3-2014

The politics of indigenous social struggle in Colombia

Gilberto Villasenor III
DePaul University, chicanorico@gmail.com

THE POLITICS OF INDIGENOUS SOCIAL STRUGGLE

IN COLOMBIA

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

March, 2014

BY

Gilberto Villaseñor III

Department of International Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

DePaul University

Chicago, Illinois

Table of Contents

"The increasing realisation that there are modern problems for which there are no modern solutions points towards the need to move beyond the paradigm of modernity and, hence, beyond the Third World."—Arturo Escobar[1]

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Indigenous social movements in Colombia have rarely received widespread attention. But when they do, they're often depicted as vulnerable and passive victims of Colombia's civil war.[2] Even when they're shown to be protagonists in the conflict, little information is given that would illuminate their point of view, other than their opposition to encroachment on their territories.[3] However, things are more complicated, as I learned during my work in Colombia. Indigenous social movement participants are theorizing and attempting to implement their own social, political, and economic vision for development in accordance with their historical experience and their values.

In February 2006, I began a yearlong commitment as a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's (FOR's) accompaniment project in Colombia. Through my work with the project, I was associated with, exposed to, and deeply immersed in several of Colombia's most vibrant social movements. FOR's work in Colombia was divided between two locations. One two-person team was based in the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó located in a northwestern sliver of the department of Antioquia, not far from the border with Panama. Another two-person team was based

---

[1] Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 207–30.

[2] Simon Romero, "Wider Drug War Threatens Colombian Indians," *The New York Times*, April 21, 2009, sec. World / Americas, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/22/world/americas/22colombia.html.

[3] Associated Press, "Colombia's Stubborn Conflict Bared as Frustrated Indians Revolt," *The Washington Post*, July 21, 2012, sec. World, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/colombias-stubborn-conflict-bared-as-frustrated-indians-revolt/2012/07/21/gJQALypazW_story.html; Juan Forero, "Colombia War Spills Into Indians' Peaceful World," *The New York Times*, May 2, 2005, sec. International / Americas, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/02/international/americas/02indians.html.

1

in Bogotá, the capital. During my time in Colombia, I worked six months in San José de Apartadó and six months in Bogotá. Accompaniers working in the Peace Community lived in a remote peasant-farming village. The Peace Community was located in the middle of a war zone where all three armed actors were active—guerrillas, military, and paramilitary. Project members would support community members' commitment to peace through the physical and political accompaniment of community members in their various projects.

The accompaniment work in the field would take various forms: meetings were organized and documented with Colombian Army officers and National Police officials, local human rights workers, and local community leaders. Information was gathered and analyzed about security, troop movements, and possible threats to the community in the region. There was constant consultation with our other offices in Bogotá and San Francisco, CA. The Bogotá office was charged with arranging meetings with US Embassy officials, bureaucrats from the Colombian Vice President's office, and human rights groups. Bogotá staff also remained on-call for emergencies, wrote articles about organizations working for peace in Colombia, translated documents for these groups, organized and led a human rights delegation from the United States.

A great deal occurred within a very short period of time after my arrival in Colombia. Within the first three months of my time in country, I was caught in crossfire between guerrillas and Colombian soldiers.[4] I also accompanied Peace Community members on two challenging and risky trips to recover remote fertile lands that had been abandoned due to the war. On one of those trips, we found ourselves alone and

---

[4] Chris Kraul, "Village's Unarmed Rebellion," *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 2006, http://articles.latimes.com/2006/sep/18/world/fg-peacetown18.

confronted with a local guerrilla commander who forced us into a conversation with him.

During that time, I was also exposed to groups that encompassed various elements of the broad spectrum of leftwing social movements in Colombia. The group that I primarily worked with, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, was connected with the peasant and peace movements. FOR staff based in Bogotá provided political accompaniment to two organizations: the ACA, *Asociación Campesina de Antioquia,* and the *Red Juvenil de Medellín* (Medellín Youth Network). The ACA supports peasant farmers and was part of the food sovereignty movement. The Red Juvenil is an organization that was part of the youth and conscientious objection movements.

During this time I also had the opportunity to tag along on a weeklong trip that Dr. Elizabeth Lozano organized to visit Nasa indigenous communities in the department of Cauca. On that trip, we visited the communities of Santander de Quilichao, Caloto, Toribio, and Jambaló. We met with the mayors of Toribio and Jambaló, the coordinators of their youth movement and their communication apparatus, along with members of other governing bodies.

Most memorable for me were visits to a legal education project, their radio station, Radio Pa´yumat, and a visit to a cooperative that made yogurt for local consumption. They shared with us delicious soda and tea that their communities had produced out of coca leaf. They discussed their work, community projects, achievements, challenges, and hopes for the future. I was impressed by their high degree of organization and their pride in their culture. I was also struck by the fact that

3

many of their projects-political, social, and economic-were interrelated with various goals and values. For example, their project producing coca tea was not only a productive project used to generate income for their communities, but it was also part of the Nasa's effort to support legitimate and culturally appropriate uses of coca, which they have traditionally used for medicinal purposes. This experience left me curious about the political impact of indigenous social movements in Colombia. It also spurred my desire to learn more about how Colombian indigenous social movements exist within a larger history of social movements in Lain America.

1.1 Lessons and Questions from my Experience in Colombia

During my time in Colombia I learned a number of important lessons. I learned that the FARC, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia,* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas mostly operate independently of leftwing social movements in Colombia. The people who make up these social movements are caught between the various armed actors and are often attacked because the government cannot easily reach the guerrillas. Social movement participants have their own platforms and agendas that are largely invisible to foreigners and even many people within Colombia. All of these lessons can be learned by reading scholarly works about Colombia. However, I had the opportunity to observe the ways in which these dynamics of Colombia's civil war play themselves out on the ground in a rural war zone.

I also learned about the international implications of Colombia's civil war and the efforts of Colombia's leftwing social movements. From outside of Colombia, media reports have tended to focus on Colombia's relationship with the United States and Venezuela. There were numerous moments of tension between former president Álvaro

4

Uribe Vélez and Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. By contrast, Colombian social movements' alliance with international movements is less well known. Social movement particpants in Colombia were connected with international human rights and social justice organizations such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Brigades International, Witness for Peace, and Christian Peacemakers Teams. But beyond this, Colombian social movement participants were also involved in various international movements: environmental, human rights, ant-globalization, and food sovereignty, among others. Many of the participants that I observed used the ideas and rhetoric of these international movements to frame their own struggles within the Colombian context. Conversely, foreign observers sympathetic to these international movements drew on the Colombian example to highlight why these movements continued to be relevant and necessary.

My experience raised questions for me about the nature and viability of contemporary social movements challenging neoliberal globalization. It made me question the role and significance of these movements. How can social movement participants constructively struggle against neoliberal globalization? Are the members of social movements capable of experimenting with alternatives to neoliberal globalization while they attempt to challenge it? What do alternatives to neoliberal globalization look like? What lessons do Colombian rural social movements hold for people living in other contexts?

Map 1: Regional Map of Northern Cauca
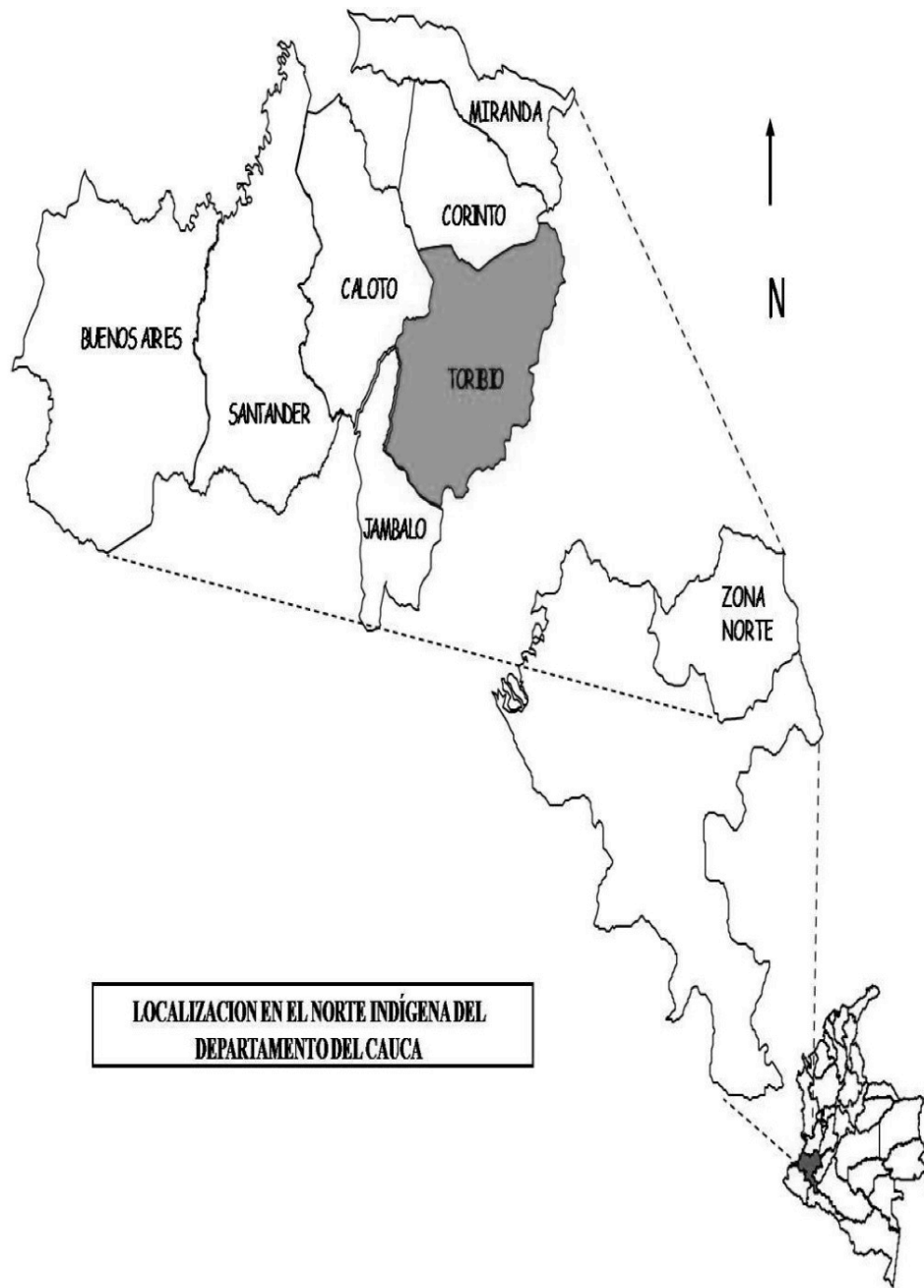
Source: The Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Toribio, Tacueyo, and San Francisco "Proyecto Nasa"

1.2 The Nasa Indigenous People of Colombia

This thesis will primarily focus on the Nasa indigenous people. The Nasa, formerly known as the Paez, have traditionally been depicted as warriors who fought the Spanish invasion when they encountered it in 1538. The Nasa are mostly farmers who live in settlements scattered across the Cordillera Central. The Nasa primarily live in the northern and eastern regions of the department of Cauca and the western part of the department of Huila. They cultivate coffee, maize, beans, tubers, sisal, vegetables, medicinal plants, sugar cane, and potatoes. They also raise cattle. Tierradentro is considered the heart of Nasa territory and is located in the department of Cauca.[5]

Two of the most important themes in Nasa history could be summarized as a struggle for autonomy and resistance to encroachment on their culture and territory. Nasa resistance could be further subdivided into two forms, legal and extralegal. Nasa resistance to the Spanish invaders could be considered an extralegal form of resistance. Before the conquest, Nasa territory was constituted by various chiefdoms with fluid territorial boundaries. These chiefdoms were made up of different ethno-linguistic groups. Chiefs did not control lands or tax their followers. They only formally exercised their authority during wartime. The Spanish attempted to invade Tierradentro as early as 1538. The Nasa managed to repel the Spaniards militarily as late as 1623.[6]

Certain factors, such as the *encomienda* system, gave rise to the Nasa struggle for autonomy. After the Spaniards conquered the Nasa militarily, they imposed the encomienda system on them. The encomienda was a grant given by the Spanish Crown

---

[5] David D. Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and the Moral Imagination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2008), 67–68.

[6] Joris Jan van de Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition: Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2007), 35–37.

7

to conquerers and their families. An encomienda gave a subject of the Crown the right to tax and conscript the indigenous people of a particular area. Indigenous people were supposed to be offered protection and conversion into the Catholic faith. However, the encomienda did not give the encomendero formal property rights to lands occupied by local inhabitants. Encomenderos used their encomienda to subject the Nasa and other indigenous people to forced labor in locations that were far from their place of origin. Even after the Spanish succeeded in imposing the encomienda system on them, the Nasa continued to resist the Spaniards and their descendants by hiding in the mountains.[7]

The early Nasa struggle for autonomy was interrelated with their struggle for recognition of their lands as *resguardos*. In the 17th century, Nasa chiefs fought to have their lands recognized as part of the resguardo system. The concept of the resguardo was originally developed during the colonial period but persists up until the present day. Resguardos refer to demarcated territories where, in theory, the indigenous inhabitants enjoy a certain measure of self-government and autonomy and the resguardo itself enjoys a special relationship with the government. It is not to be confused with *reservas indígenas* (indigenous reserves), which have a different and less autonomous status within Colombia's political system.[8] Between 1700 and 1708, several Nasa resguardos were recognized by the Spanish Crown. The recognition of the resguardos marked the formal end of the encomienda system in Nasa territory.

---

[7] Ibid., 37–38.
[8] Bettina Ng'weno, *On Titling Collective Property, Participation, and Natural Resource Management: Implementing Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Demands : A Review of Bank Experience in Colombia*, 2000, 2.

Despite their success in having their resguardos recognized, the Nasa faced an ongoing struggle over autonomy and encroachment onto their territory.[9] After Colombia gained its independence from Spain in 1819, the new republican state attempted to move towards the elimination of the resguardo system, in favor of private property. The government succeeded in abolishing Nasa chiefdoms and replacing hereditary chiefs with elected councils or cabildos as part of an effort to undermine traditional indigenous authority.[10] New legislation was eventually passed, Law 89 of 1890, which significantly impacted indigenous people's rights. The law had some regressive and progressive elements. On the negative side, the law broke up the Nasa resguardos into smaller political units and undermined the political unity of indigenous communities. It also referred to indigenous people in a paternalistic manner and regarded them as legal minors. On the other hand, the law recognized indigenous customary practices as a source of law, it provided some legal protection for the resguardo as a territory with limited autonomy, and restricted non-indigenous settlement on resguardo lands.[11]

Manuel Quintín Lame (1883-1967), a leader of an indigenous protest movement that arose at the beginning of the 20th century, symbolizes the legal and extralegal forms of resistance taken up by the Nasa. The protest movement developed in response to the encroachment of wealthy landowners into indigenous territories and the disintegration of the resguardos. Lame was the son of a Nasa tenant farmer who was elected in 1910 by various indigenous *cabildos* to be their chief and representative before the government. Prior to his election he traveled through Nasa communities to rally the indigenous population. He organized informational talks with cabildos and indigenous tenant

---

[9] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 38–41.
[10] Ibid., 43–44.
[11] Ibid., 48–50.

farmers where he would encourage them to fight for their rights. Lame discussed

several distinct themes of the Nasa indigenous struggle:

1. The need to defend the geographic integrity of the resguardos
2. The centrality of the cabildo as an institution with authority within indigenous communities
3. Recovery of stolen land and the repudiation of land titles that did not emanate from the Spanish Crown
4. Noncooperation with the institution of tenant farming through rejection of rent payment or taxes
5. The uplifting of indigenous values and a refusal to accept discrimination

Lame was famous for fighting for indigenous rights through both legal and extralegal

means. He lived in Bogotá for a time, advocating for the indigenous struggle by writing

letters to the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Supreme Court and meeting with the

president. There is some controversy over the extent to which Lame advocated for

violent tactics in support of the indigenous struggle. At least one account argues that he

brought together about 80 people who were ready to confront white landowners. Lame

was considered enough of a threat by Colombian authorities that he was imprisoned

several times, the first time for one year and the second time for four years. After his

second stint in prison, he was banned from the department of Cauca in 1922, marking

the effective suppression of the Lamista movement in Cauca.[12]

1.3 Contemporary Indigenous Social Movements in Colombia

While I have already cited various instances of Nasa resistance to European

colonizers and their descendants since the colonial period, by the late 1960s indigenous

citizens' aspirations for a better quality of life were seen as emanating from their class

identities as peasants. Governments throughout Latin America had policies that

---

[12] Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 63–65, doi:10.1177/0094582X11423221; Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 50–54.

encouraged the assimilation of indigenous people into a dominant national culture as citizens or they encouraged them to adopt class identities as peasants, without recognition of their ethnic origins. It was presumed that indigenous people were not capable of organizing themselves outside of the "left or clientelist political parties."[13] According to Erick Langer, "Indigenous peoples could not object to programs by claiming a different ethnic or racial status," which "led to an implicit policy of ethnocide."[14] Similar conditions prevailed in Colombia.

From the 1950s to the 1960s, the Colombian government implemented various initiatives as part of an effort to control and appease agrarian social movements: Law 19 of 1958, Law 135 of 1961, and the creation of the peasant organization ANUC in 1966. Each of these will be explained in greater detail in a moment. There were other initiatives that were specifically aimed at indigenous people in Colombia: an initiative to stimulate more modern forms of economic and political organization in indigenous communities, Law 81 of 1958; and the creation of a Division of Indigenous Affairs under Decree 1634, charged with promoting the integration of indigenous people into Colombian society. These initiatives were important, since participation in formal political institutions was limited by various National Front governments.[15]

The National Front was a political arrangement that lasted for 16 years between 1958 and 1974, where Colombia's two main political parties, the Liberal and Conservative Parties, ended their partisan conflict and agreed to alternate control of the presidency and evenly split all other elective political offices. While this ended violent

---

[13] Donna Lee Van Cott, "Indigenous Peoples' Politics in Latin America," *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, no. 1 (May 2010): 386, doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.032708.133003.
[14] Ibid., 386; Erick D. Langer and Elena Muñoz, *Contemporary Indigenous Movements in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2003), xiii.
[15] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 61–62.

partisan conflicts, it also blocked other political parties from participating in Colombian political institutions. The two main political parties continued to dominate the political system even after the formal end of the National Front arrangement.[16]

The three most significant government initiatives for the broader peasant movement in Colombia were Law 19, Law 135, and the creation of the ANUC, *Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* (National Association of Peasant Producers). Law 19 of 1958 created a program called *Acción Comunal* (Community Action) "for the promotion of economic and social development in local communities designed to reincorporate the peasantry into national life and reestablish state control in the violence torn countryside."[17] Although the *Juntas de Acción Comunal* (Community Action Councils) were supposed to be mechanisms of rural social control, there were instances where the indigenous movement was later able to appropriate it in the service of the land repossession movement.[18]

An important government program for the peasant movement was Law 135 of 1961, the Agrarian Social Reform Law. INCORA, *Instituto Colombiano para la Reforma Agraria*, (Colombian Institute for the Agrarian Reform) was created to implement the agrarian reform law. The law was aimed at small landholders and subsistence farmers. It was supposed to help "improve productivity through technical assistance, to increase incomes through the promotion of peasant cooperatives, and to provide better services."[19] The reform mostly failed to reach these objectives but it was

---

[16] Forrest Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 1st ed. (London, UK: Verso, 2006), 51–66; Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 61–62.

[17] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 61–62.

[18] Ibid., 91.

