the

Ecuador-Colombia border. Awá's territoriality epitomizes the interplay of political,

economic, cultural, and environmental forces and dynamics embedded in broader

histories of colonialism, the configuration of nation-states, and the consolidation of

states' legitimacy that shaped Latin America and remain paramount to understand the

region's history. The internal war in Colombia has marked, and continues to inform, the

contemporary history of Ecuador-Colombia binational relationships. The perpetual state

of warfare has shaped the life of communities located at the border zone. Recently, the

entrenchment of a system of drug production and distribution has fueled and complicated

the armed conflict between the Colombian State and irregular armed forces.[56]

Within this context, parallel identities, relationships, practices, and discourses

emerge from the binational condition of Awá people. To understand the symbolic and

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[56] By the time I am writing this chapter, the implementation of the Peace Agreement between FARC and the Colombian government is facing great obstacles. Moreover, border populations are suffering the escalation of violence between narcoguerrillas, formed by dissident elements from FARC, and Colombian and Mexican drug cartels. These actors want to fill the vacuum of power created by the dismantling of FARC's drug network, and thus, to gain control of the corridors and plantations installed across the border zone.

material sequels this parallelism has on Awá's histories, subjectivities, embodiments, and meanings, I use two analytic categories, convergence node and bifurcation point. A convergence node is an enunciated discursive and material momentum of possibilities of (re)signification. In this study, territory, *katza su,* is the convergence node of Awá's field of signification. I use the term "node" in the sense Laclau and Mouffe defines a nodal point, that is, "a privileged sign around which the other signs are ordered [and] acquire their meaning from their relationship to the nodal point" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 26). I use nodal point in a nuanced way, however, because I do not assume that a node entails a discursive closure, a connotation of fixity conveyed by the word point. On the contrary, the term convergence suggests a dynamic process of entries and exits that turn the node into a momentum that enshrines several possibilities, among them, the possibility of bifurcation.

Bifurcation point is the partition of meaning catapulted by the (re)articulation of social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental forces that create and advance a situated historical condition. The uneven impacts of war on Awá communities function as a bifurcation point insofar as the national border creates a buffer zone that reduces the effects of extractivist and agricultural activities on Ecuadorian Awá communities (albeit not in their totality), and therefore, diverge the acculturation of Awá community members according to their national location. For instance, while in general, the geopolitics taking place in Awá's territory features megaprojects (e.g., Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America, IIRSA), extractivist activities such as oil drilling, logging and mining, and allocation of land for monocrops or grassing (Bisbicús, Paí, & Paí, 2010; Camawari, 2002), agricultural colonization and mining affect

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Colombian Awá territories in less intensity than their Ecuadorian counterpart. On the Ecuadorian side, for instance, appropriation and allocation of land is the central issue enervating Awá's control of their territories (e.g. territorial management). Despite the codification of the principle of Sumak Kawsay (good living) in the Ecuadorian Political constitution, the government's initiatives and policies have not been able to prevent environmental destruction in high biodiversity spots (e.g., Yasuní Park) (De Marchi, 2013; Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Although, one way of understanding the differences between Ecuador and Colombia regarding extractivist activities could be looking at the countries development agendas —Ecuador's Sumak Kawsay, and the "locomotives of development" framing Colombia's development agenda[57]— I focus on war as the key differentiating factor since the ongoing war in Colombian territory has prevented a more rapid appropriation of land and development of projects that might threaten Awá's territory on that side of the border.

Colonization and exploitation are difficult, if not impossible, to carry out in a war zone, as the label goes with Awá's territories. Also, war has kept Colombian Awá territories at the margin of mega-projects that are part of the development agenda of the Colombian government (Rodríguez, Rodríguez, & Durán, 2017). By contrast, on the Ecuadorian side, the sequels of an apparent distant war have not decelerated the advancement of environmental colonization, in many cases facilitated by national or local governments, which issue permits for large mining or monocrops companies (e.g., palm oil) that are establishing their activities in or near by Awá's territories (Map 2). Additionally, local governments have allocated land for agriculture to mestizo peasants or

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[57] What the Colombian government calls the "locomotives of development" include: housing, innovation, mining, infrastructure, and agriculture (DNP, 2015).

Afro communities. Awá have reclaimed and protected some of these lands as ancestral, a situation that has prompted conflicts over land-rights and accelerated the acculturation of Awá's lifeways (FCAE, 2017; FCAE, UNIPA, CAMAWARI, & ACIPAP, 2016).

CONCESIONES MINERAS TERRITORIO AWA

Nombre concesión	Codigo	Area	Empresa	Estado
GEMA VERDE	40000380	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
BRUNELA	40000379	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
ROCIO	40000381	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
LUCY	40000382	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
FORTUNA	40000378	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
CRISTINA	40000377	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
ATENEA	40000376	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE
ESMERALDA	40000375	5000	SEMIPROHG	TRAMITE

Area total territorio Awa 116544.63 ha

Map 2 Mining Allocation in Ecuadorian Awá's Territory.
Legend: Pink solid line: Limits of Awá's territory. Green doted lines: Mining allocations.
Map provided by Olindo Cantincus. Personal Communication.

According to Awá's documents, the presence of extractivist and agricultural activities has aggravated the acculturation of their community members. Awá define acculturation as the "inappropriate approach to Western culture that terminates with the vital elements of [Awá] culture" (FCAE et al., 2016, p. 15). The differentiated degree of acculturation influences the processes and outcomes of Awá's discursive engagement and

struggle over meanings. The location of Awá communities in a conflict zone isolates many Colombian Awá communities, condition that decreases their contact with nonIndigenous population and, thus, contains acculturation. While this situation of isolation could be conceived as positive regarding "cultural preservation"—for instance, the native language Awapit is still spoken in those isolated communities, which is a central element symbolic territoriality— in terms of human rights the isolation of these communities becomes problematic as it is not voluntary but forced (Camawari, 2002). On the other hand, the sequels of war have forced the intra-displacement of communities towards mestizo or Afro urban settlements or closer to the roads connecting the major cities in the border zone. Forced displacements have aggravated the acculturation experienced by Colombian Awá. On the Ecuadorian side, the process of acculturation runs deeper, being one of its signals the loss of Awapit language. For instance, according to Filiberto Pascal, around 70% of the people in his community does not speak Awapit, and those who speak are mostly elders.

As analytical concepts, convergence node and bifurcation point help to understand discursive formations in transboundary sites. As an example of ways convergence node and bifurcation point work, I explore the discursive maneuvers and engagements implicated in the process of translation of the term "private property" to show how Awá representatives and their organizations' documents inflect meanings when concepts enter the discursive field of Awá's territoriality.

Sau, land, and private property: discursive maneuvers and engagements.

The Spanish words "propiedad privada" are increasingly becoming part of Awá's environmental vernacular. The discursive maneuvers and engagements that the

translation of the Western term private property demands, reveal how acculturation has

impacted Awá's realm of signification. The "natural" connections of Indigenous people

to land have worked as rhetorical devices to disenfranchise Indigenous populations.[58]

Private property is the discursive Western envelope used to naming land. Awá conceive

the term private property as an imposition consequence of a history of colonization and

dispossession that "forces the Awá to take and understand the concept of private property

of the land as a defense mechanism of [their] territory" (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). Within

Awá's territoriality, the enunciation of territory not only frames ways Awá translate alien

ideas or discourses but also creates the order of discourse in which these translations are

plausible. The process of adopting private property as a strategic defense mechanism

recontextualizes land in two ways. First, it takes private property from the discursive

regime of territoriality to the regime of land-rights. Through recontextualization, Awá's

territory becomes its legal designation as Entidad Territorial Indígena (ETI) in Colombia

or Circunscripción Territorial Indígena (CTI) in Ecuador.

Land enters the regime of market as "parcela/plot" or "finca/farm," Spanish terms

that suggest and emphasize relations of production between Awá and land:

People in each community, each person, have their protected area. They

say we can make our production from here down [his hands divide the

air]. From here up, those lands are no longer valuable, so [those lands] will

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[58] In Ecuador, the push toward white-mestizo modernity and its concurrent construction of a national territory have worked to disenfranchise Indigenous populations. Olson (2014) states, "as the larger histories of white-mestizo encroaching on Indigenous lands suggest, invoking modernity and the mechanisms of efficient cultivation allow white-mestizos to undermine Indigenous claims to land because those invocations tapped into the belief that Indigenous people could never been modern: they were of the land. Contrasting white mestizos' assumed actions *on* the land with Indigenous peoples' status as *of* the land provided a powerful commonsense claim both to particular parcels of land and to broader symbolic geography of the nation" (p. 75)

be protected. And, as I say, more than anything, in the Awá's territory, not all lands are productive. There is no need to touch those lands. So, you have to leave the mountain to live forever, because nothing grows there, they are not productive. So, there is no reason to be interested in doing any crops there. (Florencio Cantincus)

What the process of translation illuminates is that relations of production have gained discursive terrain in the construction of Awá's relationships with land. Framing land as "not productive" implies, on the one hand, that what is expected from the land is only valuable in terms of the market (e.g., wood). On the other hand, Florencio's statement, "nothing grows there," suggests a system of values infused by an instrumental conception of nature that disregards the intrinsic value of what is likely to grow there and that constitute the ecosystem of other living beings, other material and spiritual awá.

Awá organizations' decisions to allocate land is one way the materialization of this shift in the system of value becomes evident. On the Ecuadorian side, the discursive accommodations go hand-in-hand with the nuanced effects of war, which have not allowed the promotion of economic activities. As an example, Florencio mentioned that ecotourism projects cannot be implemented in Awá's territory due to the risks associated to the conflict situation of the border. The cul-the-sac caused by this situation has opened room for considering more lenient approaches to economic activities that could be conceived as alien to Awá's cosmovision. The previous quote shows how when relations of production mediate Awá's understanding of land, the sacredness of places risks being relegated to the fringes of Awá's symbolic elaboration of the political control of the territory *katza su.* One consequence of this discursive practice is, for instance, the

consideration by FCAE (Federation of Awá Centers of Ecuador) of mining as a viable economic activity within the territory: "Artisanal mining [must] work collectively, generate resources for the community, be responsible, and be carried out under the supervision of the FCAE with technical criteria. In addition, mining will only be done by the Awá" (FCAE et al., 2016, p. 57).

The inflection of the notion of mining in the Awá Ecuadorian organization suggests a market-oriented strategy to respond to the economic needs of Awá families. The consideration of allocating land for mining exploitation, although under the control of the organization and in benefit to the communities, implies a shift in the relationships with land away from the Awá principles that sustain their cosmovision. Naming land as "private property," even if it is for strategic reasons, fosters a utilitarian understanding of the land that furthers acculturation processes, which eventually debilitate Awá's symbolic control of the territory. The primacy of a system of values that deems land's worth only in terms of productivity might devitalize the relational ontologies that sustain Awá organizations' cosmological base, which depends on Awá's filial and sacred relationships with land. Western terms, such as private property, infiltrate Awá's environmental vernacular and, by gaining discursive space, could enervate Awá's cultural governmentality and territorial governance.

By contrast, on the Colombian side, the ongoing flagship project is the installation of an integral farm. The farm is located thirty minutes from Predio el Verde, the entrance of El Gran Sábalo Indigenous reservation of UNIPA (Indigenous Unit of Awá People). The farm works with the Awá Bilingual Agro-environmental Technical Educational Institution to provide food for inland communities, as well as to be a center for the

revitalization of Awá culture. To Eduardo Cantincus, "the integral farm is for the Awá to research with the elders the names of the trees in Awapit, name of the animals, fishes, and all, medicinal plants. And the names of all the traditional products in Awapit. [The integral farm] is an educational center." The farm is an example of a community-based approach to face economic distress as well as contributing to pass on traditional ecological knowledge and revitalize intergenerational dialogue. UNIPA's strategies like this one also respond to and are constrained by the more direct impact of war on Colombian Awá communities and territories. However, the severer manifestation of war on the Colombian side also explains the lower degree of acculturation experienced by Colombian Awá communities and UNIPA's organizational strength. Both help to understand why sacred and lineage relationships with land are more prevalent in the Colombian Awá side than in their Ecuadorian counterpart.

Awá's discursive engagements and maneuvers show the degree of ambiguity in the definitions of private property within Indigenous territories. But it is in ambiguity, as Laclau and Mouffe would state, where discursive changes could occur and opportunities of thinking otherwise might emerge. UNIPA's allocation of land for integral farms (rather than mining projects) signals possibilities for resistance. For instance, referring to the integral farm project, the Awapit word *sau* was usually mentioned. Within the discursive regime of territoriality, land is *sau*. In Awapit, *sau* is a historical and sacred communal[59] property built upon filial relationships that reaffirm ancestry and lineage. Hence, the importance of revitalizing Awapit terms such as *sau* — a little space of

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[59] Community is defined as "group or group of families of Amerindian descent that is aware of identity, that shares values of identification with their aboriginal past, maintaining traits and values of their traditional culture as well as forms of government and social control of their communities (Colombia, Article 2 Decree 2164 of 1995)." (Camawari, 2002, p. 6, note 1)

material and symbolic sustenance embedded in the bigger space *katza su*— to counter

notions of land that favor individual private property and turn land into a secular entity

that abides to the human-nature divide of modern capitalist history (Moore, 2015). As

sau, land aims at maintaining the self-sustenance economy featuring Awá's cosmology.

Sau, thus, is the productive unit that guarantees food security for families and

communities and allows *maishtawa,* trueque (barter), a significant interaction that,

according to Awá's traditions, helps to solidify compadrazgo (godfatherhood) and

facilitate marriage relationships via the exchange of food (Camawari, 2002, p. 14).

The discursive engagements and struggles involving the definitions of private

property demonstrate how territory functions as a node into which different signifiers

converge; additionally, the inflections of the meaning of private property show how the

differentiated impacts of war bifurcate Awá organizations' discursive maneuvers

implicated in their translation processes. Therefore, to understand these processes of

translation, it is essential to situate Awá organizations' meaning-making of global

environmental discourses at the intersection of Awá's transnational territoriality and

dissimilar effects of war. At the intersection of territoriality and war, the discursive

engagements and struggles that Awá binational Indigenous people perform in the process

of translation reveal that non-Indigenous terms, such as private property, are gaining

discursive space and affecting the sacred, lineage, and land relationships supporting Awá

cultural governmentality and territorial governance.

Summing up, the interplay between convergence node and bifurcation point in the

process of translation elucidates the centrality of territory in Awá cosmovision. The

constitutive force of territory in Awá's territoriality field of discourse is not new in

Indigenous scholarship. What is interesting, however, is to explore and understand the intricacies of how territory, as discourse, functions in relation to other terms considered alien to a cosmovision supporting the material existence of a territory. Only paying attention to the discursive field might suggest a guarded approach to development and a singular understanding of sustainability shared by UNIPA and FCAE. However, the two specific postures among Awá representatives —one advocating for opening the territory to artisanal mining, controlled logging, or water bottling; and the other for expanding the impact of the integral farm across the territory— signal conflicting systems of values regarding Awá's relationships with land, productive vs. sacred, and lineage. When the land in the territory is framed as only productive, land is signified within the discursive parameters of "private property," and therefore, Awá are more likely to sell the land or allow activities that contradict their cosmology (these activities now include some related to conservation). In contrast, when the meaning of land is attached to the notion of territory, land is sacred and enshrines ancestry; thus, in Olivio Bisbicus' words, "territory is not negotiated. Territory is not for sale."

In the following sections, I use convergence node and bifurcation point to show how the discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change are inflected when entering Awá territoriality's discursive field of signification. I illustrate ways these environmental discourses are ordered by and acquired from their relationship to Awá' territory, *katza su*. I argue that the unevenness of the effects of the Colombian internal war on Awá communities may bifurcate the meanings of sustainability, development, and climate change, meta-rhetorics that dominate the discursive field of environmental governance.

Territoriality and the Discursive Limits of Development and Sustainability

There is a vast literature asserting that the notion of development is alien, contrary, and even, threatening to Indigenous worldviews (Cajete, 1999; Escobar, 2010; Gudynas, 2011; Kauffman & Martin, 2014; Walsh, 2010). Throughout their documents, Awá assert a radical difference between the "Western notion" of development and the interpretation of what "development" means for Awá people. Straightforwardly, José Jairo states, "in Awapit, development itself does not exist, we do not have the word." However, the word development circulates among Awá people and it is used by their leaders in community meetings and inform the relationships they establish with other institutions, organizations, and communities. Yet, development and sustainability are equivocations, "a type of communicative disjuncture in which, while using the same words, interlocutors are not talking about the same thing and do not know this" (De la Cadena, 2015, p. 27). Elaborating on Viveiros de Castro's definitions of equivocations, De la Cadena (2015) states, "equivocations result from the different relational regimes that were used in the conversation" that always implies the formation of "epistemic zones" (p. 213). Awá's epistemic zone —in which nature is the source of their knowledge— and Awá's ontological zone —where human and more-than-humans are consubstantial— both approach and traverse Western epistemological and ontological zones in which knowledge is an exclusive product of human reason and the likeness among human and nonhumans fades away behind a symbolic veil.

The contact of these zones bends their discursive fields, and thus, inflects meanings, some of which are reinforced or challenged in the process of passing from one realm of signification to another. These "new" meanings reveal that similar words could

reproduce, challenge, and/or resist univocal ideas constituting discourses ostensibly

global. By looking at the translation of the global environmental discourses of

development and sustainability, I aim to illuminate the works of environmental

globalization as a discursive mechanism of modernity (and modernization) that is

debilitating Indigenous ecological knowledges, practices, languages, and repertoires of

meaning.

The discursive engagements and struggles Awá organizations face in the process

of constructing and consolidating their territoriality demonstrate how Awá perceive

Western development as a structural framework that is imposed on them and within

which discriminatory and exclusionary projects and initiatives are legitimized by national

policies. Awá in both sides of the border, as Florencio states, share pressures from

national governments:

> If there are projects that come from the State, the projects are almost done.
>
> Because [the State] really only changes the objective, whatever it is, but
>
> they come and they say, "we are going to do this cacao cultivation
>
> project." So, this [project] has to happen because it has to happen; because
>
> it is within the government's plan. So, what you have to do is to accept the
>
> projects as they come.

Awá display of a guarded perception of development is not exceptional, rather

this position is common in a globalized era when governments have used the state

apparatus to facilitate the expansion of a global market based on neoliberal tenets and

practices at the local level (Sassen, 2007). One of the results of the globalization process

is that in the name of progress, governments aim to incorporate their countries and

localities —for instance, via "integrationist" proposals— into the circuits of the capitalist market:

> The only alternative for the communities is to accept integrationist development proposals that are alien to their own notions of life. [These proposals] force the abandonment of the historical-cultural legacy and ignore our Plan for Life; [and if we] continue to resist, [we] end up being displaced or eliminated physically and culturally. (Camawari et al., 2012, p.118)

However, this integration is done indiscriminately without consideration of the particularities of populations or places, which are left "displaced or eliminated physically and culturally" if they do not abide to the premises of a Western development further by national and local governments. This dynamic is displayed by NGOs as well. For instance, when asked about two projects implemented by NGOs, Olivio Bisbicus stated, "what NGOs do are specific projects, very welfare projects. So, these projects do not have a projection to the future for the project to continue. This is the same with government institutions."