[19] Nazih Richani, *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 27–28.

also intended to help the ruling classes regain control of the countryside. The Nasa had

mixed feelings about the agrarian reform program. The agrarian reform provided some

benefits to indigenous communities such as economic technical assistance, social

programs, and limited political recognition as indigenous peasants. However, the

program was implemented "without much consideration for communities' indigenous

identity and institutions, particularly communal land tenure, and demands for the

recognition of indigenous territory and autonomy."[20]

Another key program for peasant movements was the establishment of the

ANUC. There are varying interpretations of the meaning of the government's creation

of the ANUC. On the one hand, it appears to have been established by reformist

president Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) as an ally that would create pressure from

below for land reform and help neutralize landowners' resistance to agrarian reform.[21]

On the other hand, it also appears to have been part of an effort to control and steer an

increasingly mobilized agrarian movement that was directing its energy towards a land

struggle and an armed insurgency.[22] The ANUC was eventually radicalized from the

slow pace of reforms and from a process of counter-reform initiated by the government

of Misael Pastrana. The ANUC severed ties with the Colombian government during

Pastrana's administration and organized land invasions during the early 1970s.[23]

Despite the strong participation of indigenous people in rural social movements,

---

[20] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 63.
[21] Ibid., 62–63; Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," 66.
[22] Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," 66; Richani, *Systems of Violence*, 30.
[23] Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," 67.

throughout the 1960s, indigenous activism through the ANUC was conducted on the basis of class and not ethnicity.[24]

Several factors set the stage for the emergence of the first indigenous movement organization in Colombia in the 1970s: the left was divided and unable to effectively address indigenous people's concerns; and the state was unwilling to radically restructure agrarian social relations on the basis of class concerns.[25]

There are different explanations for the awakening of contemporary indigenous social movements in Latin America between the 1970s-1980s. The development of these movements has been attributed to several factors: the support of progressive sectors of Christian churches, the emergence of international advocacy networks and professional anthropologists willing to support indigenous peoples, disappointment regarding the new democratic regimes and the simultaneous process of market liberalization.[26]

Also significant was the opportunity provided by the 1989 International Labor Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169.[27] ILO Convention 169 legally bound ratifying states to a common definition of indigenous people. It replaced an earlier more assimilationist convention from 1957, which "reflected and expressed

---

[24] Brett Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia: The Experience of the Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca in Southwestern Colombia from 1970 to 1990," *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 171–173; Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," 66.

[25] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 62–63; Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia," 173.

[26] Dorothy L Hodgson, "Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on the Indigenous Rights Movement in Africa and the Americas," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 1040, doi:10.1525/aa.2002.104.4.1037; Salvador Martí i Puig, "The Emergence of Indigenous Movements in Latin America and Their Impact on the Latin American Political Scene Interpretive Tools at the Local and Global Levels," *Latin American Perspectives* 37, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 74–92, doi:10.1177/0094582X10382100; Van Cott, "Indigenous Peoples' Politics in Latin America," 387; Jean E. Jackson and Kay B. Warren, "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992–2004: Controversies, Ironies, New Directions," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (October 2005): 553, doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.34.081804.120529.

[27] Jackson and Warren, "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992–2004," 551.

the assumptions and objectives of modernization" and took a more paternalistic view of indigenous peoples. By contrast Convention169 affirmed indigenous peoples' right to autonomy and self determination within the legal framework of the countries where they reside. The convention also enumerated various indigenous rights and governmental responsibilities such as: support for indigenous language instruction, government support for health and education programs, respect for indigenous customary law, recognition of indigenous rights to their lands, and an end to discrimination against indigenous peoples.[28]

The two Nasa themes of autonomy and resistance reasserted themselves in the 1970s. The first indigenous organization in Colombia, the CRIC, *Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* (Cauca Indigenous Regional Council) was founded by Nasa and Guambiano community members in 1971. The demands of its second founding conference reflect the emphasis on autonomy and resistance and echoed Quintín Lame's demands:

> (1) the repossession of resguardo lands; (2) the expansion of the resguardos; (3) the strengthening of cabildos; (4) an end to sharecropping; (5) the promotion of the knowledge of indigenous legislation and the demand that it be applied; (6) the defense of the history, language, and customs of native communities; and (7) the training and employment of indigenous teachers.[29]

Much of the work of the CRIC during the 1970s was directed towards reclaiming autonomy over indigenous territories. The reclaiming of autonomy took place in a variety of ways. The Nasa undertook land occupations of areas that had been usurped by the owners of haciendas. The CRIC reconstituted cabildos that no longer existed,

[28] Hodgson, "Introduction," 1038–1039.

[29] Joanne Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia: The Consejo Regional Indigena Del Cauca," *Social Analysis* 51, no. 2 (2007): 109, doi:10.3167/sa.2007.510206; Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia," 177; Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 77.

searched for resguardo titles in local archives, and created cooperatives in indigenous communities.[30]

During this time the Nasa's participation in indigenous social movements was seen as a subversive threat by the authorities. At a national level, various presidential administrations were generally hostile to any land occupation campaigns. In 1978, the administration of Julio César Turbay Ayala implemented an *Estatuto de Seguridad Nacional* (National Security Statute), which gave the military wider latitude to conduct their counter-insurgency war against the guerrillas. The security forces and landowners took advantage of the new measure to go after indigenous activists. The onslaught of violence and political and legal measures aimed at social movement participants forced the Nasa to curtail their organizing activities and to temporarily suspend their land occupations.[31]

It was within the context of state repression during the late 1970s that the Nasa began to look for ways to protect their communities. A self-defense army was organized by Pablo Tattay, a cofounder of the CRIC, along with other indigenous activists in 1977. This army would later come to be known as the MAQL, *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* (Quintín Lame Armed Movement). Initially, they worked with a group within the ELN, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army) called *Corriente Socialista Renovadora* (Socialist Renovation Current). They eventually received military training from another guerrilla group, the M-19, *Movimiento del 19 de Abril* (April 19 Movement).[32]

---

[30] Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia," 109.
[31] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 102.
[32] Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia," 184.

Even though they had been organizing and training since 1978, the MAQL did not make its first public appearance as a guerrilla army until December 1984. The MAQL decided to emerge at the moment that it did for several strategic reasons. Indigenous communities were facing a climate of repression and the MAQL wanted to make it clear that none of the guerilla movements were going to absorb the indigenous movement. The way in which the MAQL went public was as significant as the timing of its emergence. By linking itself with the memory of the indigenous activist, Quintín Lame, and taking on a distinctively indigenous identity, the MAQL distinguished itself from other guerrilla groups and sent a clear signal to the authorities that the group had no intention of taking over the state. All of this gave it a unique legitimacy. The MAQL went after those responsible for killing CRIC members and community members. They also punished simple crimes in the communities where they operated and, over time, provided protection to Nasa indigenous communities from the FARC.[33]

Despite the difficulties that the Nasa communities faced throughout the 1980s, there were some important advances as well. Newly elected President Belisario Betancur met with Guambiano and Nasa indigenous leaders in 1982 on a repossessed hacienda in the Guambiano resguardo of Silvia. Betancur dramatically affirmed "a complete rehabilitation of the rights of indigenous communities in respect of territory and autonomy, as laid down in Law 89 of 1890."[34]

The Nasa's organizing efforts in the 1970s-1980s, gave way to mobilizations and social and political gains in the 1990s-2000s. The MAQL demobilized in May of 1991 after participating in a peace process during the presidential administration of Virgilio

---

[33] Ibid., 185.
[34] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 110–111.

Barco (1986-1990). By the time the MAQL was disbanded, indigenous communities in Cauca had retaken 75 percent of the territory that had historically belonged to them, and they had accomplished this mostly through the unarmed struggle of the indigenous communities and the CRIC. In the end, the demobilization of the MAQL helped advance the struggle because it removed an obstacle to better relations between the state and indigenous communities. Perhaps one of the biggest benefits to come out of the MAQL's demobilization process was the opportunity to participate in the drafting of Colombia's new constitutional framework. The demobilization of the MAQL allowed it to have representation in the constituent assembly that had been convened to draft the new constitution.[35] The three indigenous representatives, two of which also represented different indigenous organizations, were allowed to be present at the constituent assembly proceedings but not allowed to vote. The representatives allied themselves with demobilized M-19 combatants in the constitutional assembly to secure more support for indigenous rights.

Colombia, along with other countries in Latin America responded to indigenous peoples' organizing by implementing constitutional reforms that expanded rights and recognized ethnic difference.[36] Various reasons have been cited for this change in state policy. The Colombian state needed to shore up its legitimacy in response to threats posed by paramilitary and guerrilla groups and the implementation of neoliberal economic policies. At the same time, the Nasa found that by embracing a politics of ethnic difference, indigenous movements were "able to avoid the subversive label and to

---

[35] Vanegas, "Indigenous Resistance and the Law," 70.
[36] Jackson and Warren, "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992–2004," 551.

achieve the recovery of land in a nonthreatening way for the Colombian state."[37] This

was nonthreatening because it allowed the government to respect ethnic claims without

having to honor claims made against the state on the basis of class.

Colombia's new constitution provided new rights and opportunities to

indigenous movements. According to Donna Lee Van Cott, "The 1991 Constitution

recognized the rights of resguardos to elect their own authorities according to their own

customs, to design and implement development plans, to exercise indigenous customary

law to resolve disputes within the community, to raise and administer taxes, and to

receive a portion of national income."[38] Members of indigenous social movements

increased their participation in electoral politics, taking advantage of spaces opened up

by their mobilizing by creating political organizations. These included: the Alianza

Social Indígena in 1991; the Movimiento Indígena Colombiano in 1993; and the

movement Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia in 1994.[39]

The success of the Nasa indigenous movement in recovering territory and in

gaining new rights through the Colombian constitution, led to a period of demobilization

for the indigenous movement during the 1990s. There was a shift in emphasis away

from civil disobedience and direct action, and more of a focus on working through

formal political institutions and the legal system. This has been attributed to several

factors. Indigenous movements' relationship with the state moved from the position of

being complete outsiders to having more of a formal relationship with the state and

---

[37] Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia," 187.
[38] Donna Lee Van Cott, "Constitutional Reform in the Andes: Redefining Indigenous-State Relations," in *Multiculturalism in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 49–50.
[39] Farid Samir Benavides-Vanegas, "Indigenous People's Mobilization and Their Struggle for Rights in Colombia," *SSRN eLibrary*, December 2009, 29, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1884151.

"negotiating such varied issues as the provision of health care and the administration of indigenous schools."[40] There was also a generational change in the leadership of the cabildos and the CRIC, with younger people increasingly coming into leadership positions. The new generation had more formal education and fluency in Spanish but the older generation had more political experience from the land struggles of the 60s, 70s, and 80s.[41]

The 2000s have been a period of renewed militancy among the Nasa. The indigenous leaders of the resguardos of northern Cauca came to the strategic decision that their communities had to develop a response to political and economic issues of national and international significance that were having an impact at a local level. One of the main protagonists in organizing around these issues has been the ACIN, *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca* (Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca), an umbrella organization that represents 14 resguardos and 16 cabildos in northern Cauca.[42] There have been three main issues that the Nasa have been concerned with tackling under the auspices of the ACIN: (1) finding a peaceful resolution to Colombia's civil war, (2) resisting the neoliberal economic policies of the Colombian government, and (3) pressuring the government to fulfill commitments it had previously made to help indigenous communities address land scarcity and economic problems.[43]

Much of the renewed militancy of the Nasa in the 2000s was inspired by the policies of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010). Uribe pressed forward with a

---

[40] Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia," 113.
[41] Ibid.
[42] "About the ACIN," *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte Del Cauca - ACIN*, accessed September 20, 2012, http://www.nasaacin.org/sobre-acin.
[43] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 225–226.

20

number of neoliberal initiatives such as: a free trade agreement with the United States, a Paramos Law that would have shifted "rights to the control and management of paramo highlands…from indigenous communities to the state," and a forestry bill that opened up forests to greater control and development by private interests.[44]

1.4 The Contemporary Context in Colombia

While much of Latin America has experienced some sort of political shift towards the left over the past decade, Colombia "has been governed since 1986 by a series of conservative leaders committed to neoliberalism, the U.S. "drug war" agenda, and the direct support or toleration of repression of challenges to the state's political, social, and economic agenda."[45]   Over the past 50 years various guerrilla movements have challenged Colombia's status quo. As a consequence, the country has been embroiled in a prolonged civil war. Only two guerrilla groups continue to remain a significant force: the FARC and the ELN.

The violence of the civil war predominantly affects trade unionists, peasants, indigenous people, and Afro-Colombians. Most of Colombia's countryside is in a state of emergency. According to the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development, 64% of rural women and men, are classified as living in poverty and 29% live in severe poverty.[46] Colombia's internally displaced (IDP) population, estimated to be anywhere between three to five million people, out of a total estimated population of 46.3 million,

---

[44] Ibid., 228.

[45] William Avilés, "Colombia's Left," *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 5, doi:10.1177/0094582X11422209.

[46] International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Rural Poverty in Colombia," *Rural Poverty Portal*, accessed September 8, 2012, http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/rural-poverty-portal/country/home/tags/colombia.

has been cited as the biggest humanitarian catastrophe of the Western Hemisphere.[47]

More than 280,000 people were forcibly displaced in 2010 alone.[48]

While displacement is the most common form of violence against the rural civilian population, violent attacks and targeted assassinations are also common. The ONIC, *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia) reported that in 2010 various warring parties had killed 122 indigenous people. Paramilitary groups have mostly targeted human rights defenders and trade unionists. In that same year, at least 14 human rights defenders were killed. The National Trade Union School also reported that 51 members of trade unions had been assassinated. Extrajudicial executions by the armed forces are also an issue. More than 2300 have been carried out since 1985 but few have been prosecuted. Also in 2010, 446 unidentified bodies were recovered in a cemetery next to an army base in La Macarena, Meta Department.[49]   In the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, the peasant farming community previously mentioned, more than 180 residents have been killed since the community was founded in 1997. The population has shrunk from about 3,000 members in the mid 1990s to about 1,500 residents who are currently living there.[50]

War and violence in Colombia have gone hand in hand with a certain kind of capitalist development. Between the 1980s and 1990s, paramilitaries snatched up 4.4

---

[47] "Colombia Has Biggest Humanitarian Crisis in Western Hemisphere, UN Says," *UN News Centre*, May 10, 2004, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=10691&Cr=colombia&Cr1.
[48] *Annual Report 2011: The State of the World's Human Rights*, 38th ed. (London, UK: Amnesty International, 2011), http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/colombia/report-2011.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Vanessa Joan Gray, "Nonviolence and Sustainable Resource Use with External Support," *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 49, doi:10.1177/0094582X11423225.

million hectares of land worth 4.4 billion dollars[51] and another "5 million hectares

between 1997 and 2003 – the largest land grab in Colombian history."[52] Paramilitary

groups allied with state security forces have acquired lands of strategic military or

economic value through forced displacement as part of their strategy of terrorizing the

civilian population. They then use this land "to cultivate cash crops (legal and

otherwise) or for cattle ranching and extractive industries undertaken by foreign

companies".[53]

     Despite the intensity of the violence, indigenous people have been challenging

the government, as well as armed actors, to find a peaceful political solution to the civil

war. Even more importantly, they have also been forging ahead with their own

alternative visions for development and democracy. In the process, indigenous people

have become significant political actors in efforts to bring an end to state violence in

Colombia.

1.5 Research Questions

     While much of the narrative laid out in this introduction regarding the Nasa has

focused on their domestic struggles, their story has international implications. Time and

again throughout Colombian history the Nasa have resisted projects of accumulation

through dispossession by elites operating inside and outside of the Colombian state. The

Nasa are not the only group of people who have struggled against processes of

accumulation through dispossession in Colombia, and these processes are not unique to

Colombia globally. Strategies of accumulation through dispossession are a core part of

---

[51] Richani, *Systems of Violence*, 34.
[52] Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 118.
[53] Jasmin Hristov, "Legalizing the Illegal: Paramilitarism in Colombia's 'Post-Paramilitary' Era,"
NACLA Report on the Americas 42, no. 4 (August 2009): 18–19.

23

the agenda of neoliberal globalization, they cannot be regarded as the random actions of those who are dispossessing the Nasa.

But what is meant by accumulation through dispossession or primitive accumulation? Primitive accumulation is considered the original sin of capitalism. It is about the process through which capitalism violently establishes itself in places where it does not exist or is not the dominant mode of production. According to Rosa Luxembourg:

> The other aspect of the accumulation of capital concerns the relations between capitalism and the non-capitalist modes of production which start making their appearance on the international stage. Its predominant methods are colonial policy, an international loan system—a policy of spheres of interest—and war. Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process.[54]

Scholars such as David Harvey have called for the use of the term accumulation by dispossession rather than primitive accumulation because it more accurately describes it as an ongoing feature of capitalist development.[55] Accumulation by dispossession continues to manifest itself through the following processes:

> These include the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights (…collective…,etc.) into exclusive private property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons; the commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial…processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); the monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly land; the slave trade; and usury…and ultimately the credit system as a radical means of primitive accumulation. The state…plays a crucial role in…promoting these processes and…there is considerable evidence that the transition to capitalist development…continues to be vitally contingent upon the stance of the state.[56]

---

[54] Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (London : Routledge and K. Paul, 1951), 452, http://archive.org/details/accumulationofca00luxe.
[55] David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, First Printing (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 144.
[56] Ibid., 145.

24

Since these measures constitute a crucial aspect of the neoliberal agenda, then the Nasa's resistance to these processes can also be considered resistance to neoliberal globalization. The core research question that this thesis asks is: How can we conceptualize the resistance of contemporary indigenous social movements? This thesis argues that Nasa resistance to neoliberal globalization can be better understood using Arturo Escobar's ideas about the ways in which social movement participants can critically engage processes of development. Most Nasa projects constitute projects of alternative development and alternative modernity.

Arturo Escobar advocates for a particular approach to social movements called Oppositional Postmodernism (OPM). OPM is different than other approaches to social movement theory such as Resource-Mobilization, Political Opportunity Structure, or New Social Movements theory. OPM is a better approach because it reconciles the importance of an emancipatory orientation as part of the theorizing of social movements with a politics of place.

1.6 Defining Terms

In order to be able to examine these research questions and discuss indigenous social movements, it is important to define these terms and situate these ideas within a larger conversation. Defining who is indigenous today in the contemporary social, political, and legal context of Colombia is a contentious affair. Discussions about what does and does not constitute a social movement can be just as controversial, particularly when it concerns indigenous politics in Latin America.

1.6a Indigenous

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word indigenous means: "Born or produced naturally in a land or region; native or belonging naturally *to* (the soil, region, etc.). (Used primarily of aboriginal inhabitants or natural products.)"[57] Its meaning dates back to 1646. As previously mentioned, the only legally binding definition of indigenous people by ratifying states is the one included in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 that was adopted in 1989 by the International Labor Organization (ILO).[58] According to Article 1 of the Convention, indigenous people are:

> (a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
> (b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. [ILO 1989: Article 1.1]

Additionally the Convention makes clear that "self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of the Convention apply" (ILO 1989: Article 1.2).

The United Nations uses a definition for indigenous peoples proposed by José Martinez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur to the Subcommission on Prevention and

---

[57] "Indigenous, Adj. : Oxford English Dictionary," *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed September 15, 2012,
http://www.oed.com.ezproxy2.lib.depaul.edu/view/Entry/94474?redirectedFrom=indigenous#eid
.
[58] Jerome M. Levi and Biorn Maybury-Lewis, "Becoming Indigenous: Identity and Heterogeneity in a Global Movement," Unpublished Book Chapter, March 2010, 13,
http://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:wDICtQp4SnYJ:scholar.google.com/+%22I ndigenous+Peoples+Poverty+and+Development%22&hl=en&num=100&as_sdt=0,5&as_ylo=2010& as_yhi=2011.

Discrimination of Minorities, which he outlined in his 1983 report to the UN, *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations, are those which have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of society now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems.[59]

It's important to acknowledge here that the UN does not operate with a legally binding definition of indigenous peoples, even after the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* in 2007. I will discuss the 2007 declaration in a moment. Despite the fact that it is not legally binding, the Martinez Cobo definition is considered to be the most widely used definition. It also does not differ substantially from the ILO definition previously mentioned. According to Dorothy Hodgson,

> Like the 1989 Convention, Cobo emphasizes self-identification as central to the definition of *indigenous* and stresses historical precedence and cultural difference as aspects of indigenous status. In addition, however, Cobo acknowledges the unequal power relations that exist in many states by noting "non-dominance" as another common characteristic of indigenous peoples.[60]

Hodgson demonstrates the ways in which the discourse about indigenous people has evolved to reflect the social, political, and economic gains that indigenous movements have made in her discussion of the 1994 *UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Although she discussed her observations in a 2002 article about the 1994 draft of the UN declaration, Hodgson's commentary remains relevant for the

---

[59] José Martinez Cobo, *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations.* (Geneva, Switzerland: UN Commission on Human Rights, September 30, 1983), http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/LibraryDocuments/Mart%C3%ADnezCoboStudy.aspx.
[60] Hodgson, "Introduction," 1039.

27

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that was passed by the General

Assembly in 2007. Since most of the language that she cites in the 1994 draft made it

into the 2007 declaration, her discussion will be cited here. Despite the fact that the

document does not have the legal authority of the ILO Convention or the stature of the

Martinez Cobo definition, Hodgson argues that it is important because "it reflects the

current input and agendas of indigenous activists and organizations."[61] Hodgson argues

that the UN declaration shares much in common with the 1989 ILO Convention but also

differs in some important ways: (1) it offers a stronger critique of the mistreatment of

indigenous peoples when it clams that "indigenous peoples have suffered from historic

injustices as a result of their…their colonization and dispossession"[62]; (2) it goes farther

in terms of expanding the rights of indigenous peoples such as cultural rights outlined in

articles 12 and 13; and (3) it also presents a more reified and essentialist vision of

indigenous culture when it speaks of "the urgent need to respect…the inherent rights of

indigenous peoples"[63] and it advocates for indigenous peoples' "right to maintain and

strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship"[64] with their lands.[65] Only 4 countries

voted against the declaration: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.[66]

---

[61] Ibid.