When entities such as NGOs try to step in and contribute to the communities' wellbeing, Awá representatives denounce these external organizations as they are perceived by Awá organizations as reproducing discrimination and disempowerment. Olivio's account of UNIPA's relationships with the government and NGOs is telling about these positioning:

> Today, the government institution contracts or signs agreements through foundations, [and] then through the community organizations. As Awá

people UNIPA, we do not agree with [that way of agreements]. We have

told the government, we will not accept that foundations or NGOs execute

projects in the Indigenous communities. Any project that they want to

develop within the Awá Indigenous territory, be it projects from the local

government, departmental, or central government, [must] directly [be

agreed with] the grassroots organization. [Because] UNIPA has its

installed capacity[,] its management capacity, its ability to direct its

autonomous process, yes? And [UNIPA] has its ability to govern within

the territory. That is why we have been very clear to the government: all

the processes are concerted directly with our Awá people, with our base

authorities.

Awá perceive that NGOs disregard Awá organizations' management skills in overseeing

the territory.[60] In the case of UNIPA, however, there is a political effort to reaffirm their

agency via the vindication of their organizational capabilities to confront the outsourcing

of international aid (Lewis, 2011). Also, there is a self-positioning that rebuts any attempt

to undermine Awá's organizational capacity "to govern within" their territories and

strengthening their territoriality. This position is empowering and demonstrates, in an

explicit manner, Awá's agency in terms of lived exteriority that allows Awá to actively

and intentionally stay at the margins (Micarelli, 2015; Mignolo, 2007; Rappaport, 2005).

And, while this kind of position seems to be more common on the Colombian side, using

the Awá binational organization, La Gran Familia Awá, as a platform to share political

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[60] I make these claims only based on Awá's perceptions. However, to have a more accurate description and analysis of Awá and NGOs relationships, I need to have the NGOs' perspective. Gathering and analyzing this data is part of the future research interests associated to the present study.

strategies increases the chances of this empower and active posture to become an Awá's transnational commonplace for their cultural struggle.

Awá's experiences with the imprints of development also have exacerbated their negative perception of development's outcomes as something that pressures and damages "the social fabric of the Awá family" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 14). The normative and discursive maneuvers and positions with which Awá organizations are forced to engage, highlight their resistance to the deployment of development as a discursive mechanism of the modernity project. As Gudynas (2011) manifests, "the struggle is over the meaning" (p. 37). The discursive contestations described here, however, are not exceptional but rather familiar to the experience of Indigenous people facing Western ideas of development in colonized spaces. Awá people are not an exception. In the next section, I explore the variations in the meanings of development and sustainability that occur within Awá's territoriality and the eventual formation of new meanings, although not uncontested, that may nurture Awá's political and symbolic control of their *katza su.*

Awá's good living: recontextualization and instrumentalization of development and sustainability.

In the absence of the word "development" in Awapit language, the solution is not only finding words in Awapit that might convey, albeit extremely partially, some of the principles of Western development. Finding and exploring the translation of this term confront us to attend to the assumptions supporting decisions and practices associated with the Western notion of development. One of the results of this confrontation is the possibility of opening spaces of resistance that will spring from the re-structuration of a new social grammar (de Sousa, 2011).

During the interviews, Awapit words used to translate "development" were *wat usan, wat mɨlna*, and *wat puran*. The semantics of these "conceptual blends" (Stibbe, 2015) can be laid out thus (Ministerio de Educación Ecuador, 2009):

Wat: adv. Good	Puran: v. be, live, exist
Usan: v. to do well	Mɨlna: v. to carry

In a strict sense, Awapit terms used to translate development strongly suggest that the principles of Western development are not implicated in Awapit words. The limitation of a merely linguistic interpretation of these terms, however, becomes more evident in the translation of *wat mɨlna* to Spanish. Ways interviewees construed *wat mɨlna* reveal the profound relationships between wellbeing and territory that are at the core of Awá's cosmovision supporting their territoriality. To Olindo, *wat/*good extends to "be in balance with the environment," and *mɨlna* entails "no contamination, no mining companies or monocrops." *Wat mɨlna*, he continues,

> is not only about understanding how we are going to be but, from the Awá cosmovision, [*wat mɨlna*] is how to understand the territory from the medicinal plants, from the rivers, from the cultural way of life. This is *wat mɨlna* to us. For the Awá people, it is not just to say, 'I am there, and that's it'.

In the process of translating development using Awapit words, other meanings associated with balance, environmental threats (pollution, mining and monocrops), and existentialism (survival) emerge. For instance, later in the conversation, Olindo elaborates and states that *wat* also implies that "there is nothing interfering," and *mɨlna* suggests that the actions should "carry on a long-term." The temporal reference echoes

one of the connotations of "sostenible/to sustain" one out of the two main connotations of the English word sustainability in Spanish. The other term is "sustentable," which conveys the meaning of "sustenance." Sostenible, hence, better translates as "sustain" not only the ecological systems but also their territories. The link between development and territory is elucidated by the call for resisting any kind of "interference," as well in José Jairo's translation of development as *Awá su tichan*, "the people defending their territories. So, for us the most important thing in the process [of development] is the territory." He linked the idea of defending/*su tichan* also to sustainability.

The notion of "defending" is of extreme significance if we consider that *wat usan* translates as "having the means to live in the territory, to have their chacras [farmlands]. That is the development to them [Awá]. Being in the environment freely" (Olindo Cantincus). The process of translation elucidates syntagmatic connections among freedom of being in the environment/territory, defending it, and eliminating any interference. These connections illuminate the discursive power of *wat puran/usan*, and especially *wat mɨlna*, in the constitution of Awá's territoriality. These Awapit terms hardly translate what the Spanish word "desarrollo" or the English word "development" connote in their most notable, hegemonic, enunciations. *Wat mɨlna* refers more to a degree of freedom and autonomy —reveled in their collocation in opposition to words such as "interfering" and "defending."

From s position of subalternity, Awá inflect the meaning of development by negating its importance of the term and, thus, recontextualizing Western development from mainly ideological to primarily instrumental. Within the discursive field of Awá's territoriality and in relation to the territory *katza su*, development functions as an

instrument to attain empowerment. As Olivio asserted, "we do not talk as much about development issues [but] about *empowerment* of the authorities of our territory through [improving] their leadership abilities." Being critical of the discourse of development opens the door to forge spaces of agency. Empowerment is central to Awá organizations' vision of generating alternative proposals *to* development with close regard to Awá's culture and principles. Awá organizations rework and inflect the global environmental discourses of development and sustainability as they are translated to engage and foster Awá's territoriality.

In addition to the notion of development, also sustainability is recontextualized to respond to the needs of Awá's territoriality. Similar to development, there is not a direct translation of the idea of sustainability. In translating sustainability, interviewees used again the Awapit *wat mɨlna*. Different but complementary to development, however, sustainability in *wat mɨlna* brings into light the centrality of intergenerational communication between elders and younger generations because "the elders had a different way of understanding sustainability. I remember when they said, 'the guarantee for sustainability is to guarantee the territory'" (Olindo Cantincus). Discursively, the meaning making of sustainability is intimately related to territory:

> To defend the territory is searching for sustainability. This concept refers
> to the activities to manage and take advantage of the territory in a way that
> is perdurable in time. Where natural resources are maintained in balance;
> we exploit these resources in a way that they achieve their recovery and
> avoid their exhaustion. To take advantage of these resources must
> guarantee an economic, social, and environmental profit. (PVFCAE p. 61)

Within Awá's territoriality, sustainability translates to "survival." This discursive maneuver struck me in two ways. First, the reference to survival brings forward the geopolitical context informing the process of translation. Second, sustainability as the "defense of the territory" evokes Awá's struggle for remaining in the mountain, maintaining their culture, and the right of living a dignified and safe life.

In the process of translation, Awá recontextualize the meanings of development and sustainability to respond to the need of configuring and consolidating Awá's territorial governance and cultural governmentality. The recontextualization of development and sustainability subdues these discourses to Awá's discursive needs in which development and sustainability are conversed to instrumental verbs (not discursive forces) whose meanings exist only within Awá's territoriality and in relation to territory.

The instrumentalization of the term development highlights the importance of territory in the meaning-making of a highly ideologically-charged concept such as development. What Awá *katza su* needs is not development but empowerment toward fortifying their territorial governance. Even, to Awá people, there is no more need to understand Western development. As Olindo states:

> I believe that now the development of the Awá people would be to work
> more about, not the issue of understanding development, but maybe rather
> focusing on the theme of territorial governance. Because territorial
> governance, I think, is the guarantee or it is what can help the sustainable
> development; that is, Awá can live producing what they produce.

Development is not the end but the means to achieve what Awá would define as *wat mɨlna*, buen vivir/good living. Within the realm of signification of Awá's territoriality,

wat mɨlna is seen as a process that demands understanding and engagement in the sustenance and revitalization of Awá's way of existence:

> Development is more like an activity, is to work with young people, more research with the elderly, more exchange. I understand development as further expanding the exchange of the four organizations with those of CAMAWARI, UNIPA, ACIPAP, and FCAE Ecuador. Then, we have to exchange experiences. How are they doing about traditional products? How are they conserving [nature]? How are they conserving the traditional language? How are they going about the environment, how is it? All that exchange among the four organizations. How good it would be!" (Eduardo Cantincus)

By situating the construction of the meanings of development and sustainability into the historical and ideological discursive realm of Awá's territoriality, the intrinsic ambiguity and contingent formulation of ostensibly universal/global environmental discourses are revealed. The discursive power of territory as a convergence node becomes evident as the enunciation of *katza su* brings with it the articulations of the elements configuring Awá's territoriality within which their organizations converse the overarching meaning of development into a functional concept. Through the process of translation, therefore, Awá submit development and sustainability to Awá organizations' needs of organizational strength to operationalize their political and symbolic control of their territories.

Scaling Down Climate Change

Climate change is a conceptual novelty in Awá's environmental language. According to Olindo, the first time the term "arrived" in the Awá Ecuadorian communities was in 2009. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organized workshops to socialize the concept of climate change among Awá leaders. Since then, different organizations have arrived to Awá communities with projects aim at mapping the risks of climate change at the level of their territories, or to implement adaptation, mitigation, and resilience actions.[61] In translating the meaning of climate change, interviewees pointed out that one of the difficulties in communicating climate change comes from an (over)emphasis on what Awá perceived as technical jargon:

> Olindo: As far as I have tried, and as I say, what technical words I have seen [being used], Awá people are not understanding what climate change is.
>
> Me: Do you consider climate change a technical word?
>
> O: Yes, I do. Because they also talk about the ozone cape. If you go with this technical term, the Awá people are going to understand different. [But] if I tell them, "Look brother, it's going to rain less," he is going to understand different than if I say ozone cape. For them [ozone cape] does not work. If I tell them "the river is going to dry," maybe they will understand better.

This statement is not a critique of the science behind climate change —in fact, Indigenous cosmovisions and climate science support each other in their beliefs and claims regarding the current environmental crisis (Eisenstadt & West, 2017). Neither is the reference to climate change technical character a refusal to learn how the science behind climate change works. The linguistic alienation denounced by Awá interviewees is a call for interrogating the spaces designed to communicate climate change, in particular when working with populations of nondominant languages.

Climate change, for instance, remains an alien concept to Awá communities, which complicates partnerships. According to Rider Pai, "NGOs bring in from the outside and land it here, but in the Indigenous context is not the same." "Landing" climate change —and development and sustainability for that matter— evokes foreignness and detachment and suggests a trembling approach between Awá organizations and communities and their possible national and international partners. The collaboration among Awá organizations and external institutions also converges into the territory, as Olindo's account illustrates:

I can name lots of NGOs that are [talking about climate change]. So, I said: Do you have territory? How are you going to say [to the Awá], "you have to cultivate in this way and keep it that way?" You do not have territory! Those who have territory are the [Indigenous peoples and nationalities and Afro-descendant peoples].

Situating ("landing") climate change into Awá's territoriality, therefore, demands thinking climate change as an integral phenomenon that involves not only physical transformations but also shifts in ways of thinking, and thus, ways of knowing and value

the world. Some translations of climate change to Awapit, such as *anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt*, "it is not like in past times, the territory has changed" (Eduardo), or *su an iparɨmtu wantus* "global warming" (Filiberto), mainly refer to physical/geographical changes experienced by Awá communities across the territory —flooding, droughts, or excessive rain. But also, and more relevant to comprehend Awá's translation of the term, climate change encompasses *anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt minmukas maishtɨt*, "changes in nature and changes in our thought" (Olindo). Furthermore, Florencio's definition of mitigation as "primarily that we are all aware of what we are doing in [the territory]. That would be to raise awareness," reaffirms the holistic character of Awá's understanding of climate change, as mitigation is core to the implementation of climate change related initiatives. A secluded scientific awareness may reify others' "nonscientific" knowledges and hamper collaboration and possibilities of elaborating more encompassing understandings of complex environmental phenomena such as climate disruption.

By scaling down the conversation of climate change, it is possible to elaborate ways of countering the effect of a climate change communication focused on the cybernetics of the scientific information being transmitted. In the Awá case, the foreignness of the "scientific" term not only might alienate participants but also, maybe inadvertently, position Awá as less competent to deal with climate change. This perceived lack of understanding of the specialized language about climate change (e.g., ozone cape) may foster among Awá individuals a dangerous self-deprecation avowed by some interviewees. Spaces of decision- and policy-making regarding climate change built upon this presumption, might erroneously demand nonscientific participants to make the effort to be informed or to have at least knowledge of the basic science behind climate

change (e.g., Kinsella, 2004). However, this posture risks advocating for a unidirectional effort may not demand from scientists to make the effort to be informed and get the basic knowledge about the communities with whom they are trying to communicate. Accordingly, communicating climate change entails exploring and understanding local ecocultural practices and knowledge, two intertwined elements that emplace conceptualizations of climate change. Looking at Awá's translation of climate change elucidates a phenomenological understanding of the term, which eventually relocates the power of naming what climate change is from/within the locus of the territory *katza su*.

Climate Change emplaced: a phenomenological construction of an environmental discourse.

Different from development and sustainability, whose recontextualization responds to Awá's needs regarding territoriality, climate change is not (at least not entirely yet) articulated to or thought of in territorial terms; one reason may be the recent introduction of the term. Climate change is not recontextualized but emplaced. Emplaced rhetoric "is discursive and symbolic communication purveyed through public statements, visual imagery, and embodied forms of activism that emphasize the physical, lived world of earthly existence, and the numinous experience many persons gain from substantive connections to nature" (Gorsevski, 2012, pp. 293-294). The emplacement of the meaning of climate change emerges from contrasting Awá's grounded lived idea of climate change as experienced by their communities in contrast to a more technical scientific-based notion of climate change.

In their translation of climate change, Awá representatives oscillate between place and space. To Awá people, climate change is not something remote, global, technical, or incomprehensible, but near, local, familiar, and intelligible. It is felt in place rather than projected from space. Changes are consequences of a disrupted living habitat instead of a reaction to a disorganized system. The Awá's process of making the meaning of climate change brings in a global perspective that is absent, or it is not explicit, in translating development and sustainability. In performing the translation of development and sustainability, Awá refer to war, drug trafficking, and the extractivist activities piercing their territories, building the interpretations of these terms in direct relation with, and hence, circumscribed by their territories' situation. When Awá translate climate change, however, a global perspective becomes explicit:

> With respect to climate change, especially within what we can call the
>
> global context, there is a total change. The last five years, the climate has
>
> changed a lot because the soil is warmer, the temperature is stronger. For
>
> example, in these sectors before it was a mild climate, now it is a very
>
> strong climate, the sun gets too hot. Also, the rains. There are seasons that
>
> it rains very strong and there are seasons when the water dries too fast.
>
> Then, it is seen that the climate change is totally changing the world[.]
>
> Because it is not only in Ecuador but everywhere else; climate change is
>
> seen in terms of climate change within the global context.

Florencio's attempt to construe the concept of climate change exemplifies the oscillation between place and space in the meaning making of climate change. On the one hand, "what we call the global context" is enunciated and "seen" by an erased subject that

experiences climate change "in Ecuador and everywhere." The change in the phantasmagoric global space is elusive while the local place manifests through warmer soils, stronger temperatures and rains, and droughts due to the fact that "the water dries too fast."

Therefore, the translation of climate change encompasses perspectival positions — "views from different worlds, rather than perspectives about the same world" (De la Cadena, 2015, p. 110). On the one hand, a space-based climate change builds its claims upon a detached definition of climate change deployed via a scientific language that starts from the causes (e.g., deterioration of the ozone cape). From this spatial view, Awá's territory becomes a "zone" or "region" on which climate change affectations can be traced and registered in colorful maps and well-crafted models. While this approach is legitimate and useful, the problem is that this detached representation of climate change presents itself as self-sufficient, which might explain Olindo's discontent with how climate change is addressed in meetings with NGOs. Furthermore, the hierarchical understanding of scale[62] risks rendering the local as secondary in the search for strategies to face environmental global problems.

A place-based climate change, on the other hand, derives from a phenomenological appraisal of the effects (not the causes) of climate change. Through the process of translation, it becomes evident that to Awá people place and body are the sources of a more holistic understanding of climate change that demands, once again, to direct attention to Awá's territoriality and to ways they recreate sacred and lineage

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[62] Scale is one of the four analytic tendencies in spatiality theory —the other three are territory, place, and network (William, p. 163)

relationships with land. Dwelling the territory is at the center of the re-creation and endurance of these relationships, which configure the "different world" from where Awá' make sense of climate change. In Olivio's statement, for instance, is possible to see how through dwelling Awá connect with their

> orality and history, through walking the ecological paths, and the jungle, all
> we have around our territory is life, as we have life, trees are life, trees are
> people, plants are people, leaves are people, and everything that exists in
> the ecosystem is life, it has life and that is why we have to take care of it,
> we have to protect it.

Yet, in translation something becomes precarious. The strict translation of "caminar/walk" to describe Awá's roundabouts in their territories is misleading. The word "dwelling" is a more accurate description of what Awá's "walking" accomplishes in terms of their environmental communication. As an ecocultural practice, dwelling is "thinking through places" (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013, p. 6) as it nurtures and awakes Awá's communicative senses that entangle the individual's mind and body with the territory.[63] Dwelling also entails moving from *sau* to *sau* ("plot to plot") respecting the iterative use of the land via their "cut down and rot" system of soil regeneration. This ecocultural practice differentiates Awá from the Indigenous people in the Amazonia, as they use the

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[63] This subtle but meaningful distinction between dwellers and walkers could be seen in Cepek's (2011) account on the Cofán people in the Ecuadorian Amazonia. He noticed that the same individual would dwell or walk the territory depending on the kind of role s/he would perform. Individuals were dwellers of the place when performing ecocultural practices such as hunting, fishing, or cropping, which help Cofán to reproduce a sense of community as the result of those activities are enjoyed and shared by every member of the community. On the contrary, individuals just walk the space when performing their role of "monitors" collecting data for a conservation project. Cofán subjectivity in relation with the territory was mediated by the discourse of conservation and, thus, as denizens of the space of conservation they walk instead of dwelling the territory.

"cut down and burn" system (Bisbicús et al., 2010, p. 30). Furthermore, dwelling is activity

linked to Awá's instrumental notion of development. As Rider asserts,

> if there is a development project, taking into account the cultural theme, a
>
> work is done *allá*; it is more like a practice, right? It is more about practice,
>
> it is about being there, together, walking in the jungle.