[62] "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples : Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly" (UN General Assembly, October 2, 2007), 2, http://www.refworld.org/docid/471355a82.html.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 10.

[65] Hodgson, "Introduction."

[66] Levi and Maybury-Lewis, "Becoming Indigenous: Identity and Heterogeneity in a Global Movement," 32.

28

1.6b Social Movements

According to Sidney Tarrow, social movements are defined as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities."[67] Social movements may encompass or produce political parties, labor unions, and social service organizations but they are in no way restricted to them.[68] More will be said about Tarrow's approach to social movements in chapter two of this thesis.

1.6c Modernity

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word modernity has several meanings. This definition seems to be the most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis: "An intellectual tendency or social perspective characterized by departure from or repudiation of traditional ideas, doctrines, and cultural values in favour of contemporary or radical values and beliefs (chiefly those of scientific rationalism and liberalism)."[69] Aníbal Quijano also offers a helpful perspective on the meaning of modernity,

> Modernity refers to a specific historical experience that began with America, when new material and subjective and intersubjective social relations have been produced, alongside the emergence of the new Euro-centered, capitalist, colonial world power structure. Above all there was a new place for the idea of future in the world imaginary, especially among the peoples that configured Europe. So developed a new perspective on space/time and on the place of humankind in such a new world.[70]

---

[67] Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 9.

[68] Ibid., 1–15.

[69] "Modernity, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed December 30, 2013, http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.depaul.edu/view/Entry/120626.

[70] Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America," *International Sociology* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 220–221, doi:10.1177/0268580900015002005.

29

Arturo Escobar describes four characteristics that are crucial for understanding what he calls an "Intra-European" view of modernity:

1. *Historically*, modernity has identifiable origins: seventeenth-century northern Europe (especially France, Germany, England), around the processes of Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. These processes crystallized at the end of the eighteenth century.

2. *Sociologically*, modernity is characterized by institutions such as the nation-state and by some basic features, such as self-reflexivity, the continuous feedback of expert knowledge back into society, transforming it; the disembedding of social life from local context and its increasing determination by translocal forces; and space/time distantiation, or the separation of space and place, which means that relations between absent others become more important than face-to-face interaction (Giddens 1990). Modernity thus constitutes a new way of belonging in time and space, one that differentiates between past, present, and future (linear time and History), and that is tied to the spatiality of the nation-state above all.

3. *Culturally*, modernity is characterized by the increasing appropriation of previously taken for granted cultural backgrounds by forms of expert knowledge linked to capital and state administrative apparatuses (e.g., Habermas 1973, 1987). Habermas describes this process as the rationalization and colonization of the life-world. Modernity implies the creation of an order on the basis of the constructs of reason, secularization, the individual, expert knowledge, and administrative mechanisms-what Foucault (1991) called governmentality and Vattimo (1991) the strong structures of modernity. Recently, Taylor (2004) has characterized modernity in terms of a social imaginary that privileges three social forms: the market economy, the public sphere, and the self-governing of people, with the forms of malaise they have brought about. Modernity also involves a way of being that, in contradictory fashion, highlights both perpetual change and the experience of the present—a dialectic of change and presence.

4. *Philosophically,* one may see modernity, on the one hand, in terms of the emergence of the notion of Man as the foundation of all knowledge and order of the world, separate from the natural and the divine (a pervasive anthropocentrism; Foucault 1973; Heidegger 1977; Panikkar 1993); on the other, in terms of the triumph of metaphysics and logocentrism, understood as a tendency—extending from Plato and some of the pre-Socratics to Descartes and the modern thinkers and criticized by Nietzsche and Heidegger, among others—that finds in logical truth the foundation for a rational theory of the world as made up of knowable and controllable things and beings (e.g., Vattimo 1991). For Vattimo, modernity is characterized by the idea of history and its corollary, progress and overcoming; Vattimo and Dussel point at the centrality of the logic of development to the modern order, including what Dussel (1996, 2000) calls "the developmentalist

fallacy," or the idea that all countries have to move through the same stages and arrive at the same end state, by force if necessary.[71]

Chapter 2 will discuss Escobar's critique of this view of modernity.

1.6d Coloniality

According to Aníbal Quijano, coloniality refers to

That specific basic element of the new pattern of world power that was based on the idea of 'race' and in the 'racial' social classification of world population – expressed in the 'racial' distribution of work, in the imposition of new 'racial' geocultural identities, in the concentration of the control of productive resources and capital, as social relations, including salary, as a privilege of 'Whiteness'.[72]

For Quijano, coloniality arises out of two processes, which he traces to the emergence of America: 1) the creation of global capitalism; and 2) the creation of racial categories to justify the relationship between dominant and dominated populations. In the process of constituting America as a place, "Europe or, more specifically, Western Europe emerged as a new historical entity and identity and as the central place of the new pattern of world-Eurocentered colonial/modern capitalist power."[73]

1.6e Decoloniality

According to Walter Mignolo, decoloniality argues that capitalist/Western democracy and socialism are not the only two options that should guide our thinking and doing. Decoloniality puts forward the communal as another option in addition to capitalism and communism. Mignolo argues that decoloniality has the following characteristics: 1) it originated in the third world and can be specifically traced to the Bandung conference of 1955; 2) it is concerned with global equality and economic

---

[71] Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 165–166.
[72] Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America," 218.
[73] Ibid., 217–218.

justice; and 3) it means simultaneously engaging in border thinking, delinking, and epistemic disobedience.

1.7 Description of the Chapters

In this introduction I have laid out a framework for examining indigenous social movements in Colombia. Chapter 2 identifies the major themes at work in the literature on indigenous social movements in Latin America and explains why I find Arturo Escobar's work the most promising lens for understanding these movements. Chapter 3 will explain the methods I will use to both deploy Escobar's work as a lens for understanding the social movements undertaken by the Nasa and how my examination of those social movements validates Escobar's approach. Chapter 4 will present the empirical results of my research, based on primary and secondary sources as well as my own earlier field experience. Chapter 5, the conclusion will provide a summary of the study, the implications for understanding the politics of indigenous social struggles within Colombia, and suggest possibilities for future research and policy implications.

"One should be clear also about what this concept is not: it has been said of the notion of postdevelopment that it pointed at a *real* pristine future in which development no longer exists. Nothing of the sort was intended. Rather, the notion intuited the possibility of *imagining* an era in which development ceases to be the central organizing principle of social life. The same with alternatives to modernity…"—Arturo Escobar[1]

CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this chapter will help inform the response to the primary question posed by this thesis: How can we best understand the social movements of the Nasa in Colombia since 1971? This section will elaborate Arturo Escobar's ideas about social movements. It will also situate his work within a wider conversation about social movements. This thesis argues that Escobar's ideas about the ways in which social movements can critically engage processes of development best allow us to conceptualize Nasa social movements as resistance to neoliberal globalization. Most Nasa projects constitute, in Escobar's terms, projects of alternative development and alternative modernity.

Sidney Tarrow's book, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, is arguably the most recognized summary and synthesis of social movement theory today. In this book, Tarrow constructs a general "theoretical framework for understanding the place of social movements, cycles of contention, and revolutions, within the more general category of contentious politics."[2] His intention is to situate social movements in relation to contentious politics and politics more broadly.

In Tarrow's framework, social movements are a subcategory of a much larger conceptual category that he refers to as contentious collective action. Contentious

---

[1] Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Duke University Press, 2008), 196.

[2] Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

collective action encompasses other kinds of actions such as demonstrations, insurrections, riots, strike waves, and revolutions. Collective action is contentious when people use it to push for controversial or novel claims and take actions that seriously contest those in power.

Evolving political opportunities and constraints are crucial factors in stimulating periods of collective contention. Actors evaluate and act on multiple incentives that could be characterized as "material and ideological, partisan and group-based, long-standing and episodic."[3] The term "political opportunities" refers to persistent signals that alert people to participate in contentious politics. These signals may only be temporary and informal. The term "threats" refers to the things that stifle contention such as the various ways that authorities can block change, both violently and nonviolently. The term "political opportunity structure" can be understood as a series of signals that indicate when contentious politics will arise. It stimulates a series of events that may develop into a persistent challenging of authorities and eventually transform into social movements.

Tarrow argues that contentious politics arises when regular people, in some instances emboldened by leaders, see political opportunities that open up the possibility for collective action, demonstrate possible allies, reveal opponents' weaknesses, and stimulate social networks and group identities to work on a common agenda.

Contentious action can arise through known repertoires of action and political opportunities. The term "repertoires of action" refers to the ways in which collective contention is embedded within a particular cultural context and conveyed across that context. Some examples of the repertoires of contention are: voting, petitioning,

---

[3] Ibid., 16.

assembling, striking, marching, occupying spaces, and blocking traffic, among other examples.

Tarrow argues that social movements have emerged when mobilizing structures produce collective action frames that drive persistent collective contention against a powerful opposition. The term "mobilizing structures" refers to social networks and the connective structures between them where collective action is stimulated. The term "collective action frames" are the conceptual lenses that explain and motivate collective action. According to Tarrow, "framing relates to the generalization of grievance and defines the 'us' and 'them' in a movement's structure of conflict and alliances."[4]

Social movements, as a subcategory of contentious collective action, are defined as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities."[5] Tarrow argues that social movements are unique to the "modern age" and emerged in the 18th century. He also argues that organized oppositional collective action is a key part of social movements because it is the best and sometimes only mode of action that regular people have to press their claims against more powerful opponents whether they are states, organizations, or other people. Social movements may encompass or produce political parties, labor unions, and social service organizations but they are in no way restricted to them.[6]

Key elements of contentious collective action have already been discussed such as political opportunities and threats, collective action frames, and mobilizing structures. Tarrow refers to the ways in which these concepts interact with each other as mechanisms and processes. He identifies three types of mechanisms that can stimulate collective

---

[4] Ibid., 31.
[5] Ibid., 9.
[6] Ibid., 1–15.

contention. One is a dispositional mechanism, where people can see an opportunity or threat. Another is an environmental mechanism, which is something in the environment that may prompt contentious action. The last is a relational mechanism, which is when a group or a person brings two groups together who previously were not working together to form an alliance. Although a single causal mechanism can stimulate a period of collective contention, often these mechanisms combine to initiate collective contentious action.

A cycle of contention arises when the various aspects of contentious collective action come together and interact with each other to produce a sustained period of contention. A cycle of contention is defined as a period of increased confrontation throughout a society characterized by the following: contentious action spreads quickly from more organized to less organized groups; challengers quickly find new and creative ways to engage in contentious action; new collective action frames are produced; challengers are taking part in contention in both organized and unorganized ways; and there are moments of heightened confrontation and communication between participants and authorities. This cycle creates conditions that give challengers an opportunity to overcome their weaker position. States tend to respond to this process with some combination of either repression or facilitation.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's book, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, has been considered an extension of Tarrow's work on social movements to the international arena. In their book, Keck and Sikkink argue that transnational advocacy networks are helping to change the way that national sovereignty works by "blurring the boundaries between a state's relations with its own

nationals and the recourse both citizens and states have to the international system."[7] A

transnational advocacy network (TAN) is a network of activists working internationally

that campaign on behalf of a particular cause. It is driven by common ideals, a shared

way of communicating those ideals, and close sharing of information. The goal of TANs

is to transform the actions of countries and global organizations. They frame issues to

reach a wider public, generate interest and stimulate change. Advocacy networks may

involve the following types of entities:

> (1) international and domestic nongovernmental research and advocacy
> organizations; (2) local social movements; (3) foundations; (4) the media; (5)
> churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, and intellectuals; (6) parts of
> regional and international intergovernmental organizations; and (7) parts of the
> executive and / or parliamentary branches of governments.[8]

These network advocates also work towards the creation and application of new norms

by prodding actors to change their policies and holding these actors accountable for their

international commitments.

Keck and Sikkink have identified three instances where TANs are likely to

emerge. The first is when a national group and its government are having difficulty

resolving a dispute. The national group may appeal to global allies outside of its own

country to try to shift the actions of its government, triggering what has been famously

called a "boomerang pattern." A second instance is when political entrepeneurs use the

process of building networks to fulfill their objectives. The term political entrepeneurs

refers to activists who are committed enough to a cause that they are willing to make

serious sacrifices in order to accomplish their objectives. A third instance where TANs

are likely to emerge is under the auspices of an international conference or organization.

---

[7] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998), 1–2.
[8] Ibid., 9.

According to Keck and Sikkink, transnational advocacy networks generally operate from a weaker position and don't have the ability to force others to adopt their ideas or agenda. Instead they try to effect change through nonviolent strategies and the power of their arguments. TANs adopt four different approaches to their work. The first is information politics, which is the capacity to produce politically valuable information and deploy it wherever it will make the biggest difference. Another approach is symbolic politics, which is the capacity to draw upon "symbols, actions, or stories" that can be used to help people in a distant location understand a context that may be quite foreign to them. TANs also use leverage politics, which is the capacity to pressure dominant actors to take particular actions when less powerful network participants lack the clout to influence their behavior. The fourth approach is accountability politics, which is the attempt to keep dominant actors accountable for the commitments they've previously made.

Transnational Advocacy Networks use cognitive frames to influence actors in five key ways:

> (1) issue creation and agenda setting; (2) influence on discursive positions of states and international organizations; (3) influence on institutional procedures; (4) influence on policy change in "target actors" which may be states, international organizations like the World Bank, or private actors like the Nestlé Corporation; and (5) influence on state behavior.[9]

The construction of cognitive frames, similar to what Tarrow calls "collective action frames", plays a crucial role in transnational advocacy networks' political strategies. The frame helps to explain the TANs' interpretation of a particular situation and the actions that should follow from that interpretation. A frame is successful when it becomes part of the political culture and can be called upon in the service of future campaigns.

---

[9] Ibid., 25.

In his book, *The Marketing of Rebellion*, Clifford Bob has a different take on transnational advocacy networks (TANs). His work is more focused on how TANs arise around some causes while many others never receive the same attention. Bob argues that domestic organizations first work to make themselves visible internationally. They do this by using the media to spread the word about their cause globally and to reach possible supporters. Challengers frame their demands and struggles, which are born out of a particular domestic context, in ways that can speak to a wider international public. Bob makes five key points: 1) domestic groups that garner international support do so through a difficult process where the outcome is "competitive and uncertain"[10]; 2) when NGOs do agree to support a particular group, the relationship is best described as being structured by an inequality of power, rather than being characterized as a charitable relationship; 3) in the competition for NGO support, some groups are in a better position to secure that support than others; 4) given the fiercely competitive nature of securing international support, the ways that challengers market themselves can make a significant difference; and 5) the results of international support tend to be more uncertain than is commonly discussed.

In her book, *The New Politics of Protest*, Roberta Rice's approach to Latin American social movements against neoliberalism is strongly influenced by political science and Sidney Tarrow's work. Rice focuses on three questions related to social movements in Latin America: 1. Why is there strong organized opposition to neoliberal policies by working class, poor, and indigenous groups in certain places? 2. Is there anything consistent about the ways in which this opposition expresses itself? 3. How is

---

[10] Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

this organized opposition to neoliberal policies producing real political transformation? She attempts to address these questions through a case comparison of the South American countries with the four largest indigenous populations: Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. Rice argues that opposition to neoliberal policies by social movements in Latin America have been shaped by two dynamics: the nature of national political arrangements and "historic patterns of popular political incorporation."[11]

According to Rice, movements in opposition to neoliberal policies tend to arise in places where the poor and working classes do not have political representation. Movements also emerge in contexts where citizens organize around new group identities that are distinct from old class, union, or party based forms of representation. She finds that Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia have experienced more protest movements because their political party systems have historically been feeble and unable to effectively manage political and social disagreements. Nations that have avoided marked class divisions and have insignificant leftist parties, such as Ecuador and Bolivia, tend to see ethnic identities become "a potent mobilizing framework."[12] Rice argues that neoliberal policies have demobilized some old groups such as political parties and unions while mobilizing new groups such as the jobless, the landless peasantry, and indigenous peoples.

Rice argues that neoliberal opposition consistently expresses itself in particular ways. She divides periods of resistance to neoliberal reforms in Latin America into two waves where resistance took on distinct characteristics. The first wave of opposition to neoliberal policies, which occurred roughly between the mid-1970s through the 1980s, arose in reaction to policies of structural adjustment by the International Monetary Fund,

---

[11] Roberta Rice, *The New Politics of Protest: Indigenous Mobilization in Latin America's Neoliberal Era*, 1st ed. (University of Arizona Press, 2012), 4.
[12] Ibid., 117.

the World Bank, and other international financial institutions. These structural adjustment policies included trade liberalization, privatization, and deregulation. The reaction to these policies took the form of austerity protests. The protests manifested themselves as political demonstrations, general strikes, and riots, which mostly included the participation of the urban poor and organized labor. These protests develop "out of dense social networks in the cities and involve civil-society actors who are already organized and oriented to political action."[13]

The second wave of opposition to neoliberal policies, which took place during the 1990s and 2000s, was different than the first wave of protests in three ways. Second wave protests are characterized by both urban and rural participation. Protests are generally lead by "newly politicized identities, such as ethnic, regional, civic, or sectoral identities" instead of being organized primarily on a class basis.[14] Lastly, second wave protests are driven by "cumulative grievances resulting from the failure of the economic model to deliver on its promises, rather than the abrupt dislocations associated with policy change."[15]

According to Rice, this organized opposition to neoliberal policies produced real political transformation in several different ways. She breaks down her description of the political transformation she observes by taking the four countries that she uses case studies (Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Ecuador) and assesses them by three criteria: identity, territory, and autonomy. Rice argues that these three concepts encapsulate the main demands of all indigenous movements in Latin America. Identity refers to demands by indigenous peoples that they be respected as peoples with particular rights codified in a

---

[13] Ibid., 10.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

country's constitution. Rice finds that with respect to identity Chile has made the least

progress, because its constitution does not recognize the existence of indigenous

peoples. Chile sees indigenous peoples as an ethnic minority as opposed to being

considered a people or a nation. Territory refers to the safeguarding and recovery of

indigenous lands. Regarding territory, Rice finds that Peru's constitution offers the least

protection for indigenous lands. Finally, territory refers to the desire for self-

determination by indigenous peoples on their own land. With regards to autonomy, Rice

finds that both Ecuador and Bolivia have made the most advances.

Colombian born anthropologist Arturo Escobar is perhaps best known for his

groundbreaking book, *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the

Third World*.[16] In the book, the author uses the Colombian experience with development

interventions to illustrate the ways in which the discourse and practices of development

created the idea and the reality of the "Third World". Escobar was among a number of

postcolonial thinkers such as Edward Said, V.Y. Mudimbe, Chandra Mohanty, and Homi

Bhabha who further developed Michel Foucault's ideas on the ways in which discourse

and power can constitute social reality.

Since the publication of *Encountering Development*, Escobar has identified

himself as a participant in the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) Research

Program. The group is associated with the work of a few thinkers who have strong ties to

Latin America: the philosopher Enrique Dussel, the sociologist Anibal Quijano, and the

cultural theorist Walter Mignolo. The MCD Program seeks to differentiate itself from

other approaches to modernity. It is strongly opposed to a triumphal vision of

---

[16] Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*
(Princeton, N.J. :, c1995.).

42

globalization, which argues "from now on, it's modernity all the way down, everywhere, until the end of times."[17] The MCD Program starts with five premises: 1) modernity began with the conquest of America in 1492 rather than in Europe with a historical event such as the Enlightenment; 2) it focuses on colonialism and the creation of global capitalism as being integral to modernity; 3) it views modernity as a process created through the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world and not as an intra-European process; 4) it understands that a crucial aspect of modernity is the control of others outside of Europe; and 5) it understands that eurocentrism is produced by modernity/coloniality/decoloniality. There are two conclusions that are drawn from these five premises. The first is that modernity cannot be properly understood and analyzed apart from coloniality. In other words modernity does not exist without coloniality. The second is that the knowledge and politics produced from the perspective of the colonial difference is privileged. The members of the MCD research program are interested in what is possible beyond or outside of capitalist modernity. But they are interested in approaching this possibility from the perspective of colonial difference. This section cannot pretend to do justice to a comprehensive summary of the perspectives and contributions of the MCD Research Program. However, the aim here is to help elaborate on the foundation of Arturo Escobar's ideas in order to be able to discuss more concretely his approach to social movements.

In his article, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements", Escobar advocates for an approach to social movement theory called Oppositional Postmodernism (OPM), a concept first articulated

---

[17] Arturo Escobar, "Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise: The Latin American Modernity/coloniality Research Program" (presented at the Tercer Congreso Internacional de Latinoamericanistas en Europa, Amsterdam: CEDLA, 2002), 4.

and developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. He draws a link between OPM and the

MCD Research Program. He also cites both the Anti-Globalization Movements and

Afro-Colombian Movements as two significant social movements that are symbolic of

what the OPM framework is trying to articulate.

OPM starts from the premise that social movements need to move beyond

concepts such as modernity and the Third World. This is for three reasons. First,

modernity is not able to provide modern solutions to modern problems. Modernity

cannot reconcile functions of social freedom and social control resulting in a world where

various forms of violence serve the purpose of managing peoples and economies.

Modern attempts to deal with various social, political and ecological problems end up

creating wars for the control of spaces, humans, and resources. Second, given the need to

search for solutions outside of modernity, an effort needs to be made to make those

solutions more visible. This means that it is necessary to reinterpret modernity as not just

an intra-European process, but as a process that included the suppression of subaltern

knowledges and cultural practices around the world. This process is referred to as

coloniality. According to Escobar, "coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and the

'Third World' is part of its classificatory logic."[18] Third, this view points towards a

move away "from the sociology of absences of subaltern knowledges to a politics of

emergence of social movements" which "requires examining contemporary social

movements from the perspective of colonial difference."[19]

What is meant by difference here is not some kind of trait that is inherently

unique to subaltern people but rather difference in terms of knowledges and cultural

---

[18] Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 210.
[19] Ibid.

practices that exist on the margins of the global modern/colonial system. These practices

have been "incompletely conquered and transformed…and also produced partly through

long-standing place based logics that are irreducible to capital and imperial globality."[20]

OPM social movements have been inspired by these practices of difference. Social

movements with an OPM framework value "meshworks," which are "based on

decentralized decision making, non-hierarchical structures, self-organisation, and

heterogeneity and diversity."[21] OPM social movements act out of "place-based historical

conceptions of the world" as part of a transnational network.[22]

The OPM approach neither attempts to build some kind of revolution capable of

confronting global capitalism in its entirety, nor does it settle for a politics of reformism.

It does however lift up colonial difference, as a "privileged epistemological" perspective

that requires us "to take seriously the epistemic force of local histories."[23] OPM

reconciles the importance of an emancipatory orientation as part of the theorizing of

social movements with a politics of place.[24]

In his book, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*, Escobar

looks more explicitly into what a social movement might look like from an MCD

perspective. Escobar's book attempts to illuminate the politics and knowledge

production of a place based social movement operating from the perspective of the

colonial difference. He tries to show how Afro-Colombian social movements in the

Colombian Pacific, operating from the colonial difference, offered the possibility of

---

[20] Ibid., 221.
[21] Ibid., 222.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 217.
[24] The previous theorists discussed in this chapter are state-centric in way Escobar is not. The other theorists assume that social movements make demands on states; not so with Escobar.

challenging and providing an alternative to Eurocentric forms of modernity. He does this by breaking the book down into six themes: place, capital, nature, development, identity, and networks. The proposals and conclusions of the book are too broad to be included here but his chapter on development is the most relevant for the question posed by this thesis.

In chapter four of *Territories of Difference*, Escobar focuses on the topic of development. Escobar argues that social movements need to simultaneously juggle and engage in three processes: alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternatives to modernity. During processes of alternative development, communities engage with development and are able to have some control over the terms of the process and are able to enjoy more of its benefits without deeply questioning its premises. According to Escobar, alternative development is "informed by idioms of progress and rational decision making" and "entails a struggle over the running of projects to reduce control by experts and socioeconomic elites."[25] Processes of alternative modernity involve more of a fundamental challenge to the goals and terms of development from the perspective of place based cultural difference. According to Escobar, "An alternative modernity experience may or may not be explicitly linked to an ongoing political project or movement and may be enabled to a greater or lesser extent by a given political climate."[26] Escobar envisions alternatives to modernity as an "alternative construction of the world from the colonial difference."[27] It can be understood as an attack on some of the characteristics of an "intra-European" modernity that were described in chapter 1

---

[25] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 179.
[26] Ibid., 185.
[27] Ibid., 196.

such as "universality, unity, totality," and "scientific and instrumental rationality."[28]

Escobar explains why alternatives to modernity can be a challenging concept to work

with:

> One should be clear also about what this concept is not: it has been said of the notion of postdevelopment that it pointed at a *real* pristine future in which development no longer exists. Nothing of the sort was intended. Rather, the notion intuited the possibility of *imagining* an era in which development ceases to be the central organizing principle of social life. The same with alternatives to modernity, as a moment when social life is no longer so thoroughly determined by the constructs of economy, individual, market, rationality, order, and so forth that are characteristic of the dominant Euro-modernity. Alternatives to modernity is the expression of a political desire, a desire of the critical utopian imagination, not a statement about the real in a strict sense, present or future. Operating in the cracks of modernity/coloniality, it gives content to the World Social Forum slogan, *Another world(s) is (are) possible* (Escobar 2004). But it should be kept in mind that alternatives to modernity are intended as a reformulation of the modern colonial world system but still operating within modern/decolonial critical languages, that is, without giving full weight to, much less bringing into life, those other worlds that nevertheless are part of what inspires the notion.[29]

While Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, and Clifford Bob focus on

transnational networks (TANs), they take different approaches in discussing their

significance. Keck and Sikkink attempt to conceptualize the way that TANs work and

generally describe them as selfless actors that are largely driven by an altruistic desire "to

change the behavior of states and international organizations." Bob sees TANs and the

organizations they are composed of in a very different way. In focusing on the unequal

relationship between TANs and local groups, Bob is critical of an unabashedly

benevolent view of TANs. Instead of organizations with altruistic motives, Bob sees

self-interested actors taking on causes, not on the basis of where the need is greatest, but

on the basis of whoever has done the best job of marketing themselves. Neither of these

approaches fits this thesis because all three scholars focus on transnational relationships

---

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 196–197.

47

between first and third world groups, where the emphasis of this thesis is on the Nasa as a social movement on its own terms.

Both Sydney Tarrow and Roberta Rice take similar approaches to their analysis of social movements. Tarrow is interested in producing a theoretical framework for being able to identify social movements in a generalizable way, which distinguishes it from other forms of what he refers to as contentious collective action. In some ways Rice's approach would appear to be the most appropriate, given her exclusive focus on social movements in Latin America that are opposed to neoliberal policies. Her approach could be considered an extension of Tarrow to the Latin American context, with her claim that "indigenous collective action repetoires are heavily influenced by the way in which the peasantry, and to a certain extent workers, were historically incorporated into the political system."[30] Rice's use of the concept of collective action repertoires connects her with Tarrow's work.

Roberta Rice's emphasis on the relationship between political institutions and social movements leads her to focus on the significance of formal institutions in whether movements emerge in any particular context. However, this thesis is more concerned with how indigenous movements opposed to neoliberal policies might be able to evaluate and identify projects that advance the agenda of opposing and forging alternatives to neoliberal globalization. By contrast, Arturo Escobar is interested in how movements come to a fully developed understanding of what they're trying to do. Escobar summarizes the purpose of his book, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*, in this way: "the book is above all about difference and its politics and the

---

[30] Rice, *The New Politics of Protest,* 29.

48

difference this politics makes in places such as the Pacific."[31] Escobar's approach is more overtly political than Tarrow's and Rice's approach and he attempts to ground himself within a specific understanding of the past, present, and future. Tarrow's discussions of history, modernity, and globalization play a far different role in his theorizing about social movements. This thesis adopts Escobar's approach because his is more innovative in its attempts to respond to and engage directly with the experiences of people who think and act from the colonial difference.

Other than Arturo Escobar, none of the authors can explain indigenous social movements in Cauca. Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) are a crucial part of Keck and Sikkink's, and Bob's theoretical approaches, but there have not been any TANs that have been crucial to the Nasa's success as a social movement. Social movement theory is an important aspect of Tarrow's and Rice's theoretical approaches. Social movement theory understands social movements as a modern phenomenon (originating in Europe in the 18th century), and sees a social movement's demands as modern demands. However, the Nasa see their struggle as being part of a historical process that began with the arrival of Europeans to South America. All of these theories explain by excluding, casting out whatever they can't make sense of. Escobar's approach to social movements prioritizes the knowledge production and the vision that emerges from the colonial difference. Instead of creating a theory that is more universal, Escobar is interested in trying to articulate what an approach to social movements would look like from the perspective of the colonial difference.

---

[31] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 6.

"Analytical theory enables us to see and thus comprehend the world, but that does not imply automatic confirmation. To the contrary, the world has an obduracy of its own, continually challenging the causal claims and predictions we make as social scientists on the basis of our theories. That is how we develop science, not by being right but by being wrong and obsessing about it."—Michael Burawoy[1]

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 1, I introduced my research question, which was: How can we conceptualize the resistance of contemporary indigenous social movements? I then proposed that Nasa resistance to neoliberal globalization can be better understood using Arturo Escobar's ideas about the ways in which social movements can critically engage processes of development. Using Escobar's concepts of alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternatives to modernity, this thesis will argue that most Nasa projects constitute projects of alternative development and alternative modernity. Chapter 2 was devoted to situating Arturo Escobar's ideas within a wider conversation about social movements. This chapter will analyze the methodological approaches that are most appropriate for this project.

3.1 The Case Study

The most appropriate methodological approach for this thesis is the process tracing case study approach. According to John Gerring, "a case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is-at least in part-to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)."[2] Alexander George and Andrew Bennett define it as "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other

---

[1] Michæl Burawoy, *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2009), xiv.
[2] John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20.

events."[3] The case study is the most appropriate methodological approach because the thesis focuses on only one case, the Nasa indigenous people, from 1971until the present.

The focus on one case study excludes the possibility of doing a cross-case study. However, I agree with Gerring who argues that "there is no such thing as a case-study, tout court. To conduct a case study implies that one has conducted cross-case analysis, or at least thought about a broader set of cases."[4] In this instance when I'm exploring the case of the Nasa and asking what they might be a case of, I'm thinking about whether their case corresponds to Escobar's conceptual categories.

Most of the information I will draw upon to explain my case will be qualitative. While I'm aware that the case study has historically been associated with qualitative methods, I agree with Gerring when he says that studying "a single case intensively need not limit an investigator to qualitative techniques."[5] One reason for the qualitative approach of this thesis is that most of the information used for this project has been taken from secondary sources which primarily consist of ethnographic accounts.

The reliance on secondary sources also eliminates the possibility of using the extended case method as articulated by Michael Burawoy. According to Burawoy, the extended case method consists of four principles: (1) "The extension of the observer into the community being studied"; (2) "The extension of observations over time and space"; (3) "The extension from microprocesses to macroforces", and looking at how both shape and are shaped by each other; and (4) "The extension of theory that is the ultimate goal

---

[3] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (The MIT Press, 2005), 5.
[4] Gerring, *Case Study Research*, 13.
[5] Ibid., 11.

and foundation of the extended case method."[6] The principles of the extended method

require a researcher to spend enough time in the community being studied that the

observer can "discern the social processes that give integrity to the site."[7] While I have

been lucky enough to visit the Nasa communities I will be writing about, I will not be

able to be an observer in the way that is required by the extended case method.

Burawoy does make some important points about methodology that inform this

thesis. In the prologue of his book, *The Extended Case Method*, Burawoy outlines the

following six postulates: (1) "We cannot see social reality without theory, just as we

cannot see the physical world without our eyes"; (2) "No impenetrable wall separates the

worlds we study from our laboratories of science"; (3) "Analytical theory or science

reveals the broader context of our actions, but it also shows how the context creates the

illusion of its own absence"; (4) "The university is not a neutral terrain but a field of

competing theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches…that offer different

insights into the way micro and macro are connected"; (5) "Analytical theory enables us

to see and thus comprehend the world, but that does not imply automatic confirmation";

and (6) "Analytical theory is not necessarily incomprehensible to lay people."[8] The third

postulate is particularly useful because it speaks to my desire to use the microprocesses of

the Nasa to illuminate macro possibilities of alternative projects that may be developed

from the colonial difference. This is why the process-tracing methodological approach is

the best case study approach.

---

[6] Burawoy, *The Extended Case Method*, 17.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., xiii–xiv.

3.2 Process-Tracing

According to George and Bennett, "the process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process-the causal chain and causal mechanism-between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variables."[9] In other words, process-tracing helps the researcher understand a social phenomena by tracing the processes that led to an outcome and helping to clarify and rule out the potential causes of the outcome.

In order to use the process-tracing method, I intend to design and implement a theory-oriented case study. According to George and Bennett, the design and implementation process has three objectives: (1) formulate "the objectives, design, and structure of the research"; (2) carry out the case study in "accordance with the design"; (3) draw "upon the findings of the case studies" and assess their contribution to achieving "the research objective of the study."[10]

3.3 Five Tasks for Formulating the Objectives, Design, and Structure of the Research

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to discussing the first objective. The process of formulating the objectives, design, and structure of the research has five tasks: (1) "Specification of the problem and research objective"; (2) "Developing a research strategy: specification of the variables"; (3) Selecting the case; (4) "Describing the variance in variables"; and (5) Formulating "data requirements and general questions."[11]

The first task is specifying the problem and research objective. The problem that this thesis grapples with is: How can we conceptualize the resistance of contemporary

---

[9] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 206.
[10] Ibid., 73.
[11] Ibid., 74–86.

indigenous social movements? This thesis will use the experience of the Nasa people of

Colombia and their life/productive/economic projects in order to explore this question.

This thesis explores the ways in which Arturo Escobar's theorizing about social

movements and development best help us to understand Nasa social movements as

resistance to neoliberal globalization. Focusing on the Nasa is important given the

general lack of published research on this indigenous group. Using Arturo Escobar's

theoretical framework is important because *Territories of Difference* was published

relatively recently (2008) and scholars are only beginning to engage with the ideas

regarding development and modernity that he laid out in that book.

Perhaps the most important reason for focusing on the Nasa and Escobar is the

urgency of the times we are living in. According to Escobar, "Modernity's ability to

provide solutions to modern problems has reached a limit, making discussion of a

transition beyond modernity feasible, perhaps for the first time (here, of course, the recent

public debates on global climate change are an important referent)."[12] Unfortunately, the

environmental picture has become increasingly dire since the publication of *Territories of*

Difference. The current lack of public debate on climate change signals a potentially

long struggle ahead for any kind of transition beyond modernity.

According to George and Bennett, "the formulation of the research objective is

the most important decision in designing research."[13] The research objective that is

particularly relevant for this thesis is the plausibility probe. George and Bennett define

---

[12] Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Duke University Press, 2008), 303.
[13] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 74.

the plausibility probe as "preliminary studies on relatively untested theories and hypotheses to determine whether more intensive and laborious testing is warranted."[14]

The second task is developing a research strategy and specifying the variables. Using Escobar's theoretical approach, the independent variable would be the situation of modernity/coloniality that the Nasa have experienced through the violence of the state and capital. (This was covered in Chapter 1.) The dependent variable would be the life/productive/economic projects that Nasa communities develop in response to these conditions.

Tasks three and four are the selection of the case and the description of the variance in variables respectively. The case is the Nasa people of Colombia. This thesis will look specifically at three projects: (1) the development of the communitarian economy in the resguardo of Jambalo; (2) the development of the Proyecto Global; and (3) the Nasa's Tul home garden project. These three projects were described in Joris Jan van de Sandt's, *Behind the Mask of Recognition: Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia*. Escobar's conceptual categories of alternative development, alternative modernities, and alternatives to modernity will be crucial for describing the variance in variables. The process tracing method will be used to analyze the development of each of the three projects previously mentioned.

However, analyzing and describing the path that a project takes to becoming an alternative modernity will not be as simple as the example that George and Bennett describe:

---

14 Ibid., 75.

> Suppose that a colleague shows you fifty numbered dominoes standing upright in a straight line with their dots facing the same way on the table in a room, but puts a blind in front of the dominoes so that only number one and number fifty are visible. She then sends you out of the room and when she calls you back in you observe that domino number one and domino number fifty are now lying flat with their tops pointing in the same direction; that is, they co-vary. Does this mean that either domino caused the other to fall? Not necessarily…You must remove the blind and look at the intervening dominoes, which give evidence on potential processes.[15]

The example of the dominoes demonstrates a lack of concern for bringing into consideration what actors were thinking (in this case the dominoes) as a causal process moved in a particular direction. In this sense there is going to be an interpretive aspect to trying to understand whether any of the Nasa's projects fit Escobar's theoretical categories. Clifford Geertz's concept of thick description will be helpful in addressing this issue. According to Geertz, thick description is the process of articulating "the meaning particular social actions have for the actors" who are acting in these situations.[16] For Geertz, figuring out the meaning of social actions requires an approach to cultural analysis that is "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape."[17]

The three cases: (1) the communitarian economy; (2) the Proyecto Global; and (3) the Tul home garden project, were chosen because it was feasible to study them without doing fieldwork. It's important to acknowledge the implications of this kind of case selection. For one thing, there are many more unstudied cases. There also may be unstudied cases that are more important to the Nasa than the cases I've selected. Finally, these cases are not meant as a representative sample of the available cases, but a lens that

---

[15] Ibid., 206–207.
[16] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation Of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1977), 27.
[17] Ibid., 20.

56

allows us to better understand questions regarding alternative development, alternative modernities, and alternatives to modernity.

The fifth task is to formulate data requirements and general questions. This thesis requires data that helps to illuminate the following questions: (1) what is the distinction that the Nasa make between land and territory; (2) how do the Nasa see land as being related to a specific cosmology; (3) what are the different types of land tenure that the Nasa engage in and how are these related to their larger social and political projects; and (4) how do the Nasa describe their projects in their own words and how do they articulate their significance. Since the task of this thesis is to understand the Nasa response to modernity/coloniality in Colombia, we must first analyze three aspects of that experience: (1) the experience of physical and psychological violence; (2) the experience of economic exploitation; and (3) the violence of representation. This is the situation to which the Nasa respond with their own alternative projects (which were discussed on page 55). These projects will be evaluated using Escobar's conceptual categories: alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternative to modernity. Does the project contest the terms of development "without challenging its underlying premises"?[18] Does the project involve a "significant contestation of the very aims and terms of development on the basis of an existing cultural difference and place-based subjectivities"?[19] Finally, does the project imagine "an alternative construction of the world from the perspective of the colonial difference"?[20]

---

[18] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 179.
[19] Ibid., 184–185.
[20] Ibid., 196.

"What Blaser, Feit, and McRae (2004) say of indigenous peoples in relation to development projects could be said of them, namely, that they stand 'in the way of development': this means, first of all, that they affirm their life projects, which have to do with maintaining their networks of reciprocity and relationality, their ontological commitments, their ecological, economic, and cultural difference; and, second, that they relate to development from this perspective, whether to resist it, tolerate it, or go along with it when it supports this or that aspect of their life project."—Arturo Escobar[1]

CHAPTER 4: NASA RESISTANCE TO THE EXPERIENCE OF MODERNITY/COLONIALITY

This chapter juxtaposes the conditions of modernity/coloniality that the Nasa face and the ways that they respond to these conditions through their own projects. The first task of the chapter is to explain the Nasa's experience of modernity/coloniality. There are three facets of the Nasa's experience of modernity/coloniality that will be analyzed: (1) the experience of violence; (2) the experience of economic exploitation; and (3) the violence of representation. While most of the violence and exploitation that the Nasa have historically faced has come from the forces of state and capital, it's important to acknowledge that the Nasa have often had a very contentious relationship with the FARC guerrillas. However, an examination of that relationship and acts of violence where the FARC are responsible is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Once the three facets of the Nasa's experience of modernity/coloniality have been discussed, three projects that have been formulated by the Nasa in the *resguardo* of Jambaló in response to these conditions will be analyzed: (1) the development of the communitarian economy; (2) the development of the Proyecto Global; and (3) the Tul home garden project. This chapter will examine whether these projects correspond to Arturo Escobar's concepts of alternative development, alternative modernities, and alternatives to modernity.

---

[1] Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Duke University Press, 2008), 305.