Rider's elaboration of the concepts also directs attention to the web of meanings

implicated in the translations of climate change by Awá representatives:

Me: How would elders understand climate change?

Rider Pai: I would think that we have to work hard on the cultural issue.

The experiences, the knowledge of the elders. The elders are those who

manage *time*. You have to talk to them [to know] why is that change

happening. (emphasis added)

Another element that is lost in translation stems from the nuances in the term

climate change itself. In English, for instance, "weather" and "climate" are two

semantically different words that describe two distinct phenomena (although this

distinction is also problematic in the English language).[64] In Spanish, however, this

distinction does not exist. The word "climate" translates to "clima." Clima in Spanish has

two connotations, one related to weather patterns in long periods of time, as in climate

change; the other connotation of "clima" is simply weather. Hence, the Spanish "clima"

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[64] Priests (2016) explains, "There has also been a popular confusion between the terms 'weather' and 'climate.' Weather is the current temperature and condition at a particular point in time; climate is the average or typical pattern of weather over a longer period of time. Weather is understood as 'natural,' something that develops on an immense scale and that is not subject to human influence. These attributes may have contributed to the perception that climate change, like weather, is largely uncontrollable" (p. 48-49).

encapsulates these connotations and, in the process, blurs the distinction between weather and climate. Moreover, colloquially, weather also translates to "tiempo," and the Spanish word "tiempo" is also "time" as in the time-space relationship. It is within this realm of signification that Rider's assertion, "The elders are those who manage time," must be understood.

The invocation of a phenomenological knowledge of climate change challenges an exclusionary deployment of specialized space-based jargon. In the case of Awá's traditional ecological knowledge, the ethical principle of respect is at the center of their relationships with the mountain and the spirits, actants, and beings that exist in the *katza su*. Thus, disrespect causes the changes of time and what makes more difficult to "manage time." Time as the essence of memory and stories, but also as weather and climate managed via traditional rituals of equilibrium:

> I was once talking to some of the elders of the Awá people… because they
> already knew that more sickness was coming and that is why they said,
> "we have to take care of the forest." (Olindo)

The incorporation of an Awá's traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about climate change should not be done as an account that disjoints body and place, but as an equally important knowledge able to explain the causes, and above all, to help in the understanding of the sequels attributed to climate change as a consequence of disrespecting the mountain. Sickness, flooding, and droughts are some of the symptoms of a broader cosmological unbalance. Rituals are essential to maintain the equilibrium via the communication among the four worlds conforming Awá's cosmology. Unfortunately, due to the harsh circumstance shaping Awá's territory, the elders have not been able to

balance the territory—as they cannot dwell in it—due to the presence of all the illegal armed forces operating in their territories. As Rider cogently states,

> [By living well] we understand, first, the territory: to have our land, within our territory to use or practice our culture. Then, also there is respect for the society in which we live together. So, if one has everything in the territory, then one can live well. If not, it is very difficult. And regarding the [bad] conditions of the water… We cannot hunt, cannot go to the road because there is death. The war has hurt us a lot.

The possibility or not to perform dwelling —because "there is death"— is linked to the changes in Awá's territory that are not limited to sudden shifts in their territories' time and place. Eduardo's response to "What change has there been? There has been a change due to conflicts, violence, all of these [illegal] actors, antipersonnel mines; there have been dead, all that," suggests that, although not directly linked to a disrupted climate, these changes are also influential factors in the phenomenological understanding of climate change insofar as they alter and hinder Awá's possibilities of reconstituting their sacred and lineage relationships with their territories, which according to their cosmology, eventually change the climate of *katza su.*

This phenomenological foundation of Awá's meaning-making of climate change is intimately connected to the identification and recognition of an alternative, but complementary, source of knowledge from which climate change is defined. Landing climate change, thus, emplacing it, requires a phenomenological language that represents Awá's cosmovision and empowers Awá as subject of legitimate knowledge.

Relocating power and knowledge in climate change discourse.

Within the cosmo-environment of *katza su*, nature is an active participant in the construction of Awá's knowledges, practices, and identities. Beyond the semantic interpretation, translation as a discursive practice elucidates how climate change is both an epistemological and ethical dilemma embedded in the politics of scale featuring space/place and local/global dialectics. In the case of Awá people, however, translation is also a matter of the geopolitics of (environmental) knowledge (Mignolo, 2007). The question of who has the knowledge to understand and define what climate change is, becomes relevant insofar as the inquiry relocates power. Olindo Cantincus' assertion is representative to the power/knowledge intricacies deployed in communicating climate change:

> I think that we do understand climate change... or [Indigenous] peoples and nationalities they knew that. Because they already knew. That is why they did not want to… they do not want [companies] to destroy their *katza su*. That is why [the elders] did not want large companies to enter and cut the wood. They already knew that climate change was going to come about [if we do that].

Elders are owners of a cultural science that allows them to understand the territory through their relations to the medicinal plants; they also tune in with the spirits of the mountain who communicate to them the changes in their ecologies (Bisbicús et al., 2010). To understand the changes that have occurred to the territory in relation to climate change, Rider Pai asserts:

We must do that through the research of the elders. They are the ones who

have the final word in what is the factor of that problem [of climate

change] that has been taking place [in the territory].

As source of Awá's traditional knowledge, the elders and their stories are organic moves

that embrace not only the transformations engendered by climate change —less water in

the river or unexpected variabilities in rain— but above all drastic changes in the self of

Awá and their "way of thinking." Hence, a central question regarding the geopolitics of

knowledge implicated in Awá's translation of climate change is: why has Awá elders'

knowledge regarding climate change been so difficult to legitimize?

To answer this question, and other that could emerge in the realm of climate

change, it is necessary to simultaneously attend to the institutional structure of

environmental governance and the process of acculturation experienced by Awá people.

First, addressing the institutionalized practices does not entail only looking at "the 'rules

of the game' but the habituated and regularized 'rules-in-use' maintained by human

practice and investment performed over time" (Peet & Watts, 2004, p. 25). Within the

institutional structure of environmental governance, the socialization of climate change

seems to reproduce a top-down dynamic of knowledge dissemination (in a cybernetic

fashion) that, in the same way as with other overarching concepts, reveals how expertise

can be "exercised as a rhetorical device and affect interpretations of what could and

should be done on behalf of extrahuman nature" (Bernacchi & Peterson, 2016, pp. 76–

77). As Priest (2016) suggests, "climate communicators should give thought of which

leaders might be influential with particular groups" (p. 8). In the case of Awá

communities, elders' knowledges —mayores/men and mayoras/women— are

fundamental and must be incorporated into spaces where climate change is addressed. For instance, Filiberto Pascal states:

> Practically, the elders have realized that time has changed a lot. For example, the lack of rain, the arrival of summer; they have realized that. They have said that climate change is for those reasons or sometimes they do not know, but it is not because they do not know, because they know [what climate change is].

Awá's interpretation of climate change as an environmental phenomenon also directs the discussion towards the emerging concerns on subjectivity and representation; both interlinked within the webs of the geopolitics of knowledge and the hierarchies of climate justice (Carmin & Agyeman, 2011). In a meeting with Ministry of the Environment and the United Nations, Olindo remembers:

> We also said, "how will the participation of the people be," because a discussion of climate change ... then they said, "no, it is that the big [countries], those who have done environmental damage have to reward, at least they have to contribute to the developing countries.

Second, the increasing process of acculturation have hindered the performance of ecocultural practices; further, the possibility of performing these rituals in the future is at risk insofar as Awá inter-generational communication features increasing disconnects. As Eduardo sadly affirms,

> young people did not take advantage of the elders [who] have already taken the wisdom and carried it and they already have it. If we do not believe in the elders' spiritual knowledge, [this knowledge] has already

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been lost. [The young Awá] have not been able to discover this knowledge.

Furthermore, the gender dimension of climate change is central to promote a more encompassing definition of climate change as the environmental crisis in general, and climate change in particular, has the most burden on women and children. For instance, women are less engaged in politics, and their source of labor is affected by climate change; thus, reducing women's economic contribution to the household (Spitzner, 2009). As Olindo recalls, women and children vulnerability has been discussed among Ecuador-Colombia transboundary Indigenous organizations:

Once we did a workshop where, on the issue of climate change, the Éperas[65] asked, "who can be most affected by climate change? Women and children are more affected." And I see it that way too. Because [women and children] sometimes are closer [to the affected zones]. For example, let's talk about a flood; those who can save themselves are men, but women very little[.] And Awá people, kind of see it that way; those who have more resistance are men; and women could be much more affected. Then, there is not only one way [to understand climate change]… I once said that we must try to make women understand why we should all be protected. We all should understand what is this thing of climate change.

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[65] Éperas are Indigenous people also recognized as "transboundary ethnicities" by both the Ecuadorian and Colombian governments (Senplades & DNP, 2014)

Approaching Awá's understanding of climate change demands paying attention to their environmental imaginary —memories, inter-generational knowledge, stories, ecocultural meanings— implicated in the process of translation. Insisting on the situatedness of individual and collective efforts performed and enacted in-places has the potential to scale down climate change discussions and debates. This scalar/discursive move would allow revisiting taken for granted concepts, such as those that are the focus of the present study. The dialogue between cybernetic and phenomenological ways of communicating climate change would help to envision political formations based on plurality and new ethical and political connections. This dialogue could also help us understand Rider's more than pertinent questions: "how do [climate] change, change? How does it come? Where is it coming from?"

Synopsis: Translating Global Nature

Translation entails a constant process of disturbing language and rethinking meaning. In this chapter I explored ways La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) translates the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works. By situating Awá organizations' translation processes within Awá's transnational territoriality, I seek to demonstrate the materiality and symbolicity of the nation-state border, as well as uncovered unequal power relations and contested legitimation of knowledge. Awá's translation of global environmental discourse seems to recontextualize development and sustainability to respond to the needs of operationalizing Awá organizations' symbolic and political control of the territory. Also, interviewees' attempts to translate climate change appear to emplace this concept; a rhetorical move that suggests a

phenomenological place-base conceptualization of climate change that complements, while questioning, the space-based notion of climate change featured in Western scientific definitions of this concept.

Translation is an always-already contested process and a historicist inquiry that brings in the geopolitics informing the use of language as well as directs attention to the politics of scale at play in the production of univocality and legitimation of Western scientific knowledge (WSK) over traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). The exploration of Awá's processes of translation illustrates how meaning is situated and could function as a subaltern political strategy and a pragmatic way of environmental communication. The recontextualization of development and sustainability is a strategic (although maybe unconscious) move that Awá representatives make to contribute to the consolidation of Awá's territoriality. An allegedly global or universal science is at the same time a situated knowledge. The way Awá emplace climate change reveals the need for elucidating the competing ways of knowing and valuing the world, which are embedded in the construction of the meaning of climate change as it oscillates between space and place. However, while the main goal of the interviews was directly inquiring about sustainability, development, and climate change, the responses brought forward a new layer of analysis that explicitly addresses an ecological dimension in Awá's identity formation, always within Awá's territoriality and in relation to the territory *katza su*. In the next chapter, I explore Awá's ecocultural identities in relation to their neighboring communities of peasant mestizos and Afrodescendants within the geopolitics configuring the Ecuador-Colombia border zone.

Chapter 6 Beyond the Cultural Self: Awá's Ecocultural Identities

Almost every time, when I want to remember wonder and childhood, the image of my body swinging on a vine crosses my mind vividly clear. My friends and I were trying to reach the other shore of a river. I can hear the water crashing against black rocks around which ephemeral foam rippled before disappearing to continue its endless flow toward a tributary of the magnificent Amazon River. I remember climbing a tree and feeling on the palm of my hand the moss living on its bark; moist, furry, slippery, bright and green. The smells were pungent and sweet as they combined the aromas of an imperceptible steam coming from the fertile wet soil and the acrid odor of a nearby gas station recently built on one side of the road. We had to go around the building to enter to my friends' and I's secret place as the gas station blocked what had been the path to our space of awe —the river shores; the shiny and opaque multifarious rocks; the thick canopy of branches stretching in manifold ways and adorned by multicolor leaves. Refilling my memories with what now seems to be a dream, I feel once again the fear of looking at a whirl from above. I was sat on a branch protruding over the river, some of its leaves swiftly touching the water. From this spatial point of view, I observed the infinite watery spin. My eyes were dragged to a leaf floating down, gently; to then, abruptly, be captured by the frenetic trip of the current forming the rapids of the river. Swallowed by and lost into the black hole formed by the circular pulling water; the leave was gone. Staring at the whirl's rhythmical circular movement, I contemplated my childhood reflected in the dark waters. This experience has nurtured my ecological memory, and I believe, in many ways, the embodied emotions that have influenced who I am, how I live in the world, and maybe, why I ask the questions I ask.

Memories weaved in stories are part of a history inextricably and essentially

linked to the ecologies within which they take place (Aparicio, 2017; Fernández-

Llamazares & Cabeza, 2016.; Kaufman, Ewing, Hyle, Montgomery, & Self, 2006;

O'Donoghue, 2006). Awá's identities rely on their capacity to re-create vital rituals and

narrations that weave their relationships with the sacred, lineage, and land, which support

Awá's *katza su*. The ecologies nurturing Awá's cosmovision rekindle the web of

meanings that informs the binational condition of Awá Indigenous peoples. Territory is a

constitutive part of Awá's identity. Simultaneously, Awá's identities and practices

constitute the material and symbolic existence of *katza su*. Awá's constitutive

relationships exceed the human realm and embrace mountains, animals, plants, and

rivers; all of which influence the constitution of Awá's ecocultural identities. These

identities are inseparably bound to the wellbeing and health of their territories and the

material and spiritual *awá,* who dwell the mountain and its cloud forest. To understand

the formation of an ecocultural identity is necessary to re-position nature as essential to

the process of sense making, and ultimately, of identity.

In this chapter, I aim to widen the conceptual scope of identity by investigating

Awá's ecocultural identities and discursive positionings that emerge from the translation

of and engagement with development, sustainability, and climate change within the

territoriality of *katza su*. A conventional approach to politics of identity —that has given

rise to the politics of identity displayed as a battle ground of political correctness—

obscures the relevance of the ecological dimension in the formation of identity. Further,

the focus on a cultural identity —in this study, race, class, and ethnicity— and their

intersections, moves our attention away from understanding and connecting to the eco's

realm of signification of the self and its embodied representation as always ecological. Therefore, I explore Awá's ecological subjectivities and environmental identities to understand how the constitution of ecocultural identities informs (inter)cultural relations. I start my argument presenting the historical situation of Awá's territoriality and how it influences the emergent ecocultural identity of Awá, mestizos, and Afros. After re-centering territory as the nonhuman actor in the formation of Awá's ecocultural identity, I demonstrate how while race, class, and ethnicity intersect to shape Awá's identity, within Awá's territoriality the ecological dimension of identity becomes salient, and even more, paramount to understand the discursive positioning among Awá individuals as well as Awá communities in relation to mestizo and Afro populations. I argue that Awá ascribe ecocultural identities on the basis of individuals and groups environmental actions and perceived ecological implications for *katza su.*

Bio- and Geo-graphies of Poverty and the Constitution of Ecocultural Identities

The power of remembering engenders possibilities of creating an evocative aura that isolates moments from our existence of the present; albeit momentarily, this isolation may enliven emotions of ecologies that instill in us deep and meaningful connections to particular places. Yet, as the invasive smell of gasoline in my story keeps reminding me, environments also are interested spaces and places and a material manifestation of histories of resistance, colonization, and drastic transformations. The ecologies and environments in which Awá interact along with mestizos and Afro communities are no different.

Historically situated conditions inform the relationships and discursive positionings of Awá, mestizo, and Afro populations. On the one hand, Awá and

Afrodescendants share a colonial history of oppression that is typical of the formation of the nation-states in Latin America. In Colombia, the original geographic location of Awá people, the growing presence of black populations in nearby proximity to Awá communities resulted from the Vientres Freedom Act of 1821, which culminated in the abolition of slavery in 1852, as well as from cimarronismo.[66] Awá's binational condition is intimately linked to their relations to Afro communities as well. Between 1920 and 1940, Bisbicus, Paí, and Paí (2010), three Awá elders, write:

> The growing tensions between Awá and black communities and the
>
> difficult living conditions caused by the marginalization of the State [gave
>
> rise] to a great migration of Awá families who, crossing the San Juan
>
> River (Mayasquer), came to the other side of the river, to the Ecuadorian
>
> territory, in search of land and better life options. (pp. 22-23)

Awá and Afro populations were "placed there" by the state, and both currently are fighting for the recognition of ancestral land (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011; Senplades & DNP, 2014). Instead of facilitating the resolution of land issues, however, the intervention of the State and the lack of national or local policies to help defining the territorial boundaries of minority populations, have aggravated territorial struggles and frictions between Awá and Afros communities.

Similarly, the role of the State was more harmful than beneficial to the relationships between Awá and mestizo communities. [67] While mestizos were also

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[66] Cimarronismo (marronage) refers to the Indian slaves who escaped from the Spaniards. By the end of the 1530s, cimarronismo began to allude mainly to African slave fugitives.

[67] Mestizaje emphasizes the "inherent cultural-racial mixture of Latin America peoples[.] In the 1920s and 1930s mestizaje became a central means of interpreting the national character of the political apparatus of the state. The idea that all Latina Americans shared in Indigenous and European heritage and that Indigenous heritage was central to making the Americas distinct gain increasing commonsense force. In this context, the

"placed there" by the State, they came with the law on their side. Via cooperatives, national governments allocated land for agriculture and rearing cattle, activities that up to this day are mainly carried out by mestizo peasants.[68] In their reports and personal accounts, this process is perceived and documented by Awá communities as an ongoing systematic land dispossession of Awá territories. One of the consequences of this dispossession is that it aggravates the process of acculturation by deepening family disintegration that ends up in the deterioration of Awá's roots in the land. In addition, threats of violence and forced displacement drastically have altered Awá's Indigenous traditional ways of survival and resistance; hence, aggravating their marginalized condition.

National histories have drawn the contours of the bio- and geo-graphies of poverty along the Ecuador-Colombia border. This socio-ecological situation has had, and still has, a profound influence on the formation of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities and the interrelations among them. One of the conflicts among these populations results from the incorporation of disadvantaged communities into the dynamics of market-based work relationships. The tensions that arise from the class hierarchy that emerges among community individuals are not exclusive of these populations. The generation of low-wage work force is, in fact, a pattern that defines the logic of a racial capitalism that fuels itself by land-grabbing and expansive extractivism, two dispossession dynamics usually advanced in resource-rich Indigenous and Afrodescendant territories by transnational companies (Aparicio, 2017; Dávalos &

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possibilities of indigeneity as embodiable topoi grew exponentially, helping make a national self that included indigeneity while excluding Indians" (Olson, 2014, p. 178).

[68] I make this assertion on the basis of my interviews and Awá documents. However, a more up-to-date census should be conducted to back up this demographic information.

Albuja, 2014; Gómez-Barris, 2017). As a corollary of a process of increasingly dependent on salary-based economic activities, Awá's ecological subjectivity recedes to give way to an economic subject who fuels the treadmill of a capitalist economic system and positions Awá as cheap labor. Awá conceive this system as invasive as the "penetration" of the economic market system brings more disadvantages than benefits (Camawari, 2002, p. 32). Therefore, the observed intrusiveness of the government, as well as the concomitant shift in Awá's subjectivities, seem to foster a favorable scenario for environmental conflicts between non-Indigenous and Awá communities and organizations.