Map 2: Map of the Department of Cauca
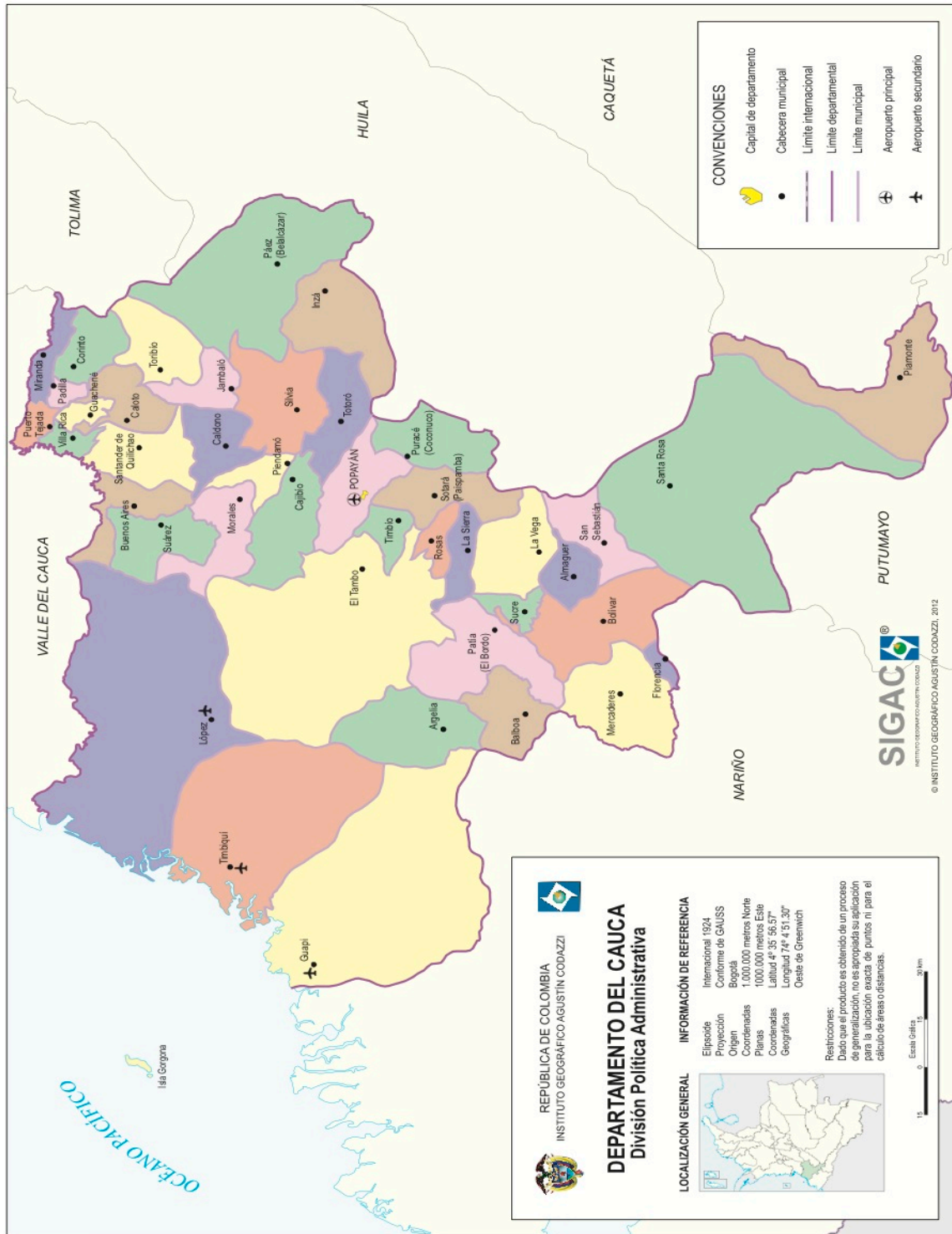
Source: The Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute

4.1 The Experience of Violence

Violence is an integral part of the experience of modernity/coloniality for the Nasa. Why discuss violence against the Nasa? How does it shape the conditions of modernity/coloniality that the Nasa experience? One way to think about the significance of violence is through the concept of social suffering. According to Kleinman, Das, and Lock:

> Social suffering results from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems. Included under the category of social suffering are conditions that simultaneously involve health, welfare, legal, moral, and religious issues. They destabilize established categories. For example, the trauma, pain, and disorders to which atrocity gives rise are health conditions; yet they are also political and cultural matters.[2]

In other words, there are many ways to evaluate the effects of violence against a population individually, socially, and politically, with regard to health, etc. Kleinman, Das, and Lock argue:

> The vicious spiral of political violence, causing forced uprooting, migration, and deep trauma to families and communities, while intensifying domestic abuse and personal suffering, spins out of control across a bureaucratic landscape of health, social welfare, and legal agencies. The gathering cycle churns through domestic and international agendas and threatens both local and global structures of security. At its brutal extremity in the Holocaust, or when it results from the "soft knife" of routine processes of ordinary oppression, social suffering ruins the collective and the intersubjective connections of experience and gravely damages subjectivity.[3]

Chapter 1 of this thesis gave a brief overview of some of the different kinds of violence that are significant factors in the Colombian context. It also described the development of the indigenous movement in northern Cauca, which was rooted in resistance and a struggle for autonomy. Keeping in mind the conceptualization of violence as that which

---

[2] Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds., *Social Suffering*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 1997), ix.
[3] Ibid., x.

60

brings about social suffering, this section will give a brief overview of the Nasa's experience of coloniality through processes of violence, which occurred between the 1970s and the 1990s.

This section does not intend to comprehensively catalogue all the instances of violence against the Nasa that are local manifestations of global coloniality. However, it means to give some sense of the range of violence that the Nasa have had to face from landowners and security forces. Landowners and government security have harassed and imprisoned indigenous activists, they have killed indigenous militants and leaders, and they have committed massacres, often with the complicity of the Colombian state.

4.1a 1970s

The Nasa's experience of violence in the 1970s took place against the backdrop of their increasing militancy. It was a particularly tense time for the Nasa because their attempts to recover autonomy over their lands were met with a violent reaction from landowners and security forces acting with state support. The Nasa reclaimed autonomy over their lands by occupying areas that had previously been taken by landowners. For the first time since the days of Quintín Lame, the Nasa were organizing themselves to reclaim their territories as indigenous people instead of just as peasants. The first indigenous organization in Colombia, the CRIC, (Cauca Regional Indigenous Council), was founded by Nasa and Guambiano community members in the town of Toribio in 1971. From the very beginning, the CRIC was seen as a threat by local landowners and the state. According to Van de Sant,

> The formation of CRIC sent a shockwave through the community of local
> hacienda owners, who immediately took action against the indigenous
> organization: they spurred local authorities to declare a state of emergency

> (estado de sitio) and arrest the entire cabildo of Toribío as well as Gustavo Mejía,
> who, as president of FRESAGRO, was a co-organizer of the meeting.[4]

Gustavo Mejía played an important role in helping to establish the CRIC. As the head of the peasant organization FRESAGRO, Mejía had spent some time in various Nasa communities and was very familiar with Law 89 of 1890. He encouraged the indigenous people to hold a meeting to discuss the illegal appropriation of indigenous lands, with FRESAGRO providing financial and logistical support. For his work as an indigenous organizer, Mejía was later assassinated in 1974 in Corinto, Cauca. Despite the repression, indigenous communities increasingly moved forward with their struggle to recuperate stolen lands. They began by refusing to pay rent on lands they already occupied. Then they expanded their struggle by beginning to work parts of the landowners' haciendas that were not under cultivation without the landowners' permission. Nasa militants were increasingly making reference to Law 89 of 1890 in justifying their actions.[5]

As the land struggle progressed into the mid-1970s, the Nasa developed a standard repertoire for land occupations. Tenant families from a hacienda would set up a *comite de lucha* (fighting committee) responsible for carrying out the land occupation. The committee would meet to strategize over how the occupation would take place. The committees that had less experience with occupations would receive support and advice from CRIC contacts and from indigenous leaders of other resguardos. The militants would choose a day for the occupation when they knew that the hacienda owner and his administrators would be away. They also made sure to prepare enough seeds and plants

---

[4] Joris Jan van de Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition: Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia* (Universiteit van Amsterdam [Host], 2007), 76–77.
[5] On Law 89, see pp. 9 above

to be planted in the land they were occupying. The land occupiers also sought help from other areas both within and outside the resguardo to conduct the occupation. The day before the occupation, a *minga* (communal work party) was organized with people from other resguardos who had come to participate in the action. Participants in the minga were welcomed with food and drink. Early the next morning, men and women would try to clear and plant on as much land as possible as quickly as possible. Other people would watch out for the landowner or his men. When the landowner found out, he would call for the police or the army. When the security forces arrived, they would act harshly against the occupiers: the leaders were arrested and jailed, the other occupiers were swiftly removed, and those who had come to help the occupation from other areas would escape from pre-planned routes.[6]

The landowners enlisted political help to stop the land repossession movement. Both of Cauca's senators to the national legislature, Victor Mosquera Chaux and Mario S. Vivas, considered the CRIC a threat to the political order. Decree 1533 gave the police and army special authority to crack down on the land occupation movement. According to Van de Sant,

> While many local and regional indigenous leaders were being arbitrarily arrested and subjected to ill-treatment and abuse, their communities were harassed with all sorts of restrictions and intimidations, such as a ban on meetings, control on personal movement, and harsher evictions…. In the shadow of the official repression, some hacienda owners even contracted hit-men to retaliate against the Indians with impunity, assisted by a judicial system that was entirely on their side.[7]

Repression against the indigenous movement intensified between the late 1970s and early 1980s with the election of President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala. Turbay Ayala

---

[6] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 87–88.
[7] Ibid., 89.

implemented the National Security Statute of 1978, which gave the army more freedom to fight the insurgency. The law was also used to attack the many social organizations that were labeled as subversive or accused of collaborating with the guerrillas. In 1979, CRIC was accused of receiving stolen guns from M-19 and the organization's entire executive committee was arrested and tortured. Nasa activists also faced violence at a local level from the military and hacienda owners, who hired assassins to kill community members participating in the indigenous movement.

The Turbay Ayala government also attempted to pass legislation on several occasions that would have "reformed" Law 89 of 1890. The government was trying to find a way to reign in the land occupations and the activities of indigenous social organizations who used Law 89 of 1890 to defend their actions. The government twice proposed an Indigenous Statute, first in 1979 and then again in 1980. The new Indigenous Statute would have given the state more control over indigenous communities by giving a government agency the power to decide "the legal existence of communities and to check their relations with third persons."[8] The legislation also opened the possibility of legalizing the occupation of resguardos by non-indigenous people. The government's attempts to pass this legislation prompted a fierce reaction from indigenous communities in various departments. Van de Sandt details two strategies that were used by indigenous organizations to oppose the government's project. One strategy was the organizing of a National Indigenous Meeting in the department of Tolima in 1980 to demand that the government respect indigenous communities' rights as expressed in Law 89 of 1890. Another strategy was the organizing of a three-week march by an organization called the MAISO, *Movimiento de Autoridades Indígenas del Sur Occidente*

---

[8] Ibid., 106.

64

(Movement of Indigenous Authorities of the Southwest).   The march started at the border with Ecuador and ended up in Bogotá. It was dubbed the *Marcha de Gobernadores* (Governor's March). MAISO contrasted the government's legislation with their own vision, the *Derecho Mayor*. The Derecho Mayor refers to "a legal concept founded on the fact that the Indians are the original inhabitants of America and are, inherently, entitled to their own authority and territory."[9] The marchers sought to build support for their ideas by attempting to educate communities regarding the derecho mayor as they made their way to Bogotá. Van de Sandt argues that the march was a factor in freezing the government's Indigenous Statute project.[10]

4.1b 1980s-1990s

There was a shift in some of the style and substance of the national government's public policy under President Belisario Betancur's administration. Betancur met with Guambiano and Nasa indigenous leaders in 1982 and publicly affirmed the legitimacy of their struggle in a way that no national political leader had up until that time.[11] Despite this shift, violence continued to be felt in the Nasa communities. Perhaps one of the most significant assassinations in the contemporary history of the Nasa was the killing of Father Alvaro Ulcué Chocué in 1984. Father Ulcué was the parish priest of Toribio, Tacueyo, and San Francisco from 1977 to 1984. He was famous for his attempts to unify the three resguardos where he ministered, which were divided by their support for different political parties. According to Joanne Rappaport, "He was a ubiquitous

---

[9] Ibid., 104.

[10] Ibid., 107; Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia," in *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 126.

[11] Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia," 126–127.

presence in northern Cauca, his activities ranging from early attempts at development planning and bilingual education, to some of the first studies of the Nasa language…He consistenly attended CRIC congresses and cabildo meetings."[12] The killing of Father Ulcué took place within the context of the ongoing land struggle in northern Cauca, where over 11,000 hectares were being fought over by the time of the priest's death. The largest and most drawn out struggle was for the Lopez Adentro Hacienda, which was made up of 2,000 hectares of canefields that were occupied by indigenous militants in 1984. Indigenous activists wanted to revive the cabildo of Corinto, which "had lost its official status and its lands in the early part of the twentieth century."[13] On November 9th, 1984, indigenous activists were forcibly removed by the military. The following day on November 10th, 1984, in what was perceived as a related move, Father Ulcué was shot and killed by an off duty police officer.[14] Both of these events prompted the emergence of the MAQL (Quintín Lame Armed Movement), the indigenous guerrilla movement described on pages 16-17 this thesis.

The MAQL demobilized in May of 1991 as part of their participation in President Virgilio Barco's (1986-1990) peace process. The demobilization of the MAQL allowed the organization to have representation in the constituent assembly for a new constitution, which was implemented in 1991. Despite the real gains achieved by the new constitution, violence against the Nasa continued.

One of the most significant contemporary instances of mass violence against the Nasa occurred on December 16th, 1991. It was called the El Nilo massacre because it

---

[12] Joanne Rappaport, *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 216.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Survival International, *Colombia Priest Murdered, Indians Evicted.* (London: Survival International, 1985).

took place at the *El Nilo* hacienda in the municipality of Caloto in the resguardo of Huellas. Fifty to sixty armed men entered the hacienda and rounded up its Nasa inhabitants. Fourteen men, four women, and two children were shot and killed and another 20 were wounded. The attack was perpetrated by members of the Colombian National Police working on behalf of drug traffickers who had recently taken over the hacienda's land.[15] Mario Murillo's observations about the situation of Colombian indigenous peoples in 1996 captures some of the mixed feelings about progress during that decade,

> In the past, the government would respond to indigenous organizing through the force of its military and police apparatus; over 400 indigenous leaders have been killed in the movement's 25-year history. Today, although local paramilitary activity supported by large landowners and drug traffickers continues to challenge indigenous self-determination through violent means, indigenous activism is met with negotiations and agreements on paper that are ultimately ignored once the dust has settled.[16]

4.2 The Experience of Economic Exploitation

A crucial aspect of modernity/coloniality for the Nasa was their experience of economic exploitation. This section will look at the Nasa's experience of economic exploitation before, during, and after the rise of indigenous social movements.

Before the rise of indigenous social movements, capital in the guise of large property owners was a key actor in the experience of economic exploitation. Large parcels of resguardo lands were in the hands of private landowners. These lands were organized as haciendas where indigenous people worked the land under the terraje system, which has been compared to sharecropping. Mestizo colonists had founded most

---

[15] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Case 11.101 "Caloto" Massacre Colombia* (Organization of American States, April 13, 2000), http://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/99eng/Merits/Colombia11.101.htm; Survival International, *Colombia Indians Massacred to Make Way for Opium Fields.* (London: Survival International, 1991).
[16] Mario Murillo, "Confronting the Dilemmas of Political Participation," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 29, no. 5 (March 1996): 21.

67

of the haciendas in the resguardo of Jambaló between 1920 and 1940. These colonists

gained control of the most fertile lands through debt relations and false property titles.

Under the terraje system, indigenous people were forced to pay the landowner with their

work or terraje for two to eight days a month and/or reserve for them a part of their

harvest. In exchange for their work, indigenous people "earned" the right to set up their

homes and have subsistence plots in the hacienda. The terraje system is basically a

feudal system.[17] There were various aspects to tenant life on the haciendas: (1) Tenants

were forced to live and work within the hacienda; (2) The owner decided where tenants

could set up their subsistence plots, whether or not they could keep animals, and how

many days they would have to work to pay their terraje.[18]

Prior to the emergence of the indigenous movement, the relationship between the

Nasa and the Colombian state regarding economic matters was framed by an

integrationist agenda. This was a subtle shift from the old policy of assimilation.

According to Van de Sant,

> Whereas in the previous period, the government agenda towards Andean
> indigenous communities had almost solely aimed to encourage and legitimate
> territorial expropriation and religious cultural domination, the new policy sought
> the integration of these communities into the market economy, mediated through
> active government intervention in internal resguardo affairs.[19]

While the integrationist policy was less overtly hostile towards indigenous people, it still

embodied a deeply colonial and paternalistic view of indigenous peoples. This

integrationist policy was codified under Law 81 of 1958 and closely linked to Law 135 of

---

[17] Some scholars have referred to the terraje system as a form of share-cropping. See Brett Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia: The Experience of the Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca in Southwestern Colombia from 1970 to 1990," *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 174; Joanne Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia: The Consejo Regional Indigena Del Cauca," *Social Analysis* 51, no. 2 (2007): 109,113, doi:10.3167/sa.2007.510206.
[18] Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia," 131.
[19] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 62.

1961, Colombia's agrarian reform law. While these laws provided the Nasa with some financial assistance, they also conflicted with indigenous institutions such as communal land tenure. The Colombian government promoted agricultural cooperatives in indigenous resguardos as a way of supporting a transition from the feudalistic terraje system to capitalist modes of production. The government hoped that expanding land ownership would eventually eliminate poverty as a source of political violence. Under Law 81 of 1958, cooperatives were promoted as a way to bring indigenous communities into a market economy without having to privatize the lands of the resguardos. Cooperatives also were initially introduced without attempting to abolish the terraje system. This last fact highlighted an important contradiction in government policy. Despite the government's desire to encourage a transition to capitalist agricultural development through Law 81, it lacked the will to fully implement this policy by confronting landowners and forcing them to give up their land.[20]

INCORA, the agrarian reform institute established under Law 135 of 1961 to manage Colombia's agrarian reform law, initially saw the growing land conflicts in the indigenous communities "as a consequence of archaic property relations on the landlord haciendas and the resguardos."[21] Decree 2117 of 1969 empowered INCORA to negotiate the purchase of land from hacienda owners in order to distribute this land to indigenous community members in the form of a loan. These people would then benefit from private credits and technical assistance. This was all part of the Cauca Project, a project that intended to abolish collectively held land as a form of economic organization in the resguardos. These were part of policies that were intended to encourage a transition from

---

[20] Ibid., 68.
[21] Ibid., 73.

69

feudal exploitation to capitalist exploitation. Under this new form of exploitation, debt is now the means by which surplus is extracted from these producers. Indigenous families were given their own piece of land that was their full property, both legally and economically, but they could not sell or lease the land for 15 years after receiving it.[22] This program polarized many indigenous communities between supporters and opponents of dividing up the resguardos. Some communities on the haciendas of El Credo (Tacueyo resguardo, municipality of Toribio) and El Chiman (Guambia resguardo, municipality of Silvia) steadfastly resisted INCORA's agenda,

> In these communities, Páez and Guambiano respectively, groups of tenant farmers had managed, after years of rebellion, to convince their patrons to request INCORA to buy up their land; but when INCORA proposed to give the Indians the land in parcels with individual titles (UAFs) they refused categorically. They indicated that they wanted the land to be allocated collectively, but INCORA initially did not wish to compromise on this issue.[23]

Several of the key demands of the CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca), which were previously discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis focused on responding to these conditions of exploitation. These demands called for the recovery and expansion of resguardo lands and an end to the *terraje* system.[24] Even when the indigenous movement achieved success in gaining control over resguardo lands, new challenges came to the forefront. According to Colombian anthropologist and indigenous ally Maria Teresa Findji, "During the 1970s, indigenous struggles were most commonly read as a 'struggle for land.' In the 1980s, they started to be read as a 'struggle for territory'."[25] In many ways, the debate over concepts of land versus territory had already begun in earnest in the 1970s as will become evident. For the Colombian government, land is simply viewed as

---

[22] Ibid., 73-74.
[23] Ibid., 75.
[24] Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia," 109.
[25] Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia," 113.

70

property, which is an important aspect of capitalist social relations and another unit of space to be defended and maintained by the state. In this sense, even though the Nasa's initial attempts to reclaim their land were seen as a threat to the social and political order, the state hoped to steer their struggle towards a land reform that would ultimately lead towards a capitalist relationship to the land. According to Maria Teresa Findji, "What is noteworthy is that the state continued to ignore the specific nature of indigenous communities and to view their members merely as peasants or those who were doomed to be peasants."[26] For the Nasa, land is seen more as being encompassed by the concept of territory, a space for the maintenance and evolution of the Nasa's social, economic, and political vision. Since the Nasa do not see their land as the property of individual entities to be bought and sold on an open market, it has conflicted with the government's vision for development in the countryside. Despite the government's shifting approaches to the indigenous movement, after many years of struggle, this question of land versus territory has continued to be a source of tension between the government and indigenous communities.

During the rise of the indigenous movement, the government's approach to the indigenous movement changed again. In the early 1970s, INCORA started to mediate land disputes. It ended its goal of breaking up resguardos and instead carried out studies to confirm the existence of resguardos. In March 1972, CRIC met with representatives of the ministry of government, ministry of agriculture, INCORA, and the governor of Cauca. During this meeting, the government acknowledged a history of large and unlawful land appropriations in Nasa resguardos. The meeting produced a statement called the *Acta de Bogotá*. In this document the government took "a first step towards

---

[26] Ibid., 120.

71

official recognition for CRIC" and "for the first time underlined the authority…of the cabildos with regard to the restructuring of tenure in resguardos, including those areas where non-indigenous colonists had settled over the previous decades."[27]

INCORA changed its policy from the promotion of dividing up resguardo lands to a policy of collectively allocating lands to community enterprises (EC). INCORA chose a number of families to participate in an EC, usually going around a cabildo, and gave the families joint ownership of the land. In exchange these farmers signed a contract including a code of internal organization, which said that the EC land could not be subdivided for a number of years, individual plots could be set aside for subsistence crops, and financial income was to be generated from commercial production by the EC. The EC's profits were supposed to eventually pay back the state-financed purchase price of the land. The EC could then be retroactively legalized through collective land title.[28] Here again debt continues to be the mechanism that transfers surplus out of the community and the withholding of title the legal means of insuring that the debt is paid. INCORA still had no way of compelling landowners to sell their land. INCORA could only help facilitate the transfer of land to the communities if landowners were willing to sell.

In the late 1970s, it became clear that INCORA and the indigenous communities had different approaches to communal projects. There were two main criticisms of INCORA's EC model: (1) if the indigenous communities accepted the EC model, they would be compelled to pay for the land; (2) accepting the INCORA-EC model meant

---

[27] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition,* 78–79.
[28] Ibid., 82–83.

accepting serious intervention in the planning and management of economic activities.[29]

The CRIC encouraged the setting up of autonomous ECs not affiliated with INCORA.

There were disadvantages to attempting to go around INCORA. The only way the

government was willing to legally transfer repossessed land to the indigenous

communities was through INCORA. The government cited the Nasa's lack of legal title

to the land in denying the communities access to credits and assistance.[30]

After the rise of the indigenous movement, Nasa indigenous communities were

forced to participate in the drug economy because of the falling prices of their traditional

legal crops such as sisal and coffee. Opium poppy and coca commanded very high return

per cultivated area. Unlike traditional crops, these crops are not tied to an agricultural

calendar and could be planted throughout the year. Cultivation does not require special

techniques or inputs. By the late 1990s, drug crop cultivation was widespread in the

indigenous communities of northern Cauca. Families began to grow the crop not just for

economic necessity but also for profit. People started to grow poppy and coca instead of

food crops, leading to an increase in food dependency. In 2001, the cabildo of Jambaló

estimated that 70 to 80 percent of food was imported.[31] Participation in the drug

economy came at the expense of communal activities. There was also an environmental

cost due to the increased cultivation of virgin land that was brought into production for

growing drug crops. Drug crop cultivation also became a threat to the indigenous

authorities. In the late 1990s, narco-traffickers installed drug processing labs in the

---

[29] Ibid., 95.
[30] Ibid., 100.
[31] Ibid., 195.

resguardo of Jambaló which resulted in higher rates of juvenile crime, alcoholism, and violence.[32]

4.3 The Violence of Representation

Another important aspect of modernity/coloniality for the Nasa was their experience of the violence of representation. According to Windsor S. Leroke, the violence of representation refers to

> The idea that the act of representation is in itself an act of violence… Like the act of translation, representation is an act of distancing. It becomes possible through the concept of "space", through something other than itself. Within this vacuum of separation, representation results, and sustains itself through a variety of social processes that are never visible and stable.[33]

A crucial feature of the "variety of social processes" that create, sustain, and give meaning to the violence of representation is that they are embedded in relationships of power. Colonialism and imperialism generated a violence of representation that subjected the Nasa to stigma and disqualification from self-representation. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith explicitly lays out the ways in which these social processes impacted representations of indigenous people by their colonizers. She argues that

> Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and "popular" works, and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories, and school curricula.[34]

A thorough discussion of the ways in which imperialism and colonialism have shaped representations of the Nasa is beyond the scope of this thesis. This section will look at

---

[32] Ibid., 193–198.

[33] Windsor S. Leroke, *"Koze Kube Nini?" The Violence of Representation and the Politics of Social Research in South Africa*, Working Paper (University of the Witwatersrand, July 13, 1994), 2–3, http://digi.nrf.ac.za/dspace/handle/10539/7896.

[34] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (London: ZED BOOKS LTD, 2012), 7–8.

the Nasa's experience of the violence of representation before, during, and after the rise of indigenous social movements.

Representations of the Nasa prior to the rise of the indigenous movement were greatly influenced by the legacy of Spanish colonialism and the efforts of post-colonial mestizo/mixed heritage (Indigenous and Spanish) Colombians to establish a new state. Up until the 19th century, the Spanish colonizers described the Nasa to the wider world. An early example of this was the label Paez, which was a name for the Nasa imposed by the Spanish. The name Paez came from the name for one of the five siblings who were considered caciques or hereditary chiefs at the time of the Spanish invasion.[35] The name Nasa would later be adopted during the rise of the indigenous movement in reference to their language, Nasa Yuwe. According to Joanne Rappaport,

> Knowledge of Nasa was virtually nonexistent among Spaniards, and so there was little possibility of the emergence of a European-authored chronicle in Nasa Yuwe. Nor did the Spanish overlords take a great interest in delving into Nasa thought. Chronicles of the Nasa were for the most part descriptions of battles. Quite simply, the Nasa were not perceived as being worth the effort: unlike the Incas, they were simple savages meant to be worked, and not an object of study or speculation. Only the missionaries, who took an interest in Nasa souls and therefore in the Nasa language, give us even the briefest description of indigenous lifeways or cosmology.[36]

Despite the lack of interest in the Nasa, there was one thing the Nasa were remembered for, and that was their resistance to the Spanish colonizers. Rappaport identifies this as one of the themes in depictions of the Nasa. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Colombian elites were concerned with the problem of what should be done with Colombia's indigenous people. On the one hand, they hoped "to harness the Indian's savagery, especially that of the Nasa, who were remembered as

---

[35] Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 33.
[36] Ibid., 61.

75

fierce warriors."[37] On the other hand it was hoped that the Nasa could be civilized and incorporated into Colombian society as mestizos:

> In his 1907 pamphlet entitled *Reducción de salvajes* (The Reduction of Savages to Civilization), Rafael Uribe Uribe made…a…case for the incorporation of Colombia's indigenous population into the labor market…Uribe Uribe's solution was to civilize the Indians: teach them to speak Spanish, slowly rid them of their "savage" culture, convert them into mestizo laborers, in short, make citizens of them. His opinions regarding the fate of Indians grew out of nineteenth-century dreams of transforming Colombia into a nation of mestizos.[38]

According to Rappaport, another view of the Nasa leftover from the colonial period, was their insignificance:

> Even as late as 1910, in the first edition of their history of Colombia, Henao and Arrubla (1938) treat Indians almost exclusively as savage warriors, confining them to chapters on the Conquest and the colonial period. The Nasa are only mentioned with regard to their resistance to the Spanish invaders and are not accorded a role in the growth of the nation… Thus, the savage Indian was conceptually banished to the pre-Indepedence era, remaining invisible to the Republican mind.[39]

These were the dominant views of the Nasa, if they were acknowledged to exist at all.

In the previous section, this thesis discussed the Nasa's experience of economic exploitation and the integrationist agenda of the state with regard to indigenous communities. While the integrationist agenda had an economic aspect that sought to incorporate indigenous people into Colombian society as peasants generating surplus through relations of exchange, there was an ideological component to this as well. This ideological component involved transforming indigenous people's understanding of themselves as well as their relationship towards their lands. In many ways, past depictions of indigenous people as being backwards informed the Colombian government's integrationist agenda.

---

[37] Ibid., 89.
[38] Ibid., 88.
[39] Ibid., 90.

76

Antonil is extremely critical about the ways in which ethnographers who studied

the Nasa in the first half of the twentieth century failed to acknowledge the real social

conditions that the Nasa faced. According to him, the work of ethnographers of that

period "provides an object lesson in how a certain brand of uncommitted 'science' can

fail utterly to reflect the real needs and aspirations of the people subject to its jaundiced

scrutiny."[40] Writing in 1978, Antonil argues that all of the ethnographic works on the

Nasa after Leon Douay's work (1890) seemed to intentionally give the impression that

there was no social conflict in Nasa resguardos. For Antonil,

> Earlier reports – such as Pittier (1907), Cuervo Márquez (1920), and Lunardi
> (1934) – were unmistakably racist and ethnocentric in tone. More
> frightening…is the fact that the grand generation of midcentury social scientists
> usually managed to avoid taking any explicit position whatsoever, shielding their
> sensibilities behind a spurious 'objectivity' that could not afford to dirty its hands
> with anything that might distract from the well-wrought mediocrity of their
> respective ethnographies. To judge from the accounts of Hernández de Alba
> (1944, 1946a) or Pérez de Barradas (1937), the Paez would seem to be living in a
> complete political vacuum. Even Bernal Villa, perhaps the best informed student
> of the Paez, dismisses the period of the *Violencia* – in which he himself was
> doing his field work in Tierradentro – with scarcely a single mention, as if the
> heat of actuality were somehow to undermine the scholarly tone of his work.[41]

Antonil continues by criticizing the work of Sutti Reissig de Ortiz and Jesus M. Otero for

not accurately describing the ongoing conflict in the region. He cites these authors'

works as reasons why it should not be surprising that the Nasa viewed "most

anthropologists with a certain amount of suspicion, even hostility, for they have so

notably failed to provide them with any real effective support."[42]

The historic distortion of indigenous people's lives and experiences, if they were

even acknowledged to exist in the first place, meant that the emergence of the indigenous

---

[40] Antonil, *Mama Coca* (London: Hassle Free Press, 1978), 247.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

movement in the early 1970s caught the public by surprise. Discussing the third

assembly of the CRIC held in July 1973, Maria Teresa Findji writes:

> …the country was surprised. In the national imagination, the Indians—living
> evidence of the colonial situation—existed only as those who had disappeared,
> those who were about to disappear, or those who were ultimately doomed to
> disappear. In no way could they be part of contemporary Colombia, nor could
> they show up in the public plaza and speak on their own behalf. For many years,
> the national discourse about the public demonstration of the indigenous people
> was to be directed by this Western linear view of progress, which equated
> "Indian" with the past and thereby relegated indigenous people to be always
> behind the times. We would like to underscore the implications that the
> appearance of communities claiming to be "legitimate Americans," which
> predated the dominant national society, had for Colombia's growing national
> consciousness.[43]

Three important changes occurred as a result of the rise of the indigenous

movement: (1) nonindigenous activists and academic scholars emerged who were

sympathetic to the indigenous movement; (2) the state changed its discourse and some of

its policies regarding indigenous peoples; and (3) perhaps most importantly, indigenous

peoples saw themselves differently.

An important shift that occurred during and after the emergence of the indigenous

movement was the participation of nonindigenous activists and academics. U.S.

anthropologist Joanne Rappaport gives a nuanced account of the role and evolution of

outsider participation in the indigenous movement in northern Cauca in her book,

*Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic

Pluralism in Colombia*. While Rappaport's initial experience trying to do research with

CRIC in the late 1970s echoed the skepticism expressed by Antonil regarding outside

researchers, the history of outside collaboration with the indigenous movement was more

nuanced than Antonil suggests in *Mama Coca*. Rappaport argues that outsiders who

---

[43] Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement
in Colombia," 113.

participated in social movement activities with the CRIC are generally regarded as

colaboradores. She argues that most colaboradores come out of the Colombian left and

see "the indigenous movement as a prime site for constructing a new nation."[44] They

were present at the beginning of the CRIC and continue to staff some of its programs.

They also served as commanders in the now demobilized Quintín Lame indigenous

guerrilla group. According to Rappaport,

> Colaboradores do not fit the mold of the intellectuals associated with leftist
> political parties, whose members inserted themselves into grassroots struggles
> under the assumption that they were a vanguard capable of leading the oppressed
> toward revolution. Instead, colaboradores have always seen the indigenous
> leadership itself as a kind of vanguard for alternative politics in Colombia and,
> for this reason, have chosen to work alongside them. Colaboradores do not speak
> *for* a subordinated sector, but are speaking *with* them…[45]

Rappaport also discusses the role of academic researchers who opted to work in

collaboration with peasant and indigenous movements instead of university base

research. These researchers "formulated a research strategy that incorporated the

politically committed dialogue that marks colaborador practice into the very fabric of

their work."[46] This research strategy or methodology is called *investigación-acción*

participativa (participatory-action research).

Another important shift that occurred after the rise of indigenous movements were

changes in the state's discourse and some of its policies regarding indigenous people.

Most of these changes have already been mentioned in this thesis. They include events

such as: (1) the signing of the *Acta de Bogotá,* where the government officially

recognized the history of "large and unlawful appropriations of land in various Paez

---

[44] Rappaport, *Intercultural Utopias*, 59.
[45] Ibid., 62.
[46] Ibid.

79

resguardos"[47]; (2) the meeting of President Belisario Betancur with indigenous governors

in 1982 where he proclaimed an end to government efforts to abolish resguardos and

affirmed Law 89 of 1890; and (3) most symbolically and concretely, the passage of

Colombia's new constitution, with indigenous participation in the constitutional assembly

in 1991.

Perhaps the most significant change to occur after the rise of indigenous

movements was a change in how the Nasa viewed themselves. According to Jean

Jackson, "Beginning in the 1970s, a process of change and restructuring has provided

both incentives and opportunities for the development (and politicization) of a generic

indigenous identity."[48] Maria Teresa Findji puts it somewhat differently,

> In the late 1970s, confrontations within CRIC, ANUC, and their respective allies
> over the political leadership of the indigenous struggles were expressed within
> the Left in terms of the opposition between the class and indigenist perspectives.
> The struggling communities, in turn, perceived the opposition in terms of
> campesinos and Indians… The indigenous people maintained that they were not
> campesinos in an effort to express the different focus of their struggles more
> forcefully. By doing so, they were, in fact, redefining their social and political
> identity.[49]

Despite these changes, the violence of representation remains an issue for

indigenous communities in northern Cauca. Mario Murillo has written about the

contentious relationship between the government and the indigenous movement during

the presidency of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010). In particular, he wrote about the

Colombian mainstream media's coverage of a six-week march organized by indigenous

movements in 2008 called the Indigenous and Popular Minga. Murillo makes the

---

[47] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 78–79.

[48] Jean Jackson, "Caught in the Crossfire: Colombia's Indigenous Peoples during the 1990s," in *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[49] Maria Teresa Findji, "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia," 121–122.

following observation regarding the mainstream media's coverage of indigenous

communities in Colombia,

> The consistent practice of the commercial mass media has been to either ignore the communities by making them invisible, clump them all together in a process of homogenization, or present them as nothing more than passive actors, the poor defenseless victims of an unjust system – "el pobre indio." There is also the more benevolent yet equally harmful tendency to celebrate their exotic-ness, embracing the apparent novelty of their different forms of dressing, their spiritual and healing practices, or their internal justice system, without really understanding the significance of each. Meanwhile, when the communities take matters into their own hands in acts of massive protest and mobilization, as they did with the minga, the dominant media usually represent these steps as acts of criminality, emphasizing their propensity to break the law – block highways, occupy territory "illegally," etc. – as a way to address their grievances. The unsubstantiated association with "dark forces of terror," meaning the FARC guerillas, becomes the accepted message that is very difficult to refute.[50]

Despite the changes achieved as result of the indigenous movement's agitation, the

government and the media still make use of old tropes in constructing an image of the

indigenous people for Colombia's mestizo population when it's in their interest.

4.4 Different Visions of Place Making

Place is central to Escobar's theoretical engagement with modernity. In his book,

Territories of Difference, Escobar finds place to be important for three reasons: (1) place

has been central to Black and Indigenous movements which are the object of his study;

(2) more generally "because place continues to be an important source of culture and

identity"; and (3) because place has been seen as far less important than such concepts as

"movement, displacement, traveling, diaspora, migration, and so forth."[51] He argues that

recent theory has given too much value to "the global" at the expense of "place".   He

devotes chapter 1 of *Territories of Difference* to the topic of place. In that chapter,

---

[50] Mario A. Murillo, "The 2008 Indigenous and Popular Minga in Colombia: Civil Resistance and Alternative Communication Practices," *Socialism and Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2009): 137–156, doi:10.1080/08854300903180804.
[51] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 7.

81

Escobar discusses two broad strategies of localization "which are not bounded and discreet but overlapping and coproduced." (1) "Strategies of localization by capital, the state, and technoscience." These are strategies where capital, the state, and technoscience use their networks and resources on behalf of efforts to link up their local, regional, national, and international agendas. According to Escobar, "To the extent that these strategies are not place-based (even if locally articulated), they inevitably induce a delocalizing effect with respect to places." (2) "Subaltern strategies of localization by communities and social movements." Escobar divides these into two categories: Place based strategies that are inspired by their relationship with territory and culture; "and network strategies that enable social movements to enact a politics of scale from below."[52]

Arturo Escobar's discussion of strategies of localization in *Territories of Difference* will be helpful here in framing the different visions of those who represent the forces of modernity/coloniality versus the vision of the Nasa. The analysis of the three facets of modernity/coloniality can also be seen as being part of a discussion about the strategies of localization by capital and the state. A discussion of the role of technoscience in the three facets of modernity/coloniality is beyond the scope of this thesis. This chapter has focused so far on how forces of state and capital created the conditions of modernity/coloniality. The rest of the chapter will focus on the ways that Nasa communities attempt to confront these conditions of modernity/coloniality with their own place-based strategies, inspired by their relationship with territory and culture. Here again, a discussion of any "network strategies" that the Nasa use "to enact a politics of scale from below" is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[52] Ibid., 32.