Land dispossession not solely has engendered the conditions for Awá's victimhood associated with involuntary processes of acculturation but also land-grabbing has radically transformed Awá's subjectivity. For instance, some Awá families have sold their land to agricultural cooperatives; landless Awá have become part of salary-based economic relations. Some Awá men have become "cuidadores" (caretakers) of mestizo peasants' farms or worker in nearby agro-companies. A repercussion of this dynamic is the incorporation of landless Awá into "peon-patrón/laborer-patron" relationships while Awá women end up working in mestizos' households as domestic workers (Camawari, 2002, p. 20). However, while race, ethnicity, and class are important cultural categories in Awá's relationships with Afros and mestizos, they are not the salient ones in these interactions.

The ecological dimension of identity acquires relevance within Awá's territoriality. Awá ascribe an identity to other Awá, as well as to Afros and mestizos, not only based on their race, ethnicity, or class, but primarily in relation to the consequences

of their practices on the ecology of *katza su*. These effects, however, should not be reduced to a misleading causal relationship between poverty and environmental degradation that may obscure the pernicious profit-driven capitalist economic system that engenders the conditions for environmental conflicts and damage (Allier, 2016). Within the discursive realm of Awá's territoriality, nonhuman actants become fundamental in the construction of ecocultural identities, relationships, and discursive positionings among disenfranchised Awá, mestizo, and Afro populations target of and affected by invasive extractive activities developing at the binational border. To investigate the formation of these ecocultural identities, I first introduce the nonhuman actor, territory *katza su*, which influences the constitution of these populations' ecocultural identities. After re-centering the territory in my analysis, I illustrate how two dialectics —inside-outside and respect-disrespect— work in the discursive positioning of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities as both unwholesome and restorative in relation to Awá's territory and within their territoriality.

The More-than-human in the Constitution of Ecocultural Identities

Katza su is the geopolitical locus of enunciation that frames the formation of Awá's ecocultural identities and that influences their relations with Afros' and mestizos' ecocultural identities. As historical situated subjects of nature, the identities of these populations are cultural but above all ecological. Ecocultural lenses direct attention to the ways non- and more-than-human nature—e.g., mountain, animals, rivers, forest— constitute and enter the realm of politics of identity displayed by Awá, mestizos, and Afros. The enunciation of *katza su* elucidates how nonhuman forces influence the discursive positioning of mestizos and Afros in relation to Awá's territory and within

Awá's territoriality. The Awá "Myth of Creation" is a representative example of the relevance of nonhuman (f)actors in the formation of identity. A more detailed ecocritical analysis of the myth requires extensive research and insight on Awá mythology, which goes beyond the scope of this study. Besides, the story contains elements that undoubtedly are additions after the Spanish colonization (e.g., firearms) and the imposition of Christianity (e.g., devil or god). I use the myth, however, as a discursive entry point to illustrate the formations of ecocultural identities and the current interactions among Awá, mestizos, and Afros. The Myth of Creation narrates the origin of Awá, mestizos, and Afros. After winning a fight with the Devil,

> God ran to get white soil that was two feet deep into the ground and he
> began to make people. God molded three dolls, and when he finished, they
> turned black. The devil molded the dolls but of his own race.[*] Soon, god
> sent the dolls to bathe in a water stream advising them not to bathe for a
> long time. The first one that entered did not pay attention to him, and he
> bathed more than the indicated time; this was mestizo. The second doll
> entered, the water stream was already drying; this was Awá. The last one
> could barely wash his hands and feet; this was black. (FCAE, 2016, p.
> 127. To read the full story, see Appendix F.)

An ecocritical (Stibbe, 2015) interpretation of the mythological threads deployed by this myth allows to pinpoint some key elements informing the construction and

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[*] "Race" is a literal translation from the original text. Considering the well-studied influence of Christianity in the (re)formulation of some Indigenous peoples' cosmologies (e.g., Mircea Eliade), the statement "his own race" may be interpreted as a resemantization of the colloquial Christian saying "in his image and likeness" when referring to God's creation of man. But, again, a better understanding of this interpretation would require in-depth research on Awá cosmology in relation to Christianity and the ongoing process of acculturation, which exceeds the scope of this study.

discursive positioning of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities: a. access and use of natural resources; and, b. an expanded notion of respect that encompasses both the human and more-than-human worlds. In my interpretation, water is a metaphor for resources. The relations established by the "three dolls" with water reveal an essential(izing) trait that Awá ascribe to mestizos and Afros. In the story, the mestizo used more water taking advantage of time and resources. This enactment is a sign of disrespect by mestizos, and as such, it is an affront to the Awá's principle of respect, essential to maintain balanced and harmonious relations with the territory *katza su*. Contemporary relations between Awá and mestizos seem to reproduce this perception of disrespect. Besides, the myth positions mestizos as those who took advantage; which is also perceived by Awá as being reproduced through the benefits mestizos receive from the system (e.g., governments' allocation of land to peasant communities).

The Afro's relationship with water, on the other hand, was disadvantaged as his time and resource became scarce. Relationships with the nonhuman water position Awá communities closer to Afro communities because both experienced inequity in the access to the resource. The bio-graphical genealogy pictured by the myth elucidates a common ground between Awá and Afros insofar as both "protect their cultures and their environments" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 101) against mining and other transnational companies and illegal armed actors who affect protected areas located in Indigenous reservations and collective territories of African descent, therefore, violating their rights of ethnic minorities. Further, Awá's and Afro's relationships with their territories are very similar insofar as both populations endow their ancestral lands with agency and vital power as it is the space in which the self evolves and creates (Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor,

2011; Senplades & DNP, 2014). Therefore, this mythological closeness persists in Awá-Afro contemporary relationships and manifests in their quest toward strengthening their sacred and lineage bonds to the land.

Enlarging the cultural by entering in dialogue with the ecological illuminates another side of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' relationships. An ecological perspective on identity focuses on ecocultural identities that emerge when territory, a more-than-human participant with agency and voice, is included as a meaningful actor in the positioning of Afros and mestizos in relation to Awá. Therefore, the identities being negotiated through interactions are ecocultural in relation to *katza su* and within Awá's territoriality. The myth illuminates the intrinsic historicity of these three populations' relationships and suggests (and warns us of) some stereotypes Awá continue to have about mestizos and Afros. These preconceptions influence their ecocultural interactions. In the next section, I further explore these relationships and demonstrate the saliency of the ecological dimension in forming identities and how attending to ecocultural identities constituted within/from this dimension contributes to build a more comprehensive approach to Awá's intra-relations among Awá, as well as to Awá's inter-relations with mestizos and Afros.

Ecocultural Dialectics within Awá's Territoriality

Dialectics facilitate looking at interactions as mutually constituted relations that move in tandem across multiple historical temporalities and locations. Awá's enunciation of *katza su* creates territoriality as a field of discourse within which meanings and subjectivities are constructed in relation to the convergence node of territory. Two dialectics emerge within Awá's territoriality. The insider-outsider dialectic stresses non-

Awá actors' relations *with* the Awá's *territory katza su;* the respect-disrespect dialectic

refers to both Awá and non-Awá actors' relations *within* Awá's *territoriality.* Territory

and territoriality ground these dialectics and inform discourses Awá deploy to position

some groups with higher status and more resources than others. The insider-outsider and

respect-disrespect dialectics work in tandem to construct unwholesome or restorative

ecocultural identifications which are based on the impacts their economic practices have

on Awá's territory at the levels of the individual, community, organizations, and society.

Insider-outsider dialectic.

The insider-outsider dialectic helps to understand Awá's construction of non-Awá

ecocultural identities, which I refer as *inter*-ecocultural positionalities. A political

ecological context featuring contested territorial boundaries, the extension of the

agricultural frontier, and the loss of land due to the "legal" grabbing of land by

transnational enterprises, informs Awá's ecological and cultural positions in relation to

other populations. At the individual and community level, Awá-Mestizo ecocultural

relations are conflictive. In 2007, for instance, Ecuadorian Awá protested against a

government's land management measure that, according to Awá's accounts, would give

operators of timber and oil palm plantations access to a portion of their territories in the

coastal province of Esmeraldas, "jeopardizing Awá's internationally recognized efforts to

practice sustainable forestry" (Alvaro, 2007, p. 1). In Colombia, Rosalba Pai, Senior

Councilor of UNIPA (Indigenous Unit of Awá People), points out that the Colombian

State's neglect has facilitated an increment on the invasion of lands by "big companies

like Astorga Barela, Palmas de Campesinos; [invasion] of Afro-descendants, which is

Copalmaco" (V2). In these scenarios, tensions among populations elucidate harmful

ecocultural identities ascribed to mestizos and Afros by Awá people as they perceive

non-Awá groups or individuals as disrespectful and damaging to their territories. Besides,

the insider-outsider dialectic renders non-Awá suspicious because, as Filiberto Pascal

accuses, "[outsiders] are observing what [Awá] have in the field [territory]. Then,

outsiders are very observant, and from the road, they see what they have and what they

do not have."

Rosalba Paí's account is also representative of two discursive positionings

deployed by Awá organizations in their documents as well as by Awá elites in the

interviews. First, when referring to non-Awá individuals or groups in relation to Awá's

territory, Awá equate Afros and mestizos' identities into one unwholesome ecocultural

identity. One of the consequences of this ecocultural homogenization is that it dismisses

the different histories that inform Awá's relations to these neighboring populations.

Regarding Awá-Afro ecocultural relations, homogenization erases their shared ethnic and

racial struggles and fights against the uses and abuses of their territories by both, the

Ecuadorian and Colombian states as well as by Awá's and Afro's common conditions of

exploitation, oppression, and discrimination perpetuated by the consolidation of these

nations states. Homogenization does nothing but reaffirming Awá's perceptions of

mestizos colonos/settlers[69] who "through different forms of deception and out of interest

to intensify the illicit crops, appropriate our [Awá] lands" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 14).

In contemporary Latin America, mestizo represents the settler, the privileged, the

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[69] The word "colono" literally translates "colonist." In Spanish, the word itself contains the historical roots
that inform Awá-Mestizos conflictive relations —colonist/colonialism— My use of the word "settler" tries
to convey the same historical conflictive relations that have been explored in postcolonial and decolonial
scholarship written in English language.

embodied manifestation of colonial times (Paz & Santí, 1993). In relation to Awá *katza su*, Awá's ascription of a singular unwholesome ecocultural identity to Afro and mestizo communities— homogenization— aggravates Awá's signification process of Afros' and mestizos' bodies, as they become the fetish, and thus, the main reason for Awá's environmental situation.

The second discursive positioning is constructed via what Amhed calls fetishization, "the transformation of the wound into an identity" (p. 32). In terms of identity, the problem with fetishism, she states, is that "cuts the wound off from a history of 'getting hurt' or injured. It turns the wound into something that simply 'is' rather than something that has happened in time and space" (p. 32). Awá's homogenized construction of mestizo and Afros into one unwholesome ecocultural identity erases history, turning the individual bodies of Afro and mestizo populations into ahistorical "objects of feelings." This erasure obscures Awá-Afro shared colonial histories and dismisses Awá-Mestizo shared colonized subjectivities, as mestizaje is also a product of the violence that shaped and colored Latin America's history.

Remembering the Myth of Creation, it is worth noting that the story highlights the significance of the nonhuman in the formations of Awá, mestizos and Afro's identity. Awá's consideration of an active participation and felt inclusion of a more-than-human actors, a.k.a. *katza su*, ecologizes the most prominent materiality of race, the skin. For instance, Awá's mythological origin grants the nonhuman (f)actor, soil, an essential role in the formation of a spectrum of skin color that emerges from the contact zone created by Awá, mestizos, and Afros' corporeal interaction with water. Awá's and Afro's darker skins are the bodily representation that links these populations to common historical

experiences featuring conditions of unequal access to and/or distribution of resources, as well as systematic oppression and marginalization. Awá's primarily approach to a black skin is not race, as they share with Afros, although in different intensities, the colors alienated by mainstream history. On the contrary, in the myth, Mestizos' lighter skin color results from taking more time and resources to clean his body from its original black color. Water connects and interacts with the surface of the skin whitening it. It might be that Awá's signification of mestizos' color of skin is less the violence that underlies the mixture of White settlers and Indigenous people, and more the representation and embodiment of mestizos' relations with nature. Mestizo's lighter skin revives Awá's memories of exploitation and abuse that reassert Awá's (and Afros') colonial afterlife.

Ethnicity, race, and class intercalate between Awá, mestizos, and Afros cultural relations; however, when entering Awá's territoriality, cultural categories converge into the node of territory in which materialities, such as the skin color, are inflected and re-signified by the ecology enveloping it. For instance, Awá relate to an already scarce resource. In the myth, "water stream was already drying"— and observe both the abuse and unfairness of others' relations to water. Therefore, Awá ecologize skin via the enunciation of the territory. In Awá territoriality's ecocultural discursive realm, *katza su*, the logical opposition between human/nonhuman is refuted by the relational ontologies constituting Awá's cosmological understanding of the world. Awá's consubstantial relations at the core of their animist ontology construct territory as the extension of self on which companies' economic activities, through the work of Afros and mestizos, leave an "impression" that fuels and "accumulates emotions over time, as a form of affective

value" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 14). Rider denounces that outsiders "pour poison in the rivers, in the gorges." Eduardo corroborates this by stating that those who arrive to the territory "intoxicate" the land because "before [their arrival] there was not poison" affecting Awá's territory. The poisoning becomes part of the "invironment" (Bell, 2004) and pollutes

> the air we breathe and the sources of water (rivers) for consumption[.] The
> animals we hunt are gone because they no longer have "pepa"(food) to eat.
> The decrease of fauna and the animals that are part of our daily diet, is a
> clear reflection of the reduction of the area in which animals live. [They]
> are death by poisoning, which generates a high deficit of animal protein
> [in our diet] and generally affects the quality of our food. (Camawari et al.,
> 2012, p. 175)

Within Awá's territoriality emerges an attached environmental identity, or ecocultural identity. And thus, the color of skin reminds the poisoned water, the land depleted, the river sick, the animals that fled; the bodies of Afros or mestizos working for companies that cut trees to plant palms, evoke a seized territory. On their skins of mestizos and Afros rests the wet dust of a cloud forest that violently projects itself when trees fall and covers their bodies.

Awa's territory is hurt and wounded and needs to be healed. External forces —the companies, the cooperatives, the armed forces, the drugs cartels— have invaded the territory. In their documents, Awá organizations understand the process of consolidating the territory *katza su* as "saneamiento/sanitation," that is, "the process of studies and purchases of the farms from the mestizos that are inside" Awá's territories (Camawari,

2002, p. 12, nota 2). In my interpretation, "sanitation" converges into the node of territory to respond to Awá's needs to strengthen their territoriality in two ways. On the one hand, sanitation refers to a legal process aimed to recover the land, and thus, it reaffirms the political control of the territory. On the other hand, sanitation evokes the urge of Awá people to counter acculturation in search for revitalizing the symbolic control of the territory. More relevant to my argument, however, is that the use of sanitation reveals an ecological dimension of Awá's avowed and ascribe identity as well. From an ecocritical perspective, "sanitation" functions as a rhetorical trope that positions mestizos and Afros as a homogeneous group who "sicken" the territory, and ultimately, Awá's health and well-being. For instance, Eduardo denounces, "oil spill is human affectation, but that is not our fault, people arriving from Putumayo[,] they are stealing the oil, all that, the rains are over, the fish, all that." Therefore, based on the damage outsiders have caused to *katza su*, Awá construct their restorative ecocultural identity by contrasting it with that of mestizo peasants or Afros, a.k.a. outsiders, who cause harm to the territory. Furthermore, Awá position themselves as not responsible for those harmful activities associated to the Western (invasive) notions of development.

At the organizational level, the insider-outsider dialectic plays out in the framing of decentralize autonomous government (DAG), national governments, agents of international cooperation, academic institutions and other public or private entities as "external actors" (FCAE, 2017, p. 25) associated with

economic interests of capitalist nature that negatively affect the elements

present in the Katza Su: forests, wood, water, animals, plants, and culture.

They also install their capitalist logic for the implementation of road,

energy and communications infrastructure megaprojects; exploitation of

minerals, oil, and its derivatives; monocultures such as oil palm and

sugarcane for biofuels, hearts of palm, cocoa, among other varieties.

(Camawari et al., 2012, p. 206)

The use of "external" highlights a reference to the outside or outer part of something. The

word "external" suggests insider-outsider dialectic in reference to the territory. Thus,

external actors are seen as a threat to Awá political and symbolic control of the territory

—territoriality— that frames their relationships to neighboring populations. Mestizo

organizations, NGOs and the government, for instance, represent these alien ideas, and

therefore, their unwholesome ecocultural practices are expected by Awá people because

they enact an ecocultural identity informed by Western ideas of development deployed

and reproduce by non-Awá societies. Awá's ascription of an ecocultural identity to these

external actors also involves the illegal armed forces and the drug cartels operating in

Awá's territory, and with whom Awá communities experience deathly territorial

conflicts.

The complicit association between settlers and illegal armed forces has

aggravated Awá's identification of non-Awá individuals and groups: "settlers have taken

advantage, or they have become allies with the illegal armed groups in direct damage of

our Indigenous people" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 142). In this regard, the fetishsized

bodies of Afros and mestizos are equated into one indistinct unwholesome ecocultural

identity that intersects with political identities emerging from the participation of some

Afros and mestizos in war and drug illegal trade. Yet, identities are above all ecocultural

insofar as Awá's ecological self is at risk due to the practices performed in the *katza su*

by external populations —e.g., illegal cropping that demands to clear forest— but also as result of the measures taken by the Colombian government to counter these illicit plantations, for example, glyphosate fumigation.

Awá perceive all these activities as the source of the maladies changing the territory's material harmony and weakening its spiritual well-being. Eduardo regrets this situation:

> For us the environmental part is for us life: there are mountain, tree, animals; I know they are sacred. Everything is connected [starting] from the wild ancestral seeds. So, to us if there is no mountain there is no harmony. There is no harmony. Now the ancestral spirits have no strength.

At the societal level, the translation of the concepts of sustainability, development, and climate change reveals different locations and positionalities. As Awá elders Bisbicús, Pai, and Pai (2010) assert in a book about Awá's communication with the spirits, mestizos, Afros and other external actors, introduced "inappropriate production systems" (p. 30), which have also created contentious debates within Awá organizations. In Olindo's words:

> Now, there is a proposal that we request the mining concession as Awá Federation. I said no. How is that possible? No! I am going to tell the Assembly to say no. I do not agree. Because we are not from the city. Now, because it is the Awá Federation, now we are going to ask for the mining concession? No! No! Leave [the territory] alone. Our resource is there.

Olindo's claim, "our resource is there," means that the territory holds within it all Awá need for their physical and cultural survival. As such, the term "resource" gains an important nuance in their meaning as it relates to broader conceptualizations of sustainability and development responding to Awá's need for organizational strengthening. In other words, the term "resource" should not be read from the utilitarian Western notion of the term; rather, resource is a material asset, but more importantly, it is the symbolic and cultural currency of Awa's Indigenous ecocultural identity.