82

Map 3: Map of the Resguardo and Municipality of Jambaló
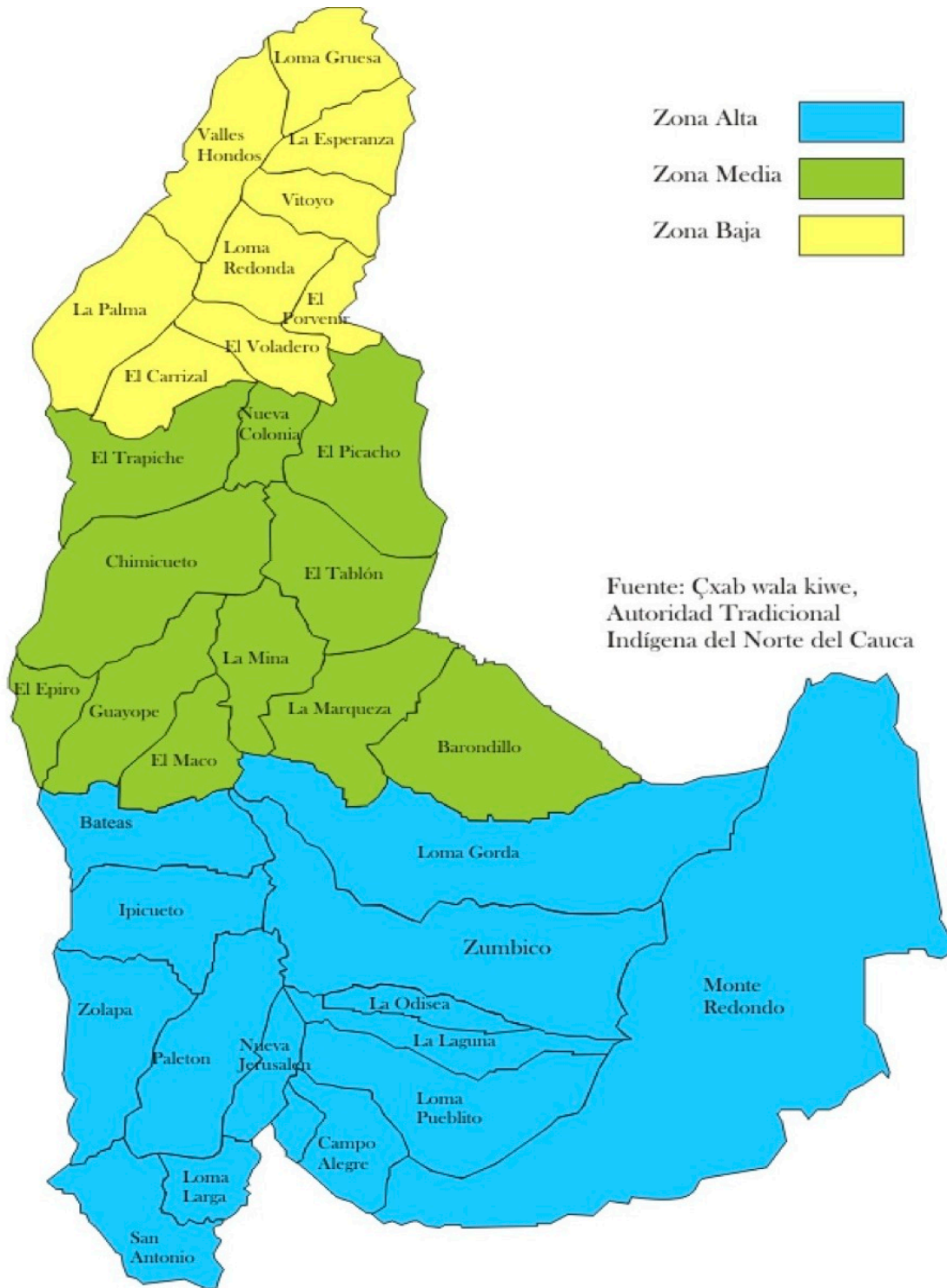
Source: The Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN)

4.5 Three Projects in Response to Conditions of Coloniality

This thesis previously discussed the rise of the indigenous movement, along with

its demands:

> (1) the repossession of resguardo lands; (2) the expansion of the resguardos; (3)
> the strengthening of cabildos; (4) an end to sharecropping; (5) the promotion of
> the knowledge of indigenous legislation and the demand that it be applied; (6) the
> defense of the history, language, and customs of native communities; and (7) the
> training and employment of indigenous teachers.[53]

However, what has not been discussed are the alternative projects that were recuperated,

preserved, or expanded with the repossession of resguardo lands. This section will

discuss three projects in the resguardo of Jambaló that respond to the conditions of

modernity/coloniality discussed in the previous section: (1) the development of the

communitarian economy; (2) the development of the Proyecto Global; and (3) the Tul

home garden project. These projects form part of what Arturo Escobar refers to as

"subaltern strategies of localization." These strategies can be understood as place-based

strategies that are inspired by their relationship with territory and culture.[54]

4.6 The Communitarian Economy

Part of the reason why the Nasa struggled to recover their lands was to establish

their own vision for social and economic development. This is a vision that cannot be

reduced to the vision of a peasant receiving a piece of property as part of a land reform.

Joris van de Sandt discusses the land use customs that exist in the resguardo of Jambaló

in his book, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*. He divides his discussion into three distinct

areas of the resguardo: an upper, middle, and lower section. He also mentions the types

of land tenure in existence in each of these sections: "individual adjudication (usufruct),

---

[53] Rappaport, "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia," 109; Troyan, "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia," 177; Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 77.
[54] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 32.

global adjudication (community enterprise), private property, terraje and lease."[55] Van

de Sant built his account on María Teresa Findji and José María Rojas' 1985 ethnography

of Jambaló, *Territory and Economy in Paez Society*. Van de Sant is particularly

concerned with changes in land management practices from 1985 to 2000. This section

is particularly focused on Van de Sant's discussion of two types of land tenure, individual

adjudication (usufruct) and global adjudication (community enterprise).

4.6a Global Adjudication

　　　　Global adjudication is a type of land tenure that came about in the aftermath of

the Acta de Bogotá. According to Maria Teresa Findji, these types of adjudications had

the express purpose of proclaiming the Nasa's control over land that was often still in the

process of being retaken from landowners,

> Since the landowner's dominance signified an absence of cabildo authority and
> the impossibility of proceeding with the usual process of "individual
> adjudication" in accord with law 89, the cabildo of Jambaló proceeded with a
> "global adjudication", before they entered the property to retake the land. This
> meant that the land was ceded to all of the terrajeros of each hacienda on the
> basis of the Title of Juan Tama and the Acta de Bogotá. It took place in the same
> way that individual adjudications happen, by marking land on foot and
> proclaiming a title. Once the haciendas were recovered, the lands were
> reintegrated into the common territory of the resguardo and the communities
> were under the authority of the cabildo for the first time. The authority of the
> cabildo and the communities was reestablished over the territory instead of the
> control of the landowner. (My translation)[56]

These collective adjudications took place in the middle section of the resguardo of

Jambaló and they were different than usufruct adjudications where individual units of

production were allocated to families.

> After the recuperations and on the basis of the community's enjoyment of the
> global adjudication process, there were experiences that we could tentatively call
> a "communal economy", that neither corresponds to parceling out the land nor to

---

[55] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 117–118.

[56] María Teresa Findji and José María Rojas, *Territorio, Economía y Sociedad Páez* (Cali, Col.: Universidad del Valle, 1985), 114–115.

the creation of a single unit of collective production. As we have been saying, each family organizes their own unit of production according to the work force available, with the limitation of available land, and it is articulated through a certain type of communal store to the exchanges within the same community, for example through "credit" that concerns the administrators so much, but often ends up being a mechanism for solidarity in times of scarcity. Or the other way around: when families subsidize a community good for reasons of autonomy, prestige or other reasons, that follow a different logic from that of return on invested capital, as we observed in the handling of a "chiva". Beyond being a storage place or point of sale for products in the market, some communal stores have played a double role: of internal organization and articulation with the market, which has to be developed in both directions. (My Translation)[57]

4.6b The Community Enterprise of Chimicueto

One project that arose as a result of the land repossession movement and the processes of global adjudication was the community enterprise of Chimicueto. Chimicueto is a *vereda* (small rural settlement) in the middle section of the resguardo of Jambaló. Land tenure in the vereda was shaped by two historic processes: (1) "the consolidation of the landlord hacienda in the first half of the twentieth century" and (2) "the land struggle of the 1970s and 1980s."[58]

Prior to the land repossession, the last non-native landowner in Chimicueto, Rafael Peñagos, expanded his coffee plantations and cattle ranch to the entire vereda. Tenant farmers who lived in the vereda were required by Peñagos to work three days a month in order to obtain permission to cultivate a small plot for subsistence agricultural production. So the Nasa revolted against Peñagos for two reasons: (1) because of their conditions of near slavery, and (2) out of a desire to recuperate their traditional practice of slash and burn agriculture. After a long struggle and a period of escalating

---

[57] María Teresa Findji, "Tras Las Huellas de los Paeces," in *Encrucijadas de Colombia Amerindia* (Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, 1993), 64–65.
[58] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 139.

confrontation beginning in 1972, Peñagos finally abandoned his land in 1981. A court order legalized the transfer of the land to the community.[59]

After the successful recuperation of Rafael Peñagos' land by Chimicueto's indigenous community of approximately 20 families, the community decided to maintain the territorial integrity of Peñagos' land. This property included grasslands for cattle raising and a coffee plantation with thousands of plants and was incorporated into a community enterprise. The community enterprise (EC) was supposed to serve as a rallying cry for the indigenous movement and help raise the community's standard of living. Chimicueto's EC was set up as an autonomous EC, which was out of an explicit rejection of the ECs created through the government run INCORA land reform agency that required outside participation in the enterprise "through a statute (internal regulations) and payment for the land."[60] The autonomous nature of Chimicueto's community enterprise meant three things: (1) it could not obtain status as a legal entity in Colombia; (2) it did not have "access to agricultural credits" and (3) it "could not negotiate contracts with third parties."[61] The members of the community enterprise worked the communal farms one to two days per week under the leadership of an executive junta.

After the repossessions in Chimicueto, cabildo leaders were initially concerned with increasing the community's food supply. In 1981, the cabildo of governor Emiliano Guejia started an initiative to increase food security and revive methods of production "such as large, community-initiated communal labor parties and inter-community barter

[59] Ibid., 139–141.
[60] Ibid., 141.
[61] Ibid.

trade (to profit from the vertical complementarity of microclimates)."[62] This meant that

part of the collective land of Chimicueto was set aside for the collective production of

corn, beans, yucca, parsnip, and sugarcane. The idea is that these crops would then be

exchanged with other veredas that grew other types of crops. This intercommunity crop

trade only lasted between 1981-1983 because some community leaders were interested in

focusing more on commercial agricultural projects that were seen as more modern and

forward looking. Additionally, interest in subsistence food production lessened after

1986 due to a government program in rural war zones. The program, the National

Rehabilitation Plan (PNR), run in collaboration with the UN's World Food Program,

gave participants "food rations in exchange for their labor contributions to sponsored

development projects, mainly for the improvement of infrastructure (roads, bridges,

etc.)"[63]

The shift away from an emphasis on subsistence agricultural production took

place at the same time that there was a renewed interest in commercial production. The

community enterprise of Chimicueto engaged in several commercial agricultural projects

such as coffee production and cattle ranching. Of the two projects, the coffee plantations

were more successful. Despite suffering from problems such as a lack of technical

expertise in managing a large coffee plantation and having old and less productive coffee

plants, income from the coffee harvest helped to pay for a number of community needs.

According to Van Sandt, the revenue was spent on the following things: (1) "renewal and

repair works on community infrastructure, including tools, fences, farms, and

construction materials"; (2) "advanced training and specific technical training for

---

[62] Ibid., 142.
[63] Ibid., 144.

88

promising youth"; (3) "food to prepare meals on communal work days"; and (4) "the remaining money was distributed evenly among the individual families."[64] Despite having over 100 acres of pastureland, Chimicueto was less successful in the area of cattle ranching. This was due to the community's lack of startup capital in terms of being able to purchase livestock. Even when the community participated in a development project in the 1990s aimed at helping the community to develop its ability to engage in cattle ranching, they were unable to expand their supply of livestock.

In addition to lands set aside for the community enterprises of Chimicueto, the community members also had their own individual plots. According to Van Sandt, "Just like on the collective farms (EC farms), there was also a partial shift, in the second half of the 1980s, in the production on the individual family plots from food crop cultivation to cash crop cultivation."[65] This dynamic of market oriented production in turn led to the "advancing monetarization of the indigenous economy as a whole and, consequently, to the declining importance of communal labor forms."[66] This arrangement of community enterprises run by the entire community on the one hand and individual plots of land divided amongst community members on the other, has presented two significant challenges for the residents of Chimicueto. One issue has been inequality of land ownership amongst community members who have their own individual plots of land. This inequality is rooted "in the former territorial organization of the landlord hacienda and in the subsequent land occupation process in the transition period immediately after the land recovery."[67] This inequality has also been exacerbated by population growth

---

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 147.
[66] Ibid., 148.
[67] Ibid., 150.

and an increasing dynamic of land shortage as less land is available to distribute to each

new generation. Another issue has been a contradiction in priorities between the

individual plots of land and the work on the community enterprises. Van Sandt argues

that

> Families are starting to prefer to invest their labor and assets in the domestic
> economy, using the facilities and revenue provided by the collective production.
> Meanwhile, they increasingly place the responsibility for the development of the
> communal institutions in the hands of people appointed to this task by the
> community… In other words, there is a tendency towards a maximization of the
> domestic (individual) economy at the expense of the communitarian economy.[68]

4.6c Individual Adjudication

The land tenure regime Van de Sant refers to as individual adjudication (usufruct)

is predominantly found in the upper section of Jambaló. This is the area with the longest

history of settlement by the Nasa. The Nasa's presence in the region dates back to the

late 16th century. According to Van de Sant,

> The upper section (in the main) has always remained under the statute of the
> resguardo, including its land tenure regime, which was partly codified in the (still
> valid) Law 89 of 1890. The land being defined as inalienable collective property,
> that is, "property owned and defended by the local community"…, the annually
> elected cabildo adjudicates usufruct rights to individual families – which cannot
> be sold, mortgaged or taken – while retaining some control over the land, mainly
> with regard to its redistribution; the cabildo also carries responsibility for the
> mediation of land disputes.[69]

Usufruct rights to land means that "every adult member of the community (comunero)

has the right to cultivate a plot to support self and family."[70] In order for a community

member to claim a piece of land, the person needs to start working the land and then

notify the cabildo regarding their intention to work the land. When the cabildo has

processed and approved the land claim, then the community member can use the parcel

---

[68] Ibid., 154.
[69] Ibid., 119.
[70] Ibid., 124.

as long as they want. When the land is no longer being worked, the person gives up their

right to the land and it returns to the community. Parents can pass on their rights to a

particular piece of land to their children, with the condition that it must be continuously

cultivated.[71]

There are other limitations to individual usufruct rights. According to Van de

Sant,

> As the resguardo is defined as the inalienable property of an indigenous
> community as a whole, single families cannot sell, farm out or mortgage land to
> people from outside the community, for this would jeopardize the territorial
> integrity of the community.[72]

Community members believe that non-indigenous people took over large segments of

resguardo lands in the middle and upper sections because this rule had been disregarded.

This rule has been strictly observed since the rise of the indigenous movement in the

1970s.

The Nasa have historically been characterized by a dispersed mode of settlement.

This mode of settlement has had a particular impact on land tenure and agricultural

production, particularly in the upper section of the resguardo. According to van de Sandt,

> In the upper section of Jambaló, the nuclear family forms the center of
> agricultural activity. Households use most of their land for the cultivation of
> subsistence crops, mainly maize, beans, and tubers. This land is tilled by means
> of slash-and-burn techniques (*rocería*). A slash-and-burn plot (*roza* / *é, tsavi-é*)
> will generally not yield more than two consecutive harvests. Therefore each year
> a family burns and plants only part of its land, usually no more than one or two
> hectares; the rest is kept fallow (*rastrojo* / *é posta*) as a reserve for future
> cultivation. Besides areas under cultivation and fallows, most households have a
> small plot where they cultivate more permanent crops, such as sisal (*fique*) and,
> to a lesser degree, coffee and sugar cane. All of these crops, which are re-
> harvested annually, are destined for sale on the market. Traditionally, the Páez
> often also maintain a house garden (*huerta* / *yac tul*) where they grow a wide
> range of vegetables and medicinal plants. Usually, families do not have all their
> land in one location, but divided into several separate plots scattered across the

---

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 125–126.

vereda–though mostly not very far from their farmhouse. Therefore, the green hills of the upper section have the appearance of "a patchwork of cultivated plots, fallow lands and recently burned areas" (Rappaport 1982: 49).[73]

Despite the seemingly isolated nature of traditional patterns of Nasa land tenure and agricultural production, Maria Teresa Findji cautions against seeing that as evidence that the Nasa are an individualistic people at heart. She argues that although the family unit constitutes the traditional basis of Nasa communities, and has been crucial to the success of their resistance, that cannot be fully understood outside of the wider community processes within which they are embedded:

> In the Páez tradition, each house is not regarded as an "individual" unit; it is a link within a community where mechanisms of reciprocity and solidarity function according to specific norms. If one were to try and understand the cultural resources of the Paez, it would be important to reinforce each "house" in order to reinforce the community. (My Translation)[74]

Findji also explains the way that the Nasa see inequality within their society. There is an acceptance that there will be inequality and that some will have more than others. However, the Nasa attempt to address this through their commitment to community:

> They attempt to take advantage of the relations of kinship as they also work in the organization of the economy. All are not equal in a family, some are poorer than others, but they support each other, and the community -a group of families that are related to each other- can be constituted as its own economic base and can be related with the others. In fact they already connect with each other thanks to their dispersion; a dispersion historically produced, but also developed out of economic necessity to take advantage of the different thermal floors or micro-climates. It is an "Andean" logic that is distinct from modes of organization where work is being concentrated in a single lot with intensive use of inputs. However, there is also inequality between communities: because of the history of their creation, because of the population-land relationship or other available resources, among other reasons. It is on the basis of this inequality that they are united. In the present conditions of extreme poverty of the Paez communities, to think of the future simply in terms of peasant families individually tied to the market is to condemn them to continue becoming impoverished. (My Translation)[75]

---

[73] Ibid., 121.
[74] Findji, "Tras Las Huellas de los Paeces," 64.
[75] Ibid., 65.

4.7 The Relationship Between the Land and Nasa Cosmology

Another way the Nasa's relationship to land is unique as compared to peasant

groups in Colombia is the place that Nasa land and territory occupies in Nasa cosmology.

Olga Lucia Sanabria gives a general overview of the relationship between territory and

Nasa cosmology. Only a brief overview of that vision can be given here, but it's

significant that the Nasa's relationship to their land goes beyond a simple extractive

relationship with the land:

> The tundra or highlands are considered the place of origin by the indigenous
> people; it is the symbolic location where ceremonies of reaffirmation of
> knowledge are performed; of recognition of indigenous authority. This territory
> is sacred because it is inhabited by spirits or "duendes", because it is where the
> "rainbow" is born and where there are "wild" and "placid" lagoons. The
> highlands, for the indigenous Paez (Nasa) as well as for the Guambianos,
> represents the personification of the "spirit of the heavy shower" or "the spirit of
> the owner of the tundra", which determines the climate in all of the indigenous
> territory (Tróchez ET to. 1992; Sanabria, 1991). In these places, the *The' wala*
> collects medicinal plants and with their "power" are able to prevent and cure
> diseases or ills of community members and communities. They are the places of
> birth of important rivers and ravines with historical and mythological
> significance, as it is with the birth of Juan Tama for the Nasa, whose lagoon takes
> his name and that of "boy of water" or cacique for the Guambianos. The
> members of the Cabildos go to these sites every year, the first day of their
> possession as an indigenous authority, to "wash" the staffs of authority and
> culturally validate their commitment and social responsibility as governors
> before the community. (My Translation)[76]

In Nasa cosmology, certain places cannot be subject to agricultural cultivation because of

their sacred significance. The Nasa also look to the phases of the moon and the

alignment of the stars in order to decide the best time to harvest crops, gather wood, build

houses, collect medicinal plants, and control pests. Rainfall is also seen as being

connected with the lunar cycle. Thunder, lightening, and rainbows are seen as signs,

---

[76] Olga Lucía Sanabria, *Manejo vegetal en agroecosistemas tradicionales de Tierradentro, Cauca, Colombia* (Popayán, Colombia: Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2001), 107.

preventative signs, or community announcements that are interpreted by the traditional

medicine person or *The' wala*.[77] According to Sanabria,

> The indigenous farmers "request permission" from the highlands and high
> mountains to cultivate. Towards that place, the *The' wala* directs their "blowings"
> during the "cleansings", because they are sacred places or places of power, where
> the mythical indigenous leader Juan Tama de la Estrella lowered into the waters
> of a ravine. Between the vegetation of the high mountains, in the rivers or the
> ravines, live the "duendes" or spirits. Places with crops, such as agricultural
> fields, are inhabited by "mojanos" or spirits of people who have turned into
> animals, who take care of crops, especially during the time of harvests. (My
> Translation)[78]

The concept that brings together indigenous views of nature with practices that

root indigenous spirituality in the natural world is called cosmovision. Joanne Rappoport

gives an important overview of the concept of cosmovision:

> Cosmovision…affords a primary vehicle for articulating the concept of culture in
> specific native conceptual frameworks. Cosmovision is understood by Nasa
> activists as an approach to everyday experience that inserts human beings into a
> broader spiritual universe and stimulates them to engage in ritual aimed at
> ensuring cosmic harmony. Implicit in this conception is the notion that human
> beings share the cosmos with other beings who, though they inhabit a different
> plane from humans, animals, and plants, are not isolated from the rest of the
> universe as supernaturals but are seen as integral components of nature.[79]

The concept of cosmovision will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

4.8 The Proyecto Global

The precursor to the Proyecto Global was the Proyecto Nasa, which was initiated

by Father Alvaro Ulcué. The purpose of the project was to promote "evangelization,

bilingual education, healthcare, housing, agricultural modernization (*tecnificación*), and

communitarian work" in the resguardos of Toribio, Tacueyo, and San Francisco.[80] The

project was stopped after Fr. Ulcué's killing because of a surge in state-guerrilla violence.

---

[77] Ibid., 108.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Rappaport, *Intercultural Utopias*, 147.
[80] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 181.