Further, the insider-outside dialectic illuminates another oppositional ecocultural identity between Awá and non-Awá societies. An urban-rural geopolitical difference, "we are not from the city," adds to Awá's ascription of an unwholesome ecocultural identity to non-Indigenous (living in the city). Non-Awá inhabitants of urban centers enact an unwholesome ecocultural identity that understands relations to land only as a resource to exploit for "more oil, you have to do mining you have to cut more wood, you have to plant more monocultures" (Olindo). Moreover, Awá's territories are positioned as distinct from the "large cities, large extension of lands that are not managed by the Indigenous people who are fully exploited" (Rider). Here, Awá's restorative ecocultural identity is associated with specific practices ("management") that prove Awá's indigeneity in terms of environmental stewardship. Therefore, in the insider-outsider dialectic, ecocultural identities are constructed depending on the praxes associated to non-Awá actors' ecocultural identities and the relationships that sustain and legitimize those activities, which in Awá's cosmovisión is a matter of respect.

Respect-disrespect dialectic.

The second dialectic stems from a vital principle in Awá's relational ontology: respect. Awá's avowed wholesomeness in their relationships to *katza su,* as represented by Awá's reading of the three dolls' relationships with water, risk obscuring the multiplicity of ecocultural identities enacted by Awá individuals and families. I explore this internal complexity via the respect-disrespect dialectic. Respect is an essential principle that guides Awá's cosmology and constitutes their connections to the mountain. Gabriel Bisbicús, José Pai, and Rider Pai (the latter is one of the interviewees in this study) state:

> From our worldview, the stories of origin and the spirits are proof that all
>
> the beings and components of nature are related to man and to the wills
>
> from the different spheres of the Awá's world, for example the owners of
>
> animals, trees, and other beings of the mountain [who] are protected by
>
> signs, sounds, noises, warnings, rules and punishments. The stories reveal
>
> the agreements in force and that exist to maintain balance with our
>
> territory and with the spiritual beings that live there, in a respectful
>
> relationship. When respect is not met, when agreements are disregarded,
>
> and advice is ignored, imbalances are generated. [These disequilibria]
>
> have consequences for the persons who commit them, even in their
>
> families and in their communities. It is then that hunger or scarcity ensue,
>
> the drought of the rivers and the absence of rains. (Bisbicús et al., 2010, p.
>
> 43)

The respect-disrespect dialectic illuminates not only ecocultural relations between Awá and non-Awá —inter-ecocultural positioning—, but also refers to

ecocultural relations that encompass both Awá and non-Awá individuals, families, and organizations, what I call *intra*-ecocultural positioning. Regarding inter-ecocultural positioning, in Awá's cosmovision, respect encompasses resource and the nonhuman, and it is vital for the formation of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities. In the myth, for instance, the Awá respects the mandate of God by doing as told —taking an appropriate bath. The mestizo disregarded the rules; thus, they disrespected the mandates. The Afro's condition, without being equivalent to the Awá's, embodies the sequel of the mestizo's lack of respect (e.g., darker skin). The disrespect described in the myth continues to inform Awá-Mestizos relationships (and possibly mestizo-Afro relationships) as Awá perceive mestizos a one of those external actors responsible for the damaging changes experienced by Awá communities in their territories. As Eduardo strongly states:

> The peasants, those who arrived, they no longer respect. We, as Awá, we
>
> preserve the forest, mountain, traditional products, culture. But now
>
> people are arriving and that's why our culture is ending[.] Before [their
>
> arrival] there was no poison. [Now] because of the coca they brought;
>
> then, there has been much effects.

Pressures from the market do not come only from the development of legal economic activities such as palm oil or cattle rearing. Illegal networks of drug production utilize and operate in Awá's territory. Unfortunately, several Awá have fallen or become part of these activities and networks as well. Awá's urgent need for economic income is increasingly satisfied by the commercial exploitation of wood and the sowing of coca, a practice that prepares the land by clearing areas and forest cover. From an Awá

perspective, these practices are "developed especially by mestizos [but] there are some members of the [Awá] communities that sow within the limits of the different reservations to obtain some money to meet the needs of the families" (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 87). Both, the dire socio-political and environmental conditions in which Awá communities live, and the hardships to finding ways of economic support, have contributed to Awá's enactment of unwholesome ecocultural identities via exploitative practices such as logging, mining, and illegal cropping.

Except by the Awá's acknowledgement of situations of oppression and discrimination shared with Afro communities, Awá's documents and interviews show no description of or mention to dynamics that may facilitate the construction of restorative ecocultural identity for mestizos and Afros by Awá people. One explanation for this lack of perspective could be that Awá's documents are mainly broad diagnoses of their humanitarian and environmental harsh situation, referring mainly to how the presence of these other communities endangers Awá's territory. Hence, the tone and emphasis of these texts intend to denounce harmful actions and practices affecting Awá communities. Although these documents present and propose solutions to face these dire conditions, they mainly are focused on Awá's capabilities and needs with no reference to the role of other communities in achieving better live conditions,

In the same token, interviews took a diagnostic tone as interviewees framed the practices associated to development, sustainability, and climate change negatively. However, the absence of identifying and ascribing a restorative ecocultural identity to mestizo and Afro populations does not mean that these populations and communities are not carrying on practices that are beneficial —restorative— to their territories and thereby

to their neighboring populations, as previous research have found occurring at the binational border (Castro-Sotomayor, 2012; Lucio & Castro-Sotomayor, 2011; Senplades & DNP, 2014). How to identify and foster the construction of wholesome ecocultural identities among Awá, mestizo, and Afro communities is fundamental to future environmental initiatives that would involve these border populations.

Awá construct mestizos' and Afros' ecocultural identities as unwholesome or restorative based on the impacts these populations have on Awá's territory. While mestizos' deleterious ecocultural practices are expected by Awá people —as external actors, mestizos are solely enacting an unwholesome ecocultural identity informed by Western ideas of development— Awá's involvement in harmful economic activities is an ecocultural contradiction that debilitates the already fragile Awá's territoriality. The formation of Awa's and others' identities are not limited to economic activities — commercial exploitation of wood and the sowing of coca— but above all, Awá's avowed and ascribed identity is constructed in relation to the ecologies that these activities affect. The discursive positionality within Awá communities seems to address changes at the level of Awá families and community. The intra-ecocultural positioning reveals different and contested ecocultural identities. I explore the intricacies of their formation in the last section.

Awa's Ethics of Respect: Ecocultural Frictions and Possibilities of Resistance

The central principle guiding Awá's lifeways is respect. Respect has a prescriptive character as disrespect has life-or-death consequences for the spiritual and bodily dwellers of the territory because, as Eduardo warns,

if we do not respect nature, punishment comes, that is, drought; drought

comes[.] That's why we cannot play with nature, we cannot play.

Within Awá's territoriality, some economic practices carried out by Awá individuals, position them based on relationships of respect-disrespect with the *katza su*. The alterations of the relationships of respect result from an accelerated process of acculturation aggravated by the incursion of a system of production that does not correspond to Awá cosmological ways of living, which generate intra-community frictions. From the intensification of acculturation and invasion, two ecocultural identifications emerge among Awá community members and leaders that might impact Awá's political and symbolic control of their territories: self-blame and the other within.

The first ecocultural identity that emerges among Awá people is the *other within*. This ecocultural Other is fostered by the involvement of some Awá individuals or families in economic activities that infringe Awá's cosmovision and possibly jeopardize their territoriality. Awá families' involvement in alien economic practices is not merely illegal (e.g., logging and coca), but also and mainly (eco)culturally reproachable as certain practices are labeled as acceptable or not. For example, the "clearing areas and forest cover," needed to advance legal or illegal logging or monocrops, goes against their ecological practice of tumba y pudre (take down and rot) which Eduardo laments: "there are brothers who no longer think this way," meaning thinking about Awá's ways of traditional knowledge and protection of the land. The practices performed by these "brothers" Awá are alien to Awa's cosmovision and might debilitate *katza su* territoriality. Among Awá, ethnicity is not relevant, rather these harmful ecocultural practices become central to the positioning of some Awá as an ecocultural other within

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Awá's territory: the *ecocultural other within.* In Olivio's account, it is possible to see the ecocultural other within emerging:

> We, as Awá, we are in the jungle, we live like peasants, like white people [who] are not thinking of protecting the territory but think more about, let's say, development. I want a development, let's say, as an example, an individual project, not a collective project. As [white people], I think "well, I have my house, a good house, a good building, a good car, a good money, a good salary." And I say, what about the rest of the people who need? [What about] the people who live in the last corner of the territory? We do not think [about them]. No! *Allá*, they will see.* *Allá*, whatever can happen. [We don't care if] *allá* you endure hunger, if they die *allá*. "They will see," they say. Nobody cares. *Allá*, he died. *Allá* in the jungle. *Allá* is not important.

The other within is also a detached ecocultural self with a degree of individualism that works against the communitarian self Awá as this ecocultural other favors "individual projects, not collective projects," in direct contradiction to Awá's cosmovision. As Filiberto Pascal asserts, "Awá do not take care of only one person, we work with the community more than anything." The discursive shift from a communal understanding of land to a private conceptualization of land is one of the most significant changes affecting Awá's cosmovision (see chapter 5) that manifest primarily through the economic activities in which some Awá families are increasingly getting involved.

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* The expression "they will see" is a literal translation of the Spanish expression "Allá ellos mirarán." In the context of this account, the verb "mirar/see" means "to take care" or "to keep an *eye* on." This expression in Spanish connotes both "to take care" but also connotes a sense of surveillance (which is not the one conveyed in this expression).

Therefore, among Awá, an ecocultural other within emerges not only from the enactment of economic activities themselves (e.g., mining or illegal cropping) but mainly from the ecological transformations —e.g., clearing the forest cover— those activities entail.

The second ecocultural identity that is being negotiated among Awá communities is *self-blame.* This ecocultural identity emerges from the environmental and ecological responsibilities that Awá themselves transfer to other Awá. This transference risks fragmenting Awá's indigeneity as it is an unwholesome ecocultural identity built out of guilt. For instance, José Jairo denounces:

> Then, even ourselves, as Awá, are guilty because to us, as Awá, we never
>
> settle for having one hectare of land, but five and up. There are some
>
> families that have up to 100 hectares!

Awá's symbolic and political control of their territories is tested against an accelerated transformation of the landscape of the *katza su* as land becomes private property, thus, less a sacred space of lineage and more a productive space of class. The internal concentration of land is increasing the pressure onto the territory as Awá population grows. The demographic changes have set the stage for internal conflicts among Awá families, which are becoming not only a matter of land but also about ethnic identity.[70] Moreover, the transference of responsibility to Awá communities regarding

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[70]Among Awá communities, one of the ways acculturation manifests is via inter-ethnic marriages, which are causing disagreements regarding land rights within Awá's territory. As Eduardo disdainfully stated: "Now both, peasants and Afros, also want to be Indigenous. Paisas* want to be Indigenous. [They say], 'I also want to be Awá not because of the work but for interest in [getting] land; or [Paisas] are coupled with an Indigenous woman. Therefore, they want to be Indigenous. But we say, 'Here, there is control. So, you are Paisa or you come from Putumayo, you cannot take the position of governor, you cannot have any position because you are not from here. To have a position to govern in our territory you must be Awá speaker. He must be an Awá speaker, and born here, and also have no crime. That's how it is." *Note: Paisa is someone from the Paisa Region of northwest Colombia formed by the departments of Antioquia, Caldas, Risaralda, and Quindío. For an insightful analysis of similar dynamics involving acculturation, interethnic marriage,

environmental degradation narrows the scope to understand global issues such as global change. An example is Florencio's response about the causes of climate change:

Florencio: There has been a lot of harmful effects. And also, the fault is of ourselves. Mining, river bank mining, [before] everything was all beach. Then, the humans also changed, and also changed the physical appearance [of the territory].

Me: When you say, "the fault is of ourselves," do you mean of Awá people? Or, to whom exactly does it refer?

F: Well, I mean the communities. Companies have not yet arrived to leave garbage from outside. Instead, it is the people themselves, we ourselves have been buying things and every time the amount of thing increases.

This statement conveys Awá's phenomenological understanding of climate change. In Florencio's interpretation, changes in the *katza su*'s "physical appearance" also alter ways of living and thinking as "humans also change." The embodiment of these changes —territorial and of humanity— also reveals what I have referred to as an emplaced conceptualization of climate change. Thus, mining for instance, is not only a consequence of economic hardship, but above all, this extractive activity, previously out of consideration, is a material manifestation of the incursion of practices that are inimical to Awá's cosmovision and ontological relations. As Eduardo mentions:

There has been climate change. Previously our family has lived everything well. They did not lack any products, animals, but now there has been changing, because of the [excess of] rain. But, it is because of nature that

identity, and land rights in First People Nations of North America, see: Lyon (2010); Sturm (2002); and Garroutte (2003).

climate change is happening; drought, drought is happening, but *that is our fault* for tearing down the trees, [there is] scarcity of products because trees no longer load as before. Do not load chiro, no corn, no longer give product as before. So, there has been a lot of change.

In relation to the formation of an ecocultural identity, the "fault" attributed to Awá communities' harmful practices, "buying things" and making "garbage," exacerbates the self-blame informing the constitution of an Awá's unwholesome ecocultural identity within Awá communities. At the same time, self-blame dangerously positions Awá as the sole responsible for the deleterious transformations occurring in their territories. This positionality, hence, may lead to lose sight of the structural factors that Awá's Plans explicitly refer and critically address. Despite analyses of the geopolitical context in which Awá communities are located, sometimes these structural factors are backgrounded giving way to a framing that risks discredit traditional Indigenous knowledges:

> We have a traditional meeting here, traditional festivities where the grandparents will be able to harmonize [the territory]. And that's why we're wrong, we're not well because they [the grandparents] are not harmonizing the territory. Previously, all traditional doctors harmonized what is produced [in the territory.] [They harmonized] all produce and therefore nothing was missing. (Florencio)

Here, Awá's avowed ecocultural identity is constructed from a sense of responsibility to their traditional ecocultural practices, which respond to a more integrated and respectful

cosmovision within which Awá's actions are deemed as respectful or disrespectful depending on the ways the more- than-human world communicates back to them.

The emergence of these two unwholesome ecocultural identities —other within and self-blame— is a manifestation of colonial logics that lingers between the lines of environmental discourses. These identities might debilitate Awá's self-identifications that could foster more productive and empowering actions. When condemnation prevails among Awá people, a disempowering vision of Awá people is likely to emerge. For instance, Florencio's description of Awá capabilities to implement projects exemplifies this trend:

> Awá people do not know well about the administration of the resource,
> then they do not distribute. For example, in a hunt, if you kill an animal, in
> a day they distributed it all to the family, and they do not say: "I have to
> keep some of [the meat] for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow." Then,
> the Awá do not have a vision of distribution[.] I do not see that the Awá
> people have a business vision.

When contrasted to Western methods, Awá's ecocultural practices are constructed as inefficient and lacking projection. The ecocultural other disempowers Awá by positioning them as those with no skills or vision or will. This perception of some Awá elites about Awá's inability for distributing shows the activation of a frame of signification that differs from Awá cosmovision.

The formation of the other within the intra-ecocultural relations they engendered, however, also demonstrates Awá's profound and meaningful reflexivity regarding their own ways of living. This critical look at themselves —whether as polluters, miners,

illegal crop farmers— and the awareness of a lack of continuity of their traditional

practices due to pressuring economic and political circumstances, foregrounds two sides

of Awá's internal positionality and possible enactments of agency. On the one side, the

reflexivity with which Awá engage is a significant force to enhance agency. When the

ecocultural discursive realm of Awá's territoriality is activated, empowerment finds its

way. For instance, speaking about the project of the integral farm being implemented in

UNIPA's territory (see chapter five for details on the farm), Eduardo states:

> The traditional food reserve farm is planting chiro, pineapple, cane, yucca,
>
> all variety of products; also ponds [for the fishes]. Then we, ourselves, are
>
> going to have [economic] income because we are going to sell chiro,
>
> pineapple, fish —we are also introducing fish for sale and
>
> commercialization. So, that's what we're aiming for, but that's for people
>
> living near the roads. Here, as the Grand Awá Family, we want to have an
>
> integral farm. But I've also been saying to the brothers, "I do not know
>
> what is happening, but other brothers no longer think this way. They are
>
> already destroying trees, polluting streams." So far it comes. But, we are
>
> going to have an agroecological center!

Besides the reflexive position on the "other brother's" thinking strayed from

Awá's ways of being, living, and feeling, the assertiveness with which this statement

ends —"but, we are going to have an agroecological center!"— is a way of reclaiming

agency by affirming exteriority —a purposefully and an intentional determination of Awá

to stay at the margins where in Olivio's words:

Wealth is all green growth from the bosom of nature, from the bosom of

mother earth who gives us. Yes? Who gives us life. And then, we are still

living there [in the territory], yes?

Closing proposal: Ecologizing Intercultural Relations and the Politics of Identity

Recentering the territory *katza su* is fundamental to understanding Awá's

ecocultural identities and their relationships. By exploring the translation of development,

sustainability, and climate change, it became evident that the enunciation of the territory

katza su is at the center of Awá politics of ecocultural identity insofar as identities and

discursive positionings are constituted in relation to Awá's territory and within Awá's

territoriality. The territory *katza su,* is vital to understand the intersecting ecocultural

identities of Awá, mestizos, and Afros at the Ecuador-Colombia border, as well as to

approach intercultural and environmental conflicts to possibly foster collaborations

among these populations. To think otherwise about the possibilities of alliances among

Awá, mestizos, and Afros, requires building coalitions upon a human existence that

stretches beyond its cultural self and toward and into the ecology of the subject and the

environmental dimension of identity.

Our current ecological conditions demand expanded ways of exploring,

challenging, and negotiating identities. An ecocultural approach embraces extrahuman

factors as constitutive of identity. I explored the Awá politics of ecocultural identities to

understand their cultural relationships within and from Awá's ecological dimension

explicit in the territory *katza su.* By looking at identity with ecocultural lenses, I

attempted to elucidate the construction and positioning of Awá, mestizos, and Afros'

ecocultural identities and to understand how the enunciation of territory *katza su* mediates

their relationships. *Katza su*, the more-than-human actor constituting Awá's ecological subjectivity and environmental identity, enters the realm of politics and forms restorative or unwholesome ecocultural identities enacted by Awá, mestizos, and Afros. These ecocultural identities engage in dialectic relations that inform and illuminate individuals and groups identifications.

Two dialectics are at work in the challenges and negotiations implicated in the constitution of Awa's ecocultural identities. In relation to the territory, the insider-outsider dialectic pinpoints inter-ecocultural positionalities between Awá and non-Awá individuals, communities, organizations, and societies. The construction of these positionalities equates Afro and mestizos by homogenizing them into one unwholesome ecocultural identity. The colonial histories shared by Awá, mestizos, and Afros become secondary when the territory is included as an active and sensuous actor in their relationships. Through a process of homogenization that erases common colonial struggles and origins, mestizos' and Afros' bodies become fetish of Awá's emotional resentfulness and wariness.

Within Awá's territoriality, on the other hand, the respect-disrespect dialectic highlights Awá's intra-ecocultural positionalities and reveals differences within a population that self-identifies as one ethnic people, Awá, whose incorporation into capitalist market dynamics is increasingly differentiating them by class. Within the discursive realm of Awá's territoriality, what at first glance appeared to be land-based ethnic and class conflicts among Awá, mestizos, and Afro, get complicated by the ecocultural identities emerging from the incorporation of *katza su'*s voice and agency in the intercultural relationships among these populations. The nonhuman converges into

the node of territory, one that is rich in natural resources, manifests agency and voice, and

demands respect for both humans and nonhumans alike. Therefore, the insider-outsider

and respect-disrespect dialectics exceed the human realm as (dis)respectful practices are

intimately linked to whether these activities —performed inside or outside the territory—

harm or benefit Awá's *katza su*.

Chapter 7 Conclusion: Translating Global Nature in Transboundary Sites

This study had two primary interests: translation and borders. My interest in national borders comes from my resistance to conceive nation and state as the only political and administrative corpus though which societies and communities can be organized. Translation is a process that results from the encounter of different systems of knowledge whose boundaries bend, collapse, simplify and/or overtake. The nuances and intricacies in the construction of meaning fascinate me, whether across distinct languages, bodies, times, spaces, and places. These two elements —translations and borders— and their various amalgamations, flow through the previous pages. At the same time, a field-based study allowed me to reflect on the inevitable ecocultural shock that translating myself into the worlds of others demanded from me surpassing my own borders and limits.

In this final chapter, I highlight the main findings of this study to then illustrate a rhizomatic framework that expands structures of feeling in which the non-human (f)actor shapes ways to approach community engagement and intercultural praxis. This framework helps to situate process of translation and their paramount importance in comprehending Awá's territoriality, environmental discourses, and ecocultural identities. I close by marking some signposts for future inquiries regarding communication, nature, translation, and border.

Situating Translation: Pragmatic and Constitutive Functions of Territoriality

In chapter four, I aimed to identify some of the ways La Gran Familia Awá Binational (GFAB) understands, constructs, and reproduces relationships with their territories. From phenomenological and geopolitical perspectives, I mapped out the

strategic articulations between relationships and principles that configure Awá organizations' ways to exert or not symbolic and political control of the territory *katza su*. Awá's relationships with the land, sacred, and lineage include an ethos guided by four principles —territory, culture and identity, unity, and autonomy— which mediate Awá's respectful co-existence, co-living, and co-evolving among material and spiritual inhabitants constituting the territory.

As a contribution, I present the analytical concept, *territoriality* as a pragmatic and constitutive environmental communication for identity-based mediation in environmental conflicts. The visualization of Awá's territoriality is likely to facilitate dialogue between Awá organizations and external actors (e.g. academic institutions, NGO's, and government), as well as to ease the way for non-Awá organizations, groups, and individuals to approach and possibly understand the cosmological elements supporting Awá organizations. Territoriality, as environmental communication, is constitutive and pragmatic, with the constitutive function "embedded within the pragmatic" (Pezzullo & Cox, 2018, p. 9). In its pragmatic mode, territoriality attempts to capture Awá's genealogy of thought, practice, and connection to *katza su*. As such, territoriality is set to inform, educate, and promote Awá's cosmovision, while translating, therefore, reproducing, challenging, and/or resisting foreign ideas considered by Awá people as damaging to their ways of living. The visual representation of territoriality, however, may obscure the differences across national and regional spaces. Accordingly, I referred to the constitutive mode of territoriality to avoid losing sight of the border as method of analysis.

In its constitutive function, territoriality is a discursive and ideological practice insofar as it is construed as much by what allows us to see as by what it conceals. Awá's embodied experiences and historical conditions coalesce in the enunciation of the territory. In this sense, *katza su* is what De la Cadena (2015) calls Earthbeings, "entities whose regimes of reality, and the practices that bring them about, unlike history or science, do not require proof to affirm their actuality" (p. 150). In correspondence to Awá's cosmovision, *katza su* evokes territory as an active participant in the decisions Awá make regarding their well-being and the mandates (policies) to achieve Awá's buen vivir, *wat mɨlna.* As constitutive, territoriality emphasizes sacred and ancestral relationships to the land, and underlies the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in the reproduction of these relationships, and ultimately of Awá's cultural science (Bisbicús, Paí, & Paí, 2010).

The world changes and expands in Awá's territory. Territoriality is the representation of one of many ways Awá people would organize their social, political, and cultural life; but above all, territoriality envelops sociopolitical and cultural interactions and organizes nature in a manner that disrupts human/nonhuman, culture/nature, and society/nature binaries and embraces their mutual constitution (Milstein, 2011; Moore, 2015).

Awá's territoriality is an ideal type, however. In a Weberian sense, territoriality is a theoretical idea against which to contrast and compare Awá's ongoing situation regarding their ways of exerting political and symbolic control of *katza su.* Ideally, an Indigenous guard would be formed and defending a clearly defined territory within which Awá's ancestral relationships, cosmologies, stories, and families, can flourish. The reality

of Awá people's conditions is far from this ideal as their history of displacement and reterritorialization have radically altered Awá's historical continuity as one ethnic people. The denomination of *transboundary ethnicities* by the Ecuadorian and Colombian governments proves the existing ontological condition of Awá as binational Indigenous people. Therefore, I used territoriality, in its pragmatic and constitutive modes, to situate and analyze Awá's translation of the concepts of development, sustainability, and climate change, and to explore the material and epistemological effects of Awá organizations' process of the translation of these global environmental discourses on Awa's cosmovision, institutions, and identities.

Struggles Over Meaning: Exercises in Translation

In chapter five, I was interested in understanding how La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) translates the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works. To this end, I situated the process of translation in relation to Awá's territory and within their territoriality. I critically used translation as a way into the non-linear, paradoxical, and contested ways Awá process and elaborate on the global concepts of sustainability, development, and climate change. I engage with translation to locate differences as well as similarities in the Awá's meaning-making of these concepts as one way of elucidating the incoherencies and incompatibilities intrinsic to seemingly global environmental discourses; ambiguity that ultimately may give rise to opportunities of resignification.

I argued that within the discursive realm of Awá's territoriality, Awá organizations recontextualize development and sustainability and emplace climate

change. In translation, Awá interviewees recontextualize development and sustainability to respond to Awá organizations' need to operationalize the symbolic and political control of their territories. Awá's instrumentalization of the meanings of development and sustainability simultaneously undermines and reveals the ideological structure of these global environmental discourses such as anthropocentrism, capitalism, and individualism. Translation, therefore, is not only a matter of accommodating meaning; translation is a way of enacting epistemological domination and resistance (e.g., contested definitions of land) and creating possible worlds, for instance, via the Awapit term *wat mɨlna*, Awá's conception of good living.

Furthermore, interviewees' attempts to translate climate change emplace this concept by constructing its meaning not out of its global/scientific causes but based on Awa's direct lived experiences of abrupt changes of their immediate nature's cycles. Thus, Awá's translation is embodied. The embodiment of translation re-centers and places the body as a generative core in Awá's understanding of climate change. In other words, climate change is not an abstraction —like CO_2 emissions could end up being perceived by Awá— but experiential, for instance with the floods Awá families and communities have undergone. Therefore, recontextualization and emplacement function as discursive maneuvers that (re)generate place-based environmental discourses.

The struggle over the meanings of development, sustainability, and climate change also revealed that governments and NGOs construe these discourses from a global perspective that, on the one hand, privileges spatial constructions of territory —e.g., the governments' assignation of Indigenous territories as Territorial Indigenous Constituency or Indigenous Territorial Entity. On the other hand, a global perspective contributes to

reify the role of national states, inter and supranational entities, and trans- and multi-national corporations as the major, and often times only, players in signaling environmental futures (Hickmann, 2016). The tendency to prioritize a spatial perspective, however, risks reproducing welfare approaches to Awá organizations that have hindered, purposefully or not, the consolidation of the binational organization La Gran Familia Awá. This situation is more evident in the current situation of the Ecuadorian Federation of Awá Centers (FCAE), which despite multiple national and international NGOs working to strengthen the Federation, this entity is at the edge of cessation.[71]

Contrary to the top-down space-based construction of Indigenous spaces, Awá's territoriality is a bottom-up place-based construction of these territories. The phenomenological place-based sense making of climate change clashes with a space-based definition of this concept and renders "uncompressible" for the Awá what climate change is. Yet, this perceived "lack of understanding" ascribed to Awá communities by some Awá elites, alludes to a tendency to privilege scientific knowledge over what Awá call cultural science forged by their embodied experiences of the changes in their territories. Awá members call out this privilege by re-positioning their elders as bearers of a cultural science, a.k.a. traditional ecological knowledge that can explain "even" climate change when seen and lived from and within Awá *katza su*.

Finally, the emphasis on translations illuminated how the national border functions as an "epistemic device" that informs Awa's meaning making of global environmental discourses. Within the discursive realm of signification that constitutes

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[71] This assessment comes from meetings between Fundación Ser Ambiente (FSA) and FCAE. These meetings were set by FSA to gather information and write a proposal to address issues of environmental governance affecting FCAE. I had access to those notes as I contributed to the proposal.

and is constituted by Awá's territoriality, Awa's translation of global environmental discourses exemplifies the emergence of "perspectival positions" (De la Cadena, 2015) on development, sustainability, and climate change, as Awá's construction of meaning reveals not perspectives about the same world —for instance, when the thunder becomes the grandfather— but views from different worlds featuring Indigenous cosmovisions and Western worldviews.

Awá organizations critically engage with the global environmental discourses of development, sustainability, and climate change, sometimes reproducing, challenging, and/or resisting the epistemological and ontological assumptions buttressing these environmental discourses whose display draws the contentious contours of Awá's ecocultural identities. Awá's process of translation elucidated subjects of development, sustainability, and climate change whose ecocultural identities manifest at different levels in multifarious enactments. By presenting Awá's self-determination or indigeneity as inextricably bounded to the territory *katza su*, territoriality highlights the ecological dimension of Awá's identity. At the intersection of ecology and culture, identity negotiations and positioning among Awá, mestizos, and Afros, as well as in relation to organizations and governments, offer new ways of understanding intercultural encounters.

Weaving Ecological Subjectivities and Environmental Identities: Ecocultural Identities in Intercultural Encounters

I engaged with the politics of identity in chapter six and explored the ecocultural identities and discursive positionings that emerge from the translation of development, sustainability, and climate change in relation to *katza su* and within Awá's territoriality. I

furthered the notions of territory and territoriality to illustrate how the ecological dimension becomes salient in the formation and positioning of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities. As communicative practice and historicist inquiry, translation illuminates new articulations and ways of thinking that morph subjectivities and their relationships. The constitution of ecocultural identities implicates Awá's relationships with their neighboring Afro and Mestizo communities, as well as with the external actors infiltrating Awá's territory, a.k.a. government, academic institutions, NGOs.

I identified two ecocultural identities, restorative and unwholesome, braided into two dialectics: insider-outsider and respect-disrespect. I used these dialectics to elucidate how Awá, mestizos, and Afros' restorative and unwholesome ecocultural identities emerge in relation to *katza su* and within Awá's territoriality. Both dialectics re-center the territory *katza su* as the nonhuman actor fundamental to understand Awá's ecocultural identities and their relationships with mestizos and Afros. The discursive maneuvers Awá performed in their definitions of development, sustainability, and climate change, show how discourses inform and facilitate the constitution of multiple ecological subjectivities and environmental identities. These ecocultural identities are contingent on whether the enactments of Awá, mestizos, and Afros' ecocultural identities benefit or damage *katza su.*

From the insider-outsider dialectic, there are two identifications process at work: homogenization and fetishization. These processes shape the inter-ecocultural positionalities between Awá and non-Awá individuals, communities, and societies. Within Awá's territoriality, the respect-disrespect dialectic illuminates two ecocultural

identities implicated in intra-ecocultural positionalities among Awá individuals, families, and communities: the other within and self-blame.

Homogenization and fetishization.

The process of homogenization performed by Awá people erases mestizo and Afro historically distinct cultural identities and make them equivalent into one encompassing unwholesome ecocultural identity. While it is true that Awá recognize a history of oppression and discrimination shared with Afro populations, the involvement of members from these populations in economics activities that damage *katza su*, locates Afrodescendants in the same position as mestizos. The emotional burden generated by the intrusion of activities and individuals that disturb the equilibrium of *katza su* marks both, Afros and mestizos, with an unwholesome ecocultural identity that turns them into the fetish of Awá's pain. Without distinction, Afro and mestizo bodies come to represent the lacerations suffered by *katza su*. In tandem, homogenization and fetishization erase history and may complicate the formations of inter-ecocultural alliances among these populations.

Self-blame and the other within.

The respect-disrespect dialectic reveals the formation of an avowed and ascribed ecocultural identity constructed from a critical embracement of self-blame. Awá's ecocultural other within emerges from the felt impact on the ecology of their territories caused by the legal or illegal economic practices in which some Awá families have become involved. Accordingly, embracing and abiding to an ethic of respect that renders some activities as restorative and others as unwholesome would form an Awá ecocultural

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identity. Thus, the practice "tumba y pudre" (take down and rot) would be the enactment of an Awa's restorative ecocultural identity associated to a particular system of ecological meanings that perceive *katza su* in consubstantial terms. Logging, mining, or sowing coca, on the other hand, would be the enactment of an Awá's unwholesome ecocultural identity —the other within *katza su*. While more research is needed, I could be argued that the participation of some Awá families in what is perceived as damaging economic activities enervates Awá organizations' symbolic control of the territory. Awa's enactments of unwholesome/outsider and restorative/insider ecocultural identities are one manifestation of a radical shift in Awá's cosmovision and ultimately of vital links to *katza su.*

Furthermore, it is the increasing number of Awá families and individuals involved in harmful activities that has engendered a sense of self-blame among Awá people. Awa's emotional and critical appraisal of their acquired practices affecting the territory, —for instance, the increased use of plastic products and the lack of recycling initiatives— reaffirms the existence of the other within. But at the same time, Awá's recognition and self-criticism of the impacts produced by these actions and practices, demonstrate their capacity for reflexivity and resilience in confronting the incursion of alien ideas and practices into their ways of life and self-determination as the implementation of UNIPA's integral farm demonstrates.

An Analytical Proposal: An Ecocultural Rhizomatic Framework

The inclusion and use of ecocultural lenses in this study are an attempt to align with Milstein's (2012) call for greening communication. I consider the rhizomatic framework an example of what could emerge from an inter-field conversation between

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critical intercultural and environmental communication. This dialogue offers an opportunity to denounce the anthropocentrism *decanted* into communication scholarship, which risks simplifying the subject, endorses human-centered power, and curtails agency. Figure 4 represents one of several rhizomatic representations of the Awá ecocultural situation (Figure 4):
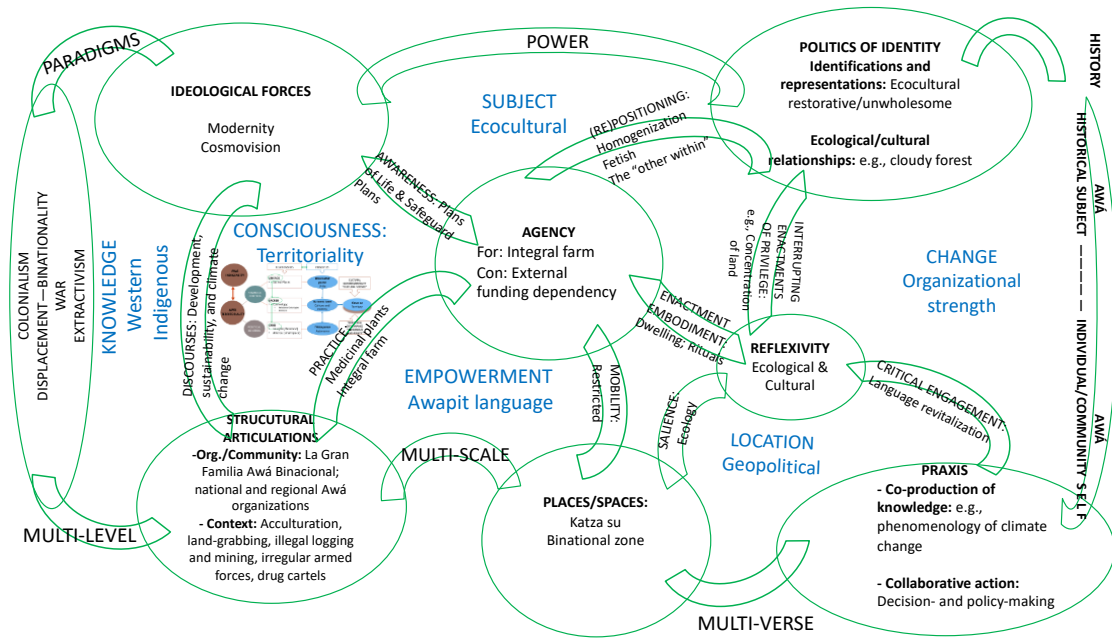
Figure 4 A rhizomatic representation of Awá binational Indigenous people's ecocultural situation

I ecologize the rhizomatic framework introduced in the methodological section of this study, which draws on Collier's (2014) work on community engagement. The ecocultural rhizomatic framework broadens notions of communication, culture, and identity, as well as expands the scope of analysis toward non- and more-than-human spheres. The ecological dimension expands the kind of relationships that have shaped human history as independent from what has been named "nature." Scholars approaching humans' reality from an ecological perspective focus on relationships between humans

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and more-than-human and on subjects and positionalities that emerge from those interactions. The emphasis on the eco also deepens our knowledge about a set of values, ideas, and believes that informs, in this case, Awá's understanding of global environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change. Accordingly, to explore the ecological dimension from a discursive perspective, I had to understand the environmental dimension structured by multilevel environmental institutions such as the UN Climate Change at the global level and governments at the national level. I focused on the organizational level and looked at UNIPA and FCAE, Awá organizations part of La Gran Familia Awá Binacional.

My entry into the formation of subjectivities and identities is ecological and environmental. The ecological dimension is intrinsic to Awá's understanding of the world as animated and consubstantial. The environmental dimension refers to the institutional frameworks supporting global environmental discourses. At the intersections of these two dimensions, I ecologize cultural categories of identity such as class and race. To illustrate this eco-identification process, I ecologize the emergence of a class-based identity, a.k.a. some Awá people becoming laborers or domestic service. Hence, rather than understanding Awá's new subjectivity as already part of a work-based relationship, I stated that the emergence of this class subject is also a product of the discursive transfiguration of land, from sacred to instrumental. This shift changes and even erases (when the land is sold) Awá's sacred and lineage relationships with *katza su*, ultimately debilitating their territoriality. From this standpoint, it is possible to speak of pain as the common thread between the ecocultural identification process of homogenization and

fetishization. Within this expanded non-only human structure of feeling, ecocultural discursive positionalities emerge.

The praxes performed by Awá individual and communities connect this binational Indigenous people to larger structures of environmental governance, but also their praxes reveal histories of colonialism that explained a context of repetitive forced intra- and inter-displacement, which resulted in the emergence of Awá's current binational condition. The effects of this history of dispossession and reterritorialization results from unrestrained extractivist activities such as land-grabbing and illegal logging, activities worsen by the presence of irregular arms forces or drug cartels. These events have aggravated Awá's acculturation process greatly jeopardizing their cultural survival and Indigenous rights. This historical context comes to the fore in the configuration of Awá's territoriality of *katza su*, their "big house."

Signposting the Path for Future Inquiries

The rhizomatic representation of Awá's ecocultural situation as binational Indigenous people, helps identifying possible ways of how external actors —government, NGOs, academia— could contribute to social and environmental change in and justice for Awá communities. At the core, of all support to Awá communities should be the need for strengthening Awá's local and binational organizations. To this end, I propose five signposts for further exploration.

First, **identity-based mediation in environmental conflict.** The framework shows how focusing on the politics of ecocultural identity elucidates modes of reflexivity and agency and, thus, revisiting intra- and inter-cultural conflicts from an ecological perspective. In the mediation process, the first critical intervention is the interruption of

enactments of privilege. In reference to Awá organizations, this means to address the issue of concentration of land among Awá families. The second critical intervention could be to develop and further existing programs regarding language revitalization. Reviving Awapit language is paramount. As the Awapit speaking population diminishes, it is necessary to support initiatives such as the intercultural bilingual education program that is being furthered by both national governments, especially in Ecuador.

Therefore, one central element in the process of language revitalization is to emphasize the strategic use of Awapit to spaces of decision- and policy-making. All interviewees coincided in that Awapit is limited to Awá communities and has rarely been used in spaces of decision-making where Spanish is the dominant language. In a context of decision- and policy-making, revitalization is a subversive word. In the language realm, revitalization challenges the dangerous monolingualism the linguistics mask of imperialism that that accompanies the modern project of capitalist globalization (Phillipson, 1992). A pledge for challenging monolingualism and thus asserting multivocality can be advanced by engaging with an expanded notion of communication to approach the-body-of-politics beyond the human body and the human domain and towards the nonhuman and more-than-human realms. This epistemological and ontological movement entails rethinking and feeling agency otherwise.

The second signpost is to explore **transversal forms of communication, agency, and dissent in environmental peacebuilding.** These transversal forms constitute and are constituted by the historicity of the Awá binational Indigenous people and transboundary organizations such as La Gran Familia Awá Binacional. By investigating Awa's situated communication practices and ecocultural identities via the rhizomatic model of

situational analysis, the findings of this study aim at developing approaches to and understandings of the complex dynamics of binational Indigenous organizations and their role in (post)conflict environmental peacebuilding.

An ecocultural perspective directs attention to the emotion of pain and the feelings the destruction of Indigenous territories creates of which Awá people's conditions is a blatant example. This approach resonates with the claims for a process of peacebuilding in Colombia that includes the territory as a "victim" of the conflict (Rodríguez et al., 2017) to avoid the future militarization of Indigenous peoples' territories. The pain is inflicted not only upon Awá human people but Awá nonhuman people. More than ever, environmental peacebuilding at the Ecuador-Colombia border should consider and include participants from both countries because the effects of the war in Colombia are not exclusive of one territory and cannot be contained by the national border, as recent tragic events in 2018 have demonstrated.

Third, I suggest exploring the **impact of national borders on the meaning-making process of border communities.** While the effects of national boundaries can be noticed more clearly in other fields such as economic (currency, tariffs) or political (legal frameworks), the impacts of national borders on the construction of discourses by border communities are less obvious. Translation is multilayered and involves various onto-epistemological moves as borders it traverses. By delving into translation, this study revealed the dangers of an uncritical reproduction of global environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change. Yet, my findings also showed how the border functions as an "epistemic device" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) that influences the way Awá from Colombia and Ecuador re-signified discourses. In

translation something becomes precarious allowing ambiguities whose explorations might illuminate possibilities for agency and change.

Connected to border communities, another topic of future inquiry is connected relates to explore **"translational ethnicities."** The territoriality of the nation-state is more tangible at the border as legal, politico-administrative, and economic frames of reference drastically shift just by stepping into the other side. Therefore, one way to understand the transnational character of ethnic people, is to explore the differences and similarities between borderland Indigenous organizations' forms of communication, agency, and dissent from those performed by inland organizations, i.e., by Central Andean Indigenous populations. But more research is needed to understand how the identification of Indigenous and Afro borderland population as "transnational ethnicities," and its implicit emphasis on ethnicity, subvert or not the mestizo nation-state as the legitimate political apparatus.

The fifth signpost seeks **to complicate space and place** by focusing on the nuances of these two analytical concepts and their implications for understanding place- and space-based communication. Space- and place-based ecological practices and environmental discourses are not exclusive but dialectical. In the process of translation, Awá navigate these two perspectives by simultaneously transgressing and complying with discursive formations such as of development, sustainability, and climate change. For instance, in theory, there is the possibility that Awá organizations construct placed-based environmental discourses but perform space-based environmental practices. In this arrangement, community organizations' condition the global environmental agenda by questioning its conceptual frame, e.g., sustainability, while complying with its practices,

as FCAE's intention to create an Awá-owned logging enterprise in their territories demonstrates. The other option—community organizations constructing space-based discourses but performing place-based practices— is less probable due to the "accountability" implicit in communities abiding by the global environmental agenda, e.g., final reports with measurable outputs. Further, in line with existing literature on the debate about place and space (see theoretical framework), this study demonstrated the political potential of place-based systems of ecological meaning to decolonize nature, in the way Awá's territory is evoked in the Awapit *katza su*.

Finally, a methodological note, the ecological dimension reframes researcher/ practitioners' interplay with the more-than-human. Reflection is needed regarding the implications of Human-More-than-human relationships on the execution of field work, as well as on the researcher/practitioners' ways of engaging with academia and being in the world.

Closing Statement

The rain ceased. The voice of Pamba, the Awá's grandfather, is nowhere to be heard. The girl went off to play with her sister. Olivio's voice is reaching my ears as coming back from *allá* —"Los Awá somos gente humilde/The Awá are humble people"— I heard him saying. I received their humility as shelter and food; but also, they gave me the gift of remembering humility. Becoming humble is vitally disruptive in a too human world in which a pernicious anthropocentrism nurtures human exceptionalism. In *katza su,* this revitalizing disruption, albeit temporary, was possible.

Appendixes

Appendix A. Effect of Glyphosate Fumigation on Awá communities

Source: (Camawari et al., 2012, p. 93)

Effects on Nature:

- Soil degradation and water contamination.

- Direct and indirect impact on the flora and fauna.

- Emigration of the animal species.

- Irreparable damage of the forest (wood and non-wood trees, flora, fauna,) the

   paddocks for livestock, food crops, etc.).

- Loss of native seeds.

Social effects:

- Impact of pancoger crops (food staple crops) and violation of the right to safety

   and food sovereignty.

- Increase dependence on external economies and day laborers which accentuates

   the vulnerability to the armed conflict.

- An increase of the tree felling as a method of subsistence.

- A decrease in food crops.

- Generation of resentment against the state and acts as a catalyst for the voluntary

   or forced link (especially for young people) to armed forces.

- Multiple diseases in the population (affects public health) and domestic and

   hunting animals.

- Forced displacement that violates civil and political rights, economic, social and

   cultural rights (ESCR), and collective rights.

- An indirect incentive to coca cultivation in which children and youth manage high budgets generating social and family breakdown.

Cultural effects:

- The environmental degradation of the territory affects the cosmological notions of the Awá people.

- The ecological balance is broken and medicinal plants are lost. Both are important factors to keep the individuals and the Awá's society healthy.

- The loss of identity and culture associated with territory impacts the patterns of use of nature.

- Transformation of traditional methods of cultivation, loss of own seeds and replacement by external products.

- The loss of cultural identity breaks the internal structure of power of the communities, where the elderly lose their traditional role, and young people become highly vulnerable to external influences.

- The government, autonomy, territory and the cohesion of social groups are affected.

Appendix B. Informed Consent Form for Members of La Gran Familia Awá

Binacional

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research conducted by José Castro-Sotomayor, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The research seeks to understand how community organizations understand the ideas of development, sustainability, and climate change and how your organization communicates these ideas to the communities with which these organizations work. This research project will therefore include interviews with members of the four organizations that constitute La Gran Familiar Awá Binacional (GFAB), entity working in community and environmental projects in the Awá's territory located on the border between Ecuador and Colombia.

You are being asked to participate in this study because: (a) You are working in one of the GFAB organizations involved in issues related to sustainable development, , community development, environmental and human rights, health, education; (b) Your organization is located in one of the Provinces or Departments forming the border between Ecuador and Colombia; (c) You are a Colombian or Ecuadorian citizen; (d) You identify as Awá, (e) You are willing to talk about environmental initiatives on the Ecuadorian-Colombian border.

This form will explain the research study and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

Participation in the interview will take approximately between 60 to 90 minutes of your time on the day appointed. During the interview, you will be asked to provide information about your organization and your involvement in the organization by sharing information on your professional work, the actions that you have taken and how you think these actions are related to environmental initiatives and projects carry on the border between Ecuador and Colombia, in particular those that directly impact Awá's territory. Your responses will be kept confidential. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties whatsoever. You can withdraw from the research before the interview begins, however, you cannot withdraw from the research after the interview is completed. Your responses will be audio-recorded only with your permission. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

How long will I be in this study?

This interview will take between one hour or one hour and thirty minutes to complete and

you also agree to be audio recorded.

What are the risks of being in this study?

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study. There may be minimal risks in talking about some uncomfortable experiences that you might have gone through or experienced working with government agencies or nongovernmental organizations. In this respect, memories of these experiences may make you feel uncomfortable. The interview will also explore questions regarding community or organizational conflicts. In order to reduce potential emotional risks, you may choose not to respond to any question, inform and talk about your discomfort with the interviewer, or stop the interview at any time.

What are the benefits of this study?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences in your organization related to environmental initiatives in the Ecuadorian-Colombian border, in particular those that directly impact Awá's territory. The interview will allow you to share your views on the effect of government and NGOs work on the Awá communities. In short, this research provides you with an opportunity to reflect about the work that you are doing and its potential to be developed into a model for best practices that can be applied in your organization for best outcomes. The results from the interviews will be compared and contrasted with interviews from members of the four organizations forming the GFAB and this will lead to a better understanding of the relationships between Awá's organizations with governmental and NGOs agencies as well as recommendations for all the participating organizations. The results of the study will be directly relevant and applicable to the work you are doing in your organization in the Awá's territory and on the border of Ecuador and Colombia.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

Your participation in this personal interview is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, skip any question or withdraw before the interviews begin.

How will my information be kept confidential?

If you do decide to participate, you will review the consent form and keep for your records. When you verbally agree to proceed with the interview, you will complete a demographic survey. On the demographic survey you will be asked to choose a pseudonym. You will agree to have the interview audiotaped and introduce yourself using your chosen pseudonym.
All the information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. No signed consent documentation will be required. Your personal responses will not be shared with anyone else in your organization. Your name and the name of your organization will not appear in any research report or transcript. Your pseudonym will be used in the dissertation and

any subsequent publications. Quotations from the interview responses will be listed with the pseudonyms only. It is only the researcher, José Castro-Sotomayor and his dissertation Advisor and Principal Investigator, Dr. Tema Milstein, who will have access to the audiotapes and the transcripts of your interview. The audiotaped data will be erased when the written transcriptions of your interviews are finished.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no direct costs to you for participating in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Participating in this study is voluntary and there is not direct compensation. However, I will cover all expenses related to transportation, lodging, and food if needed.

Can I stop being in this study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation before the interviews begin. However, you cannot withdraw from the research after the interviews are completed

Whom can I call/email with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, José Castro-Sotomayor, PhD Candidate, or his associate Dr. Tema Milstein will be glad to answer them any time throughout the week. Please send an email to castrosotomayorj@unm.edu/tema@unm.edu. If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team in regard to any complaints you have about the study, you may contact the Institutional Research Board (IRB): irbmaincampus@unm.edu. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at http://irb.unm.edu/

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may email the UNM IRB at irbmaincampus@unm.edu.

Consent
You are deciding whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research subject. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____ _____
Name of Adult Subject (print)   Signature of Adult Subject   Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE
I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

_____   _____
(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)   Date

Formulario de Consentimiento Informado para Miembros de La Gran Familia Awá Binacional

Introducción

Usted está invitado a participar en la investigación realizada por José Castro-Sotomayor, Candidato Doctoral en el Departamento de Comunicación y Periodismo de la Universidad de Nuevo México (UNM), Estados Unidos. El objetivo de esta investigación es explorar cómo su organización entiende e interpreta los conceptos de sostenibilidad, desarrollo y cambio climático. Además, el estudio explora las formas en que su organización se comunica y colabora con el gobierno y las ONG para diseñar, participar y ejecutar proyectos de sostenibilidad, desarrollo y cambio climático. Este proyecto de investigación incluirá, por lo tanto, entrevistas con los miembros de las cuatro organizaciones que conforman La Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), entidad que trabaja en proyectos comunitarios y ambientales en el territorio Awá ubicado en la frontera entre Ecuador y Colombia.

Se le pide que participe en este estudio porque: (a) Usted está trabajando en una de las organizaciones de GFAB involucrada en temas relacionados con desarrollo sostenible, desarrollo comunitario, derechos humanos y medioambientales, salud, educación; (b) Su organización está ubicada en una de las Provincias o Departamentos que forman la frontera entre Ecuador y Colombia; (c) Usted es ciudadano colombiano o ecuatoriano; (d) Usted se identifica como Awá, (e) usted está dispuesto a hablar sobre iniciativas ambientales en la frontera entre Ecuador y Colombia.

Este formulario explicará el propósito del estudio, y explicará los posibles riesgos y los posibles beneficios que esta investigación pueda tener para usted. Si tiene alguna inquietud, <u>por favor pregunte al investigador.</u>

¿Qué pasará si decido participar?

La participación en la entrevista tomará aproximadamente entre 60 a 90 minutos de su tiempo en el día acordado. Durante la entrevista, se le pedirá que proporcione información sobre su organización y su participación en ella compartiendo información sobre su trabajo profesional, las acciones que usted ha tomado y cómo cree que estas acciones están relacionadas con iniciativas ambientales y proyectos que se llevan a cabo en la frontera entre Ecuador y Colombia. En particular se preguntará sobre el efecto que estas acciones tienen directamente sobre el territorio Awá. Sus respuestas serán confidenciales. Dado que su participación es totalmente voluntaria, puede optar por no responder a ninguna pregunta durante la entrevista sin ningún tipo de sanciones. Usted puede retirarse de la investigación antes de que comience la entrevista; sin embargo, no puede retirarse de la investigación después de que la entrevista se haya completado. Sus respuestas serán grabadas sólo con su permiso. Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento.

¿Cuánto de mi tiempo tomará participar en este estudio?

La entrevista tomará hora o una hora y treinta minutos para ser completada. Usted también acepta que la entrevista sea grabada en audio.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos de participar en este estudio?

Hay riesgos mínimos asociados con la participación en este estudio. Puede haber riesgos mínimos en hablar de algunas experiencias incómodas que usted pudo haber pasado o experimentado al trabajar con las agencias del gobierno u organizaciones no gubernamentales. A este respecto, los recuerdos de estas experiencias pueden hacerle sentir incómodo. Con el fin de reducir los posibles riesgos emocionales, usted puede optar por no responder a ninguna pregunta, informar o hablar acerca de su malestar con el entrevistador, o detener la entrevista en cualquier momento.

¿Cuáles son los beneficios de este estudio?

Su participación en esta investigación le dará la oportunidad de compartir información y opiniones sobre sus experiencias en su organización relacionadas con iniciativas ambientales en la frontera ecuatoriano-colombiana, en particular aquellas que impactan directamente al territorio Awá. La entrevista le permitirá compartir sus puntos de vista sobre el efecto del gobierno y el trabajo de las ONGs en las comunidades Awá. Resumiendo, esta investigación le brinda la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre el trabajo que usted está realizando, con la posibilidad de convertirse en un modelo de prácticas efectivas, las mismas que se pueden aplicar en su organización con el fin de obtener mejores resultados. Los resultados de las entrevistas serán comparados y contrastados con las entrevistas de los miembros de las cuatro organizaciones que forman la GFAB. Esto permitirá comprender mejor las relaciones entre las organizaciones Awá y las agencias gubernamentales y no gubernamentales, así como sistematizar recomendaciones para todas las organizaciones participantes. Los resultados del estudio serán directamente relevantes y aplicables al trabajo que usted está haciendo en su organización, en el territorio de Awá y en la frontera de Ecuador y Colombia.

¿Qué otras opciones tengo si no quiero participar en este estudio?

Su participación en esta entrevista personal es completamente voluntaria. Usted puede negarse a participar, omitir cualquier pregunta o retirarse antes de comenzar las entrevistas.

¿Cómo se mantendrá mi información confidencial?

Si usted decide participar, revisará el formulario de consentimiento y lo guardará para sus registros. Cuando usted acepta verbalmente continuar con la entrevista, usted firmará este formulario de consentimiento y luego llenará una hoja de información. En la hoja de

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información, usted tendrá la opción de elegir un seudónimo, así como decidir no utilizar su afiliación organizativa. Usted aceptará que la entrevista se grabe en audio y se presente usando el seudónimo elegido o su nombre real. Usted aceptará que la entrevista se grabe en audio y se presente usando el seudónimo elegido.

Toda la información obtenida en relación con este estudio permanecerá confidencial. Sus respuestas a la entrevista se utilizarán estrictamente con fines académicos. Se requiere firmar la documentación de consentimiento. Sus respuestas personales no se compartirán con nadie en su organización. Su nombre y el nombre de su organización no aparecerán en ningún informe de investigación o transcripción. Su seudónimo será utilizado en la disertación y en cualquier publicación posterior. Las citas de las respuestas obtenidas en la entrevista se listarán con los seudónimos solamente. Sólo el investigador, José Castro-Sotomayor, y su asesora de tesis doctoral e investigadora principal, Dra. Tema Milstein, tendrán acceso a las cintas de audio y a las transcripciones de su entrevista. Los datos grabados en audio serán borrados cuando las transcripciones escritas de sus entrevistas estén terminadas.

Durante el período de análisis, el USB y las copias impresas de las transcripciones se almacenarán en un archivador cerrado ubicado en la oficina del investigador principal en el departamento de Comunicación y Periodismo para completar el estudio en mayo de 2018. Después de este período, Castro-Sotomayor, mantendrá los archivos digitales de las transcripciones en su computadora personal protegida con contraseña durante cuatro años para que los manuscritos de la tesis sean revisados hasta que sean aceptados para su publicación. A más tardar en mayo de 2022, los datos relacionados con el estudio serán destruidos. El USB se romperá y se romperá y las copias impresas de las transcripciones serán trituradas. Los formularios de consentimiento firmados y recopilados por el investigador serán triturados.

¿Cuáles son los costos de participar en este estudio?

No hay costos directos para participar en este estudio.

¿Se me pagará por participar en este estudio?

Participar en este estudio es voluntario y no hay compensación directa. Sin embargo, el investigador cubriré todos los gastos relacionados con transporte, alojamiento y comida si es necesario.

¿Puedo dejar de participar en este estudio una vez que empiece?

Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted tiene el derecho de elegir no participar o retirar su participación antes de que empiecen las entrevistas. Sin embargo, una vez finalizada la entrevista, no podrán retirarse. Si usted decide retirarse durante las entrevistas, la información grabada no será borrada.

¿A quién puedo llamar o enviar un correo electrónico con preguntas o quejas sobre este estudio?

Si tiene preguntas, inquietudes o quejas en cualquier momento sobre la investigación, José Castro-Sotomayor, Candidato a PhD., o su asociado Dr. Tema Milstein, estarán encantados de contestarlas en cualquier momento a lo largo de la semana. Por favor, envíe un correo electrónico a castrosotomayorj@ unm.edu / tema@unm.edu. Si desea hablar con alguien que no sea el equipo de investigación con respecto a cualquier queja que tenga sobre el estudio, puede comunicarse con la Junta de Investigación Institucional (IRB): irbmaincampus@unm.edu. El IRB es un grupo de personas de UNM y de la comunidad que proporcionan una supervisión independiente sobre la seguridad y las cuestiones éticas relacionadas con investigaciones con personas. Para obtener más información, también puede acceder al sitio web del IRB en http://irb.unm.edu/

¿A quién puedo llamar con preguntas sobre mis derechos como sujeto de investigación?

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, puede enviar un correo electrónico al IRB de UNM a irbmaincampus@unm.edu.

Consentimiento

Usted está tomando la decisión de participar en este estudio. Su firma al final de este documento indica que usted leyó la información proporcionada (o la información le fue leída). Al firmar este formulario de consentimiento, usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales como sujeto de investigación.

He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y todas las preguntas han sido contestadas satisfactoriamente.

Al firmar este formulario de consentimiento, estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Se le proporcionará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento.

_____   _____

Nombre de Sujeto Mayor de Edad (legible)   Firma del Sujeto Mayor de Edad

_____

Fecha

FIRMA DEL INVESTIGADOR

He explicado la investigación al sujeto o su representante legal y he respondido a todas sus preguntas. Creo que él/ella entiende la información descrita en este formulario de consentimiento y consiente libremente a participar.

_____
Nombre del Investigador (impreso o escrito)

_____   _____
Firma del Investigador   Fecha

Appendix C. Interview Guide/Guía de Entrevista

Instructions

The following interview questions pertain to understanding your involvement and experience in your organization within the broader context of the binational border's history of environmental initiatives. The questions focus on ideas of development, sustainability, and climate change and how your organization understands and interprets these concepts. Additionally, the interview will explore ways your organization communicates and collaborates with government and NGOs to design, participate, and implement projects aim to sustainability, development, and climate change. Your responses are going to be kept confidential by request. Participation in this interview is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable during the interview.

Responses to this interview will be tape-recorded only with your permission.

1. Is there a word for development in Awapit? If there is, how does its meaning differ from development meanings used by government and NGOs? How are the meanings similar? If there is not, why do you think that is? Are there multiple words that describe or define development in Awapit?

2. Is there a word for sustainability in Awapit? If there is, how does its meaning differ from sustainability meanings used by government and NGOs? How are the meanings similar? If there is not, why do you think that is? Are there multiple words that describe or define sustainability in Awapit?

3. Do you think the differences or similarities between the Awá and the Western meanings of development and sustainability influence the way your organization communicates and collaborates with NGOs and government institutions? How?

4. How do you think the differences or similarities between the Awá and the Western meanings of sustainability and development should be addressed when your organization communicates and collaborates with NGOs or government institutions?

5. Do you recall workshops or projects where the differences or similarities between the Awá and the Western meanings of development and sustainability were addressed?

6. Do you recall the Awapit words for development or sustainability been used in workshops organized to address environmental issues in the Awá *katza su*? If not, Why? If they were used, what was significant about it?

7. How does the meaning of *katza su* (Territory-Cosmo environment) inform the work your organization does?

8. How would you explain the Awá's way of "living well" in the *katza su* (Territory-Cosmo environment) to people who are not Awa, for instance, some people working with NGOs or the government?

9. The Plan Salvaguardia Awá (2012) states the need for "generating alternative proposals of development from the Awá's own culture." What do these "alternative proposals" entail? Could you give examples of projects or initiatives that represent this "alternative proposals of development"?

10. If development is achieved in the *katza su*, what would development look like for the Awá people?

11. If sustainability is achieved in the *katza su*, what would sustainability look like for the Awá people?

12. One of the most recent terms in the environmental debate/conversation is climate change. What are your thoughts on climate change?

13. Is there a word for climate change in Awapit? If there is, how does its meaning differ from climate change meanings used by government and NGOs? How are the meanings similar? If there is not, why do you think that is? Are there multiple words that describe or define climate change in Awapit?

14. Do you think the differences or similarities between the Awá and the Western meanings of climate change influence the way your organization collaborates with NGOs and government institutions? How?

15. How do you think the differences or similarities between the Awá and the Western meanings of climate change should be addressed when your organization communicates or collaborates with NGOs or government institutions?

16. Do you recall workshops or projects where the differences or similarities between the Awa and the Western meanings of climate change were addressed?

17. What are some of the strategies that your organization has used related to climate change? How effective have these strategies been?

18. How would you describe working with NGOs and government institutions on sustainability, development, and climate change projects?

19. What do you think is the role of your organization in achieving sustainability and development in the *katza su*, and in dealing with the effects of climate change on Awá communities?

20. What do you think is the role of the Gran Familia Awá Binacional in achieving sustainability and development in the *katza su*, and in dealing with the effects of

climate change on Awá communities?

21. What do you think could improve communication and collaboration between your organization and government and NGOs?

22. What do you think could improve communication and collaboration between the Gran Familia Awá Binacional and government and NGOs?

23. What do you think is the value of using Awapit words in the process of communicating and collaborating with Western organizations (NGOs and government)?

24. What governmental or international documents you use to build the Life Plans or Safeguard Plans? Why? How do you decide which documents or report to incorporate?

25. If you think about the future of the Awá people, what would you like to see happening in regard to sustainability, development and climate change in the *katza su*? What do you expect for the Awá future generations?

26. Any other information that you will like to add? Any other individuals that you can recommend for us to interview?

Guía de Entrevista

Instrucciones

Las preguntas diseñadas para esta entrevista buscan entender su participación y experiencia en su organización dentro del contexto histórico de las iniciativas ambientales desarrolladas en la frontera binacional. Las preguntas se centran en las ideas de desarrollo, sustentabilidad y cambio climático, y en cómo su organización entiende e interpreta estos conceptos. Además, la entrevista explorará las diferentes formas en que su organización se comunica y colabora con el gobierno y las ONGs en el diseño, participación e implementación de proyectos de sustentabilidad, desarrollo y cambio climático. Sus respuestas se mantendrán confidenciales. La participación en esta entrevista es voluntaria y usted puede optar por no responder a ninguna pregunta si se siente incómodo durante la entrevista.

Las respuestas a esta entrevista serán grabadas sólo con su permiso.

1. ¿Existe una palabra en Awapit para desarrollo? Si existe, ¿cómo difiere su significado de los significados de desarrollo utilizados por el gobierno y las ONG? ¿Cómo son estos significados similares? Si no la hay, ¿por qué cree usted que no? ¿Existen múltiples palabras en Awapit que describan o definan desarrollo?

2. ¿Existe una palabra en Awapit para sustentabilidad? Si existe, ¿cómo difiere su significado de los significados de desarrollo utilizados por el gobierno y las ONGs? ¿Cómo son estos significados similares? Si no la hay, ¿por qué crees usted que no? ¿Existen múltiples palabras en Awapit que describan o definan desarrollo?

3. ¿Cree usted que las diferencias o similitudes identificadas entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de desarrollo y sustentabilidad influyen en la forma en que su organización se comunica y colabora con ONGs e instituciones gubernamentales? ¿Cómo?

4. ¿Cómo cree usted que las diferencias o similitudes entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de sustentabilidad y desarrollo deben ser abordadas cuando su organización se comunica y colabora con ONGs o instituciones gubernamentales?

5. ¿Recuerda usted talleres o proyectos en los que se abordaron las diferencias o similitudes entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de desarrollo y sustentabilidad?

6. ¿Recuerda usted que las palabras Awapit para desarrollo o sustentabilidad se hayan utilizado en talleres organizados para abordar temas ambientales en *katza su* Awá? Si no, ¿Por qué? Si se usaron, ¿qué importancia cree usted que esto tuvo?

7. ¿Cómo cree usted que el significado de *katza su* (Territorio-Cosmo ambiente) influencia el trabajo que su organización realiza?

8. ¿Cómo explicaría usted el "vivir bien" Awá en el *katza su* (Territorio-Cosmo Ambiente) a personas que no son Awá, por ejemplo, algunas personas que trabajan con ONGs o el gobierno?

9. El Plan Salvaguardia Awá (2012) afirma la necesidad de "generar propuestas alternativas de desarrollo a partir de la propia cultura Awá." ¿Qué implican estas "propuestas alternativas"? ¿Podría dar ejemplos de proyectos o iniciativas que representen estas "propuestas alternativas de desarrollo"?

10. Si el desarrollo se logra en el *katza su*, ¿cómo sería el desarrollo para el pueblo Awá?

11. Si la sustentabilidad se logra en el *katza su*, ¿cómo sería la sustentabilidad para el pueblo Awá?

12. Uno de los términos más recientes en el debate/conversación ambiental es el cambio climático. ¿Qué piensa usted sobre el cambio climático?

13. ¿Existe una palabra en Awapit para cambio climático? Si existe, ¿cómo difiere su significado de los significados de cambio climático utilizados por el gobierno y las ONG? ¿Cómo son estos significados similares? Si no la hay, ¿por qué cree usted que no? ¿Existen múltiples palabras en Awapit que describan o definan el cambio climático?

14. ¿Cree usted que las diferencias o similitudes entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de cambio climático influyen en la forma en que su organización colabora con las ONGs y las instituciones gubernamentales? ¿Cómo?

15. ¿Cómo cree usted que las diferencias o similitudes entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de cambio climático deben ser abordadas cuando su organización se comunica y colabora con ONGs o instituciones gubernamentales?

16. ¿Recuerda usted talleres o proyectos en los que se abordaron las diferencias o similitudes entre los significados Awá y Occidentales de cambio climático?

17. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las estrategias que su organización ha utilizado relacionadas con el cambio climático? ¿Qué tan efectivas han sido estas estrategias?

18. ¿Cómo describiría trabajar con ONGs e instituciones gubernamentales en proyectos de sustentabilidad, desarrollo y cambio climático?

19. ¿Cuál cree usted que es el papel de su organización en el logro de la sustentabilidad y el desarrollo en el *katza su* y en el tratamiento de los efectos del cambio climático en las comunidades Awá?

20. ¿Cuál cree usted que es el papel de la Gran Familia Awá Binacional en la consecución de la sustentabilidad y desarrollo en el *katza su* y en el tratamiento de los efectos del cambio climático en las comunidades Awá?

21. ¿Qué cree usted que podría mejorar en la comunicación y la colaboración entre su organización y el gobierno y las ONGs?

22. ¿Qué cree usted que podría mejorar la comunicación y la colaboración entre la Gran Familia Awá Binacional y el gobierno y las ONGs?

23. ¿Cuál cree usted que es el valor de usar palabras Awapit en el proceso de comunicación y colaboración con las organizaciones occidentales (ONGs y gobierno)?

24. ¿Qué documentos gubernamentales o internacionales utiliza para construir los Planes de Vida o los Planes de Salvaguardia? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo decide qué documentos o informes incorporar?

25. Si piensa en el futuro del pueblo Awá, ¿Qué le gustaría ver que pase en el *katza su* en relación con la sustentabilidad, el desarrollo y el cambio climático? ¿Qué espera para las generaciones futuras Awá?

26. ¿Alguna otra información que le gustaría añadir? ¿Alguna otra persona que me pueda recomendar para entrevistar?

Appendix D. Information Sheet

Date: _____   Place: _____

I have been informed about the option of making my interview anonymous. I have decided to:

      Use my real name _____   Use a pseudonym _____

Participant's Name (leave blank is pseudonym is selected): _____

Participant's Pseudonym (will be used if selected): _____

I have been informed about the option of making my organizational affiliation anonymous. I have decided to:

      Share my affiliation _____

      Not sharing my affiliation and use a pseudonym _____

Organization's Pseudonym (will be used if selected): _____

I am a member of (leave blank is pseudonym is selected):

FCAE ____   UNIPA _____   CAMAWARI ____
      ACIPAP_____

My position in the organization is: _____

Community where do you live (optional): _____

Language you speak besides Spanish: _____

National origin/Nationality: _____

Hoja de Información

Fecha: _____   Lugar: _____

He sido informado sobre la opción que tengo para hacer mi entrevista anónima. Yo he decidido:

Utilizar mi nombre real _____   Utilizar un pseudónimo _____

Nombre del Participante: (dejar en blanco si se escoge un pseudónimo): _____

Pseudónimo del Participante (será utilizado si es escogido): _____

He sido informado sobre la opción que tengo para hacer mi afiliación organizacional anónima. Yo he decidido:

Compartir mi afiliación _____

No compartir mi afiliación y utilizar un pseudónimo _____

Pseudónimo de la Organización (será utilizado si es escogido): _____

Yo soy miembro de (dejar en blanco si se escoge un pseudónimo):

FCAE ____   UNIPA _____   CAMAWARI ____   ACIPAP_____

Mi cargo en la organización es: _____

La comunidad donde usted vive (opcional): _____

Idioma que habla además del español: _____

Nación de Origen/Nacionalidad: _____

Appendix E. Selection of Awá Videos Published in YouTube

#Ref.: 1
Published By: Camawari Ricaurte
Date: Jul. 5, 2016
Title: Pueblo Awa CAMAWARI
Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr9z_HxSqB0
Time: 9: 43 min.

#Ref.: 2
Published By: UNIPA
Date: Sep. 16, 2014
Title: Asamblea General del Pueblo Indígena Awá. Predio el Verde, Corregimiento el Diviso, Municipio de Barbacoas, Nariño, Colombia.
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um88cv6yoBg&t=187s
Time: 19:21 min.

#Ref.: 3
Published By: Resguardo Tortugaña
Date: Sep. 5, 2014
Title: Realidades de la Zona Telembí Awá.
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DR4MNxiq4g
Time: 15:09

#Ref.: 4
Published By: Gobierno Autónomo Provincial Sucumbíos
Date: Nov. 25, 2016
Title: Reportaje Awá
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f51PzfBKyVA
Time: 4.54

#Ref.: 5
Published By: Care Ecuador
Date: Jan. 23, 2017
Title: Cosmovisión Awá
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebky0YSmgPw
Time: 7:13

#Ref.: 6
Published By: Contravía
Date: March 2012
Title: El Pueblo Awá: "Aprender y luchar para resistir el engaño"
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY-Nk2Uc-M8
Time: 27:46

#Ref.: 7
Published By: Carlos A. Guevara.
Date: April 24, 2009
Title: Minga Awá Parte 1
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60eY-xcy1eA
Time: 5:18

 # Ref 8
Published By: Carlos A. Guevara.
Date: ABRIL 24 2009
Title: Minga Awa Parte 2
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbyt4Gwm47M
Time: 5:18

#Ref.: 9
Published By: Contravía
Date: March 31, 2009
Title: Desplazamiento del pueblo Awá en Ricaurte, Nariño (2/3)
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXnYTupzFBg
Time: 9:52

#Ref.: 10
Published By: Contravía
Date: March 31, 2009
Title: Desplazamiento del pueblo Awá en Ricaurte, Nariño (3/3)
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrI0nRCFVmc
Time: 9:04

#Ref.: 11
Published By: Contravía
Date: March 20, 2012
Title: Situación Comunidad Awá en Nariño Parte I (inglés)
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xs3fixib28
Time: 28:00

#Ref.: 12
Published By: Contravía
Date: March 21, 2012
Title: Situación comunidad Awá en Nariño II (English)
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sore-HnhUk&t=18s
Time: 27:06

#Ref.: V13
Published by: Corporación de Productores Audiovisuales de las Nacionalidades y
Pueblos (CORPANP), Ecuador
Date: Nov. 2011

Title: Nacionalidad Awa
Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A6G2FALSC8
Time: 5:09

Appendix F. Awá Myth of Creation

Se cuenta que en un principio no había nada. Después nació una yerba y de ella salieron dios y el diablo. Primero fueron a conocer el mundo; al verlo vacío pensaron que no era muy bueno. Se sentaron frente a frente y empezaron a hacer la Tierra: cuando dios hizo la tierra, el diablo hizo las peñas.

Luego el diablo quiso ser dueño de todo. Entonces, se pusieron a pelear. El diablo tenía una escopeta para matar a dios. Dios le dijo "dispárame", y el diablo disparó. Dios paró con la mano los plomos y el diablo no pudo matarlo. Enseguida, dios tomó la escopeta y le disparó al diablo, tampoco murió, le pasaron por los lados. El diablo quiso engañar a dios recogiendo los plomos del suelo, para convencerlo de que los agarró como él. Pero dios se dio cuenta y le dijo: "Como no pudiste coger

It is said that in the beginning there was nothing. Then a weed was born and from it came god and the devil. First, they went to know the world; when they saw it empty, they thought that it was not very good. They sat face to face and began to make the Earth: when god made the Earth, the devil made the rocks.

Then the devil wanted to own everything. Then, they started fighting. The devil had a shotgun to kill god. God told him to "shoot me," and the devil fired. God stopped the bullets with the hand, and the devil could not kill him. Immediately, God took the shotgun and shot the devil; he did not die either, the bullets passed him by the sides. The devil wanted to deceive God by picking up the bullets from the floor to convince him that he stopped and grabbed them like god. But God realized and said: "Since you

los plomos, perdiste". Así, el diablo no pudo ser dueño de todo el mundo.

Después de esta pelea se pusieron a hacer a las personas. Dios tenía un hueso de vaca, que el perro del diablo se lo estaba comiendo. Cuando se dio cuenta corrió a coger tierra blanca de medio metro de hondo y empezó a hacer a las personas. Dios moldeó tres muñecos y, cuando terminó, se pusieron negros. El diablo también moldeó figuras, pero de su misma raza. Al rato dios mandó a los muñecos a bañarse en el chorro, aconsejándoles de que no se bañaran mucho tiempo. El primero que entró no le hizo caso y se bañó más del tiempo indicado este era mestizo. Entró el segundo, el chorro ya se estaba secando; este era Awá. El último apenas alcanzó a lavarse las manos y los pies; este era negro.

Después dios hizo lo animales y las plantas; el diablo hizo todo lo contrario:

could not take the bullets, you lost." Thus, the devil could not own the whole world.

After this fight, they started making people. God had a cow bone, which the devil's dog was eating. When God realized, he ran to get white soil that was two feet deep into the ground, and he began to make people. God molded three dolls, and when he finished, they turned black. The devil molded figure but of his own race. Soon, god sent the dolls to bathe in a water stream advising them not to bathe for a long time. The first one that entered did not pay attention to him, and he bathed more than the indicated time; this was mestizo. The second doll entered, the water stream was already drying; this was Awá. The last one could barely wash his hands and feet; this was black.

Then God made the animals and the plants; the devil did the opposite: god

dios hizo el venado, el diablo el gusano,	made the deer, the devil the worm, god
dios hizo la vaca, el diablo la munchira.	made the cow, the devil the munchira.

Source: Historia del Pueblo Awá del Ecuador. Awaruspa anña pura ikuaturkin
(FCAE, 2016, p. 127)
Note: The author did some editions to the Spanish version. English version translated by
the author.

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