Community leaders of Jambaló persuaded Rubén Darío Espinosa and Fr. Mauro Riascos to set up similar program in the resguardo of Jambaló. In 1987, Espinosa and Fr. Riascos organized meetings and workshops for indigenous leaders that dealt with the reality and issues of the resguardo. The new organization was called Proyecto Global because it was meant to serve the whole resguardo without regard for each participant's political or religious affiliations.[81]

The Proyecto Global initially focused on health promotion and on literacy and vocational training for male adult community leaders. The first meeting that incorporated the whole resguardo was held in March 1988. It was located in the village of La Mina, a meaningful site because of the tension that existed there between indigenous people in favor of the land struggle and mestizos who were opposed to the struggle. The meeting lasted several days and its participants were tasked with reflecting on the challenges facing the resguardo and suggesting ways to confront those challenges. They were asked to contrast the *cara buena* (good face) of life in the resguardo with the *cara mala* (bad face) through drawings and discussions. Participants were divided into different groups where they shared their perspective. The break out groups then reported their findings to the wider general assembly. According to Van de Sant,

> High on the problem list were issues such as: party politics (*politiqueria*: clientelism) and disunity, malnutrition and lack of skills, lack of economic resources, and the crisis in the community enterprises (ECS). Positively evaluated points were: an autonomous cabildo, availability of repossessed land and community members' interest in training. They then tried to set priorities starting to change the bad side that saw two—apparently opposite—main and pressing concerns return time after time: on the one hand, the modernization of agrarian production and, on the other, the re-introduction of traditional medicine, culture, language, and custom and practice.[82]

---

[81] Ibid., 180–181.
[82] Ibid., 182.

This meeting in La Mina served as a template for ongoing bimonthly Proyecto Global sessions. These meetings in the resguardo of Jambaló were to take place in different veredas each time in order to encourage the participation of the whole resguardo. These meetings generally brought together 400-500 community members including the following: "teams of teachers from educational centers and health promoters; groups of lay catechists ('delegates of the word'), elders and traditional healers (shamans); executive committees (*juntas directivas*) of social and economic projects, communal action boards (JACs), community shops, community enterprises (ECs) and the cooperative of Zumbico; the cabildo and, depending on the political situation, some functionaries of the *alcaldia* (municipal government)." There were no written rules that governed the methodology of the Proyecto Global meetings. However, the conversations and details from each meeting were recorded and published in a series of pamphlets.[83]

The book *Los Líderes Cuentan Sobre el Proceso Organizativo del Resguardo de Jambaló y del Proyecto Global* (The Leaders Discuss the Organizational Process of the Resguardo of Jambaló and of the Proyecto Global) is a compilation of interviews with community leaders from different parts of the resguardo of Jambaló. The leaders were asked to give responses to several variations on the following questions: (1) What was the state of indigenous organization before the birth of the Proyecto Global? (2) How was the organization of the communities before the birth of the Proyecto Global? (3) Why was the Proyecto Global initiated? (4) How was communal organization strengthened? (5) How did the Cabildos assimilate the programs and projects into the process of communal organization? (5) What was the role of the youth, women, Traditional Medicine People, and external people in the organization process? (6) How do you see

[83] Ibid., 183–184.

96

the current process of the organization? (7) What was autonomy like before and what's it like today? (8) How do you see the development of the Life Plan today? (9) What difficulties and opportunities does the new constitution present for the community? (10) What is the relationship between local processes and regional processes? (11) What gave birth to the civic movements? (12) How can we achieve an education that strengthens the communities' organization? (13) How will the organization confront and resist globalization? and (14) What advice can you give us for the future?

There were several important themes that came up again and again throughout the interviews. Perhaps the most important theme was autonomy and many of its possible implications—political, economic, and social-cultural. Other important themes included: the need for greater political, economic, and social-cultural organization and coordination; the importance of respecting elders and valuing their contributions; concern about the Nasa youth—their participation in the projects of the resguardo and the perceived loss of values among the younger generation; and general anxiety about the challenges of cultural maintenance that the Nasa face. All of these themes are interrelated. One of the interviews that demonstrated many of the themes found throughout the book was with Aparicio Quitumbo, a teacher in the resguardo of Jambaló and a person who served as a youth participant at the founding meeting of the Proyecto Global. At one point he discusses his participation in the meeting,

> I was a very lost student at the Jambaló Technical Agricultural Baccalaureate
> School. They never explained what a communitarian organization is in those
> schools. Maybe that's why the youth were not as dedicated to the community as
> much as they are today with all the youth that participate in the Cabildo. I
> participated by going to bars on Saturday, to go to play. There was a time that I
> almost hit Angel Quitumbo, because I did not understand; I was a young person
> lost in drunkenness - despite having a secondary education. During that time
> Father Mauro saw me in a state of drunkenness and he invited me to that
> meeting; I was there drunk… I think that the idea of the Proyecto Global should

97

be attributed to Rubén Darío, Father Mauro Riascos, Father Reinaldo Cogliati, Jorge Eliécer Quiguanás, Angel Quitumbo; they had a lot of clarity regarding the Project. At that time, Francisco Gembuel explained what was the objective of the Proyecto Global. I remember so much, and I have it in the meeting notes, what we spoke about that day: a brick project, housing and cattle projects. But we did not even understand why. It's like we went to eat, because in reality we were not going to understand, where people dreamed of going; one maybe participated to waste time, because they did not even understand. That same day they began to say that we need to have trained people. And I remember that I said to them: "Well, I am trained. How will you employ me?" Because the secondary school graduate is always prepared with a vision of seeking employment, never with a vision of organization, of leadership. They said that in Jambaló there was no one trained to work in this; for that reason they began to talk about the need for integration, to have people trained for health, for education and in other spaces, like the economy, administration. They filled us with the idea that we needed to continue building. One of the programs that was born before the Proyecto Global was the health program, which was born in Toribio… Proyecto Global was also born out of the municipal decentralization of 1986. Francisco Gembuel already understood more or less - because he was president of the CRIC - what was the primary goal of the municipal decentralization. For that reason, we had to prepare leaders to be Mayor and not let those in the urban core of Jambaló to just do whatever they wanted; so we needed to prepare ourselves. (My Translation)[84]

In this excerpt from the interview, Aparicio discusses some of his alienation from community processes as a youth, which the organizers of the Proyecto Global explicitly hoped to address. He also mentions his concern with the kind of employment he might be offered through his participation in the project and juxtaposes that with a wider vision of organization and leadership, which he felt that he initially lacked. This was particularly apparent in his question to the project organizers, "Bueno, yo estoy capacitado. ¿En qué me van a emplear?" which I translated as "Well, I am trained. How will you employ me?" This concern with the economy and employment versus work is another theme that comes up in responses from other indigenous leaders. He also sees the Proyecto Global as being explicitly focused on developing people's capacities to

[84] Cátedra Nasa Unesco, ed., *Los Líderes Cuentan Sobre El Proceso Organizativo Del Resguardo de Jambaló Y Del Proyecto Global* (Santander de Quilichao, Colombia: Catedra Nasa Unesco/ACIN, 2002), 67.

engage in different community projects, as well their capacity to be able to enter into politics at different levels of government.

Regarding the theme of autonomy, this thesis has already discussed the ways in which autonomy has been an important theme for the Nasa.[85] However, the book being discussed here makes a more direct link between Nasa concerns about autonomy and the objectives of the Proyecto Global in Jambaló. Perhaps one of the most important themes was regarding economic autonomy. The former indigenous governor of Jambaló, Emilio Guejia, discussed his efforts to bring more economic autonomy to the resguardo after his election in 1981:

> We went about guiding the dispersed rural settlements, that we should return to the way we thought before, that we should think like indigenous people with our own ideas. Then they treated us like we wanted to return to wearing the loin cloth; that if they had a house of tile that we wanted them to knock it down and make a house of straw. They criticized us but that was not what we wanted, just that as indigenous people that we would act indigenous, with our own customs. That's how we started thinking about our economy. We started to think, that everything was being brought in from outside, knowing that the land produces here. And we began to organize a cane crop, saying that the panela was being brought in from Santander or Popayán, knowing that we can produce panela here. That time people responded to the invitation made by the Cabildo. We met with several dispersed rural settlements and we proposed that we work on that in Platina and began to plant sugar cane, thinking about how we could organize ourselves more. But at that time we were very persecuted. In 1981, we already began to have meetings amongst the dispersed rural settlements . We organized several assemblies in Bateas, dealing with the economy, we referred to it as "economic and social reconstruction." (My Translation)[86]

Economic autonomy has mostly been discussed in relationship to the recuperation of land, but there was also a serious concern with what was to be done with the land once it was recuperated. The excerpt above shows that indigenous leaders were concerned with the development of a local agricultural economy that

---

[85] On the subject of the Nasa and autonomy, see pp. 8-21 above

[86] Catedra Nasa Unesco, *Los Lideres Cuentan Sobre El Proceso Organizativo Del Resguardo de Jambaló Y Del Proyecto Global*, 9.

reflected indigenous values well before the initiation of the Proyecto Global. The

governor also mentions some of the tension this created and the feeling by some

community members that this was part of an attempt to impose out-moded

customs on the inhabitants of the resguardo. But the issue of economic autonomy

became more pressing throughout the 1980s for two reasons: the growth of the

market for coca and falling prices for fique, a plant used to extract fibers for

garments, rope, and hammocks, each of which presented their own unique

challenges. One indigenous leader, Mariano, explained the issue with the growth

in coca production:

> Well before the Proyecto Global, in the years following 1980, we were already
> speaking of an economy. It was because of the problem of coca, which began to
> be considered illicit for the state. As in the other zones and in Jambaló already
> there were threats of destroying coca, but here the coca was seen as something
> cultural and many used it for work. So it was discussed in the assemblies. There
> were also problems, because some had a lot and did not want to give it up,
> because there was a moment that an arroba got to be worth twenty thousand
> pesos, which at that time was a lot of money. Some lived decently with that
> amount. For that reason there were problems. The Cabildo had a meeting over
> the issue; we began to discuss the problem in the dispersed rural settlements and
> it was clarified, that it was cultural and that it was necessary to maintain, but that
> in any case it was not necessary to cultivate it excessively. It was clarified that
> we needed to continuing growing about fifty plants per family, so that each could
> use it for traditional medicine, so that each could take their handful of coca leaf
> to the traditional medicine practitioner. That was one of the problems that we had
> at the time; also related to the situation today, we are growing too many illicit
> crops. At that time we were already discussing the drug trafficking situation.
> (My Translation)[87]

There was a general consensus among Nasa indigenous leaders that the growth of coca as

a cash crop has been a threat to indigenous communities. However, different leaders saw

the problem in different ways. For Mariano, the problem with coca production was that it

was increasingly becoming the main source of income for resguardo inhabitants and a

threat to the autonomy of the community. The concern was that people were becoming

---

[87] Ibid., 28–29.

100

dependent on income from coca production. The other issue was that people were getting away from the proper reason for cultivating coca. Growing coca is considered a cultural imperative for the Nasa, particularly for their traditional medicinal practices. Another Nasa leader who was interviewed, Laurentino Rivera, pointed out other issues with the growth of coca production, "Of course there were deaths. Some had some, others did not. So then they went to rob almost everything from the person who had some; and those who had a lot, the truth was they would pay someone to watch over them and that's why we were having the deaths that we've been having. (My Translation)[88] Laurentino gives a clearer sense of how deeply the community was being divided by increased drug production. There was more theft and murders due to the increased inequality. This was apart from the problem of youth being drawn into drug production.

For Mariano, the issue was that coca was replacing food crops and this was perceived to be stimulating a shift in the eating habits among the youth:

> I remember that previously we only planted crops to eat, crops to cook with in the house. That did not bring as many problems into the house. It also wasn't an issue for the community or the Cabildo. But now there is a big problem, because now the young people or the children have forgotten how to eat their own food, now they eat everything brought in from outside, and that's how we see things. I think that now we consume the food from outside, I believe that we have adopted the same ideas as those from outside. And in that sense to return to the ways that we thought before, it is difficult, because our youth have another vision. I think that it falls on the home and the parents to reflect on these things and raise consciousness, to educate them to return to their roots, because the rest I believe it's not possible to organize well. (My Translation)[89]

This shift in eating habits was also perceived as a loss of culture. But the need to confront drug production in the resguardo became especially important because of the extent to which the youth were being drawn into working for the drug labs. According to Mariano,

---

[88] Ibid., 15–16.
[89] Ibid., 45.

101

> There was a problem among the youth, which was that some young people left school, since they could make twenty thousand pesos on a daily basis and it was easy for them to be there, many times without pants or without having school supplies. That was the reality. (My Translation)[90]

Anxieties about the youth and processes of cultural maintenance were an important theme and will be discussed at greater length later in this section.

Another important issue with respect to the economy besides the increase in coca production was the production of fique or sisal which Mariano also described:

> On the other hand there was also the problem of fique. Then in a great assembly, which took place in Bateas, we discussed the fique situation, because we were planting too much fique. We attempted to raise people's consciousness, saying, "how we were going to grow a single monoculture!" In addition, we said, that you cannot eat fique and coca. That was a point of discussion, that we needed to plant more food crops, because in addition we were starting to buy all of our food. That is, if we sold fique, we would buy panela, we would buy potato, we would buy rice, everything… People were becoming indebted with the fique fiber processor as the only alternative, but later people became indebted, they were left with large fique crops or they became indebted with the fiber processor, because the processor did not buy the fique fibre. If they did accept the fique fiber, they were not able to get good prices. For that reason we felt that large scale fique crops were not an alternative. (My Translation)[91]

Here the problem with fique was that people were depending on it as a cash crop and growing it as a monoculture. Community leaders saw this as a threat to communal autonomy, since people were becoming indebted to the processors of fique fiber. Mariano does not explicitly state this but part of the problem posed by fique and coca was the threat that it posed for the Nasa's food sovereignty. Fernando Prada Ramírez defines food sovereignty as,

> Focused on the economic strategies that certain groups develop and the way in which those societies relate to their ecosystems in order to obtain the food necessary for their survival; it is a system of production oriented towards the internal satisfaction of the basic food necessities of the social group. (My Translation)[92]

---

[90] Ibid., 47.

[91] Ibid., 29–30.

[92] Fernando Prada Ramirez, "Epistemología Y Poder En La Alimentación Soberanías Fragmentadas Y Expansión Biotecnología," in *Desde Los Andes Al Mundo, Sabor Y Saber : Primer Congreso Para La*

Community members have attempted to respond to the threat of dependence on

fique and coca by trying to develop alternative income generating projects.

Unfortunately, these projects have mostly struggled to become viable. One former

indigenous governor of Jambaló, Angel Quitumbo, described what happened with a

woodworking project:

> Later we formulated a wood working project, because there was this need to
> bring everything in from outside. It was good for us to build furniture through
> that project, which was made right here. People were taught. Workshops were
> created; several people learned, but people did not keep practicing. A brother of
> mine who is a professional in that area was teaching others. He paid a percentage
> of the 20% to be able to work in this wood working shop. He installed the
> machinery and a three-phase meter. He also passed energy to the mill. But then
> there it consumed more energy and the Cabildo did not want to help him pay for
> the energy and he still had to pay the same percentage of money. Then he was
> losing money and left the project. When he left the project we started to lose the
> manual material and those that were studying with him left the project. The
> machinery was there until now. I don't know if they rented it. (My Translation)[93]

The woodworking project was started with the intention of addressing the community's

desire to be more autonomous in its production of goods, such as furniture and cabinets.

But in Quitumbo's account, the project was not financially sustainable for its participants.

One of the indigenous leaders interviewed, Mariano, felt that the problem with economic

projects was that they were begun without broad support from the community:

> Some things, some projects are being done without consulting the community
> and sometimes the community does not have the training or consciousness for the
> projects and that's when there's problems: Then they don't even know what to do.
> For example in the case of Loma Gorda with the Yogurt project. I was conscious,
> they even consulted me, but the community was not conscious. Then we did not
> know what that was for; they did not want to get training to manage that. The
> same with the fish farm. This same thing happened with other dispersed rural
> settlements. Some projects are rushed because the State says: "Here's some
> money, create a project." People do it without much analysis. That is the

Preservación Y Difusión de Las Cocinas Regionales de Los Países Andinos : Lima, Perú, Noviembre 2003.
(Lima, Perú :: Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Escuela Profesional de Turismo y Hotelería,,
2005), 111.
[93] Cátedra Nasa Unesco, *Los Líderes Cuentan Sobre El Proceso Organizativo Del Resguardo de Jambaló
Y Del Proyecto Global*, 123.

103

difficulty of the present process, where things are done very loosely. That's why we clash with the community; people are not familiar with it, they still do not understand micro enterprises. (My Translation)[94]

A former mayor of Jambaló, Edgar Iván Ramos, also gave his assessment of why economic projects have had a hard time succeeding. He felt that outsiders who were not familiar with local conditions were driving decisions about the kind of projects the community started. Despite the difficulties with the projects, Ramos felt that the process had been useful. He explained:

I believe, that something needs to be added to what Angel said about the wheat projects,… the cattle ranching and other projects. I think, that it's not so much that they have failed, but that those projects have allowed the community to keep maturing so that today's community is capable of saying, what is the project that we really need. Because in that period we said "let's do wheat", but because somebody in Bogota said "let's do wheat" and we produced wheat. Somebody said: "In Jambaló we needed a wood working shop" - and we mounted wood working shop. But we did not take into consideration, that there was no wood here to sell to anyone. So there have been things that have not been working, but that has allowed us to know that, when we maintain a project it's because we have gone through all of these stages to learn. I think, that everything has been a process - that we have made mistakes, but that the process has allowed us to reflect. (My Translation)[95]

One of the most important reasons why community leaders have been concerned with developing viable economic projects, aside from finding sources of income that could replace cash crops such as coca and fique and strengthening local autonomy, was a concern with creating a more sustainable community for future generations. Many of the indigenous leaders interviewed for *Los Líderes Cuentan Sobre el Proceso Organizativo del Resguardo de Jambaló y del Proyecto Global* showed some concern about losing the youth to immigration and processes of cultural loss. Indigenous leader, Laurentino Rivera, expressed his concern that the youth might take the education that the community

---

[94] Ibid., 53.
[95] Ibid., 126.

fought so hard to give them and get a higher paying job outside of the community.

According to Laurentino:

> The other piece is that the children should study for the future, but that they don't study to go and look for positions in another place, to go and serve the wealthy. What I see is that in some rural settlements there are people who studied, but they go to look for work with the same boss that exploited their parents, their grandparents; now they beg for work with them. So that does not get us anywhere, because if they exploited us materially, now they exploit our children intellectually. In secondary school, which we are struggling to improve, the secondary school century XXI La Mina, the idea is that people study so they can improve what is in the land, either in the rural settlement or here in the municipality. It would be very good if people are educated and served in some capacity, either with the Cabildo or in the Municipality. I think that would be a means for us to continue managing our politics. But if we study and we want to be managers and go about politicking with the whites or think like white people, then we are not going to obtain the future, because the future is in really thinking like indigenous peoples. The fact that we dress the same as white people, that does not take anything away from us, but we can not let them take away our way of thinking… Because if we let go of our children, because they have been educated, let them go and look for an office, then I believe there is no sustainable future. Because if young people are educated with techniques on how to make use of the land, then we do not need to fight so much for the land amongst ourselves, but instead improve and produce. (My Translation)[96]

Here it's important to come back to the juxtaposition of work versus employment briefly

mentioned earlier in this section. Laurentino wants the youth to become more educated.

However, he feels that the youth should use their education in service to the community,

such as participation in the cabildo or local municipal administration. Education should

not encourage the youth to "pensar como blancos" (think like white people) and try to

become "gerentes" (managers) and "buscar oficina" (look for office work). Aparicio

Quitumbo makes a more explicit reference to this dilemma of employment:

> I think that the Life Plan as of this year is going to change a little, looking more at the economy. There are going to be difficulties, because now there are three secondary schools in Jambaló, where we are preparing people who partly are only seeing a vision of employment. But if these people who are getting training do more than think about material world, then maybe we can live. Many youth only think about material concerns, in money, motorcycles, cars; because of the same economic globalization and economic opening we are so behind, that we

---

[96] Ibid., 56–57.

> leap behind the other; we are like frogs in tomato gardens, we want to be just like the European, whereas the Europeans are tired of living that way and us indigenous people wanting to buy a car, but without much capacity, without analysis. (My Translation)[97]

Here the problem with "la visión del empleo" is clearer. For Aparicio, the vision of employment is superficially focused on increasing one's personal material wealth. The fear is that the youth are being lost to a materialistic culture. This fear about losing the youth is intertwined with concerns about loss of respect for the elders and for nature. A teacher in the community, Dora Córdoba, expresses some of this concern:

> As far as the work, we saw the participation of the youth in what was the community work. It seems to me that this has existed for a long time. We have lost it, yes, now that we no longer see that the young people are the ones who take the initiative to do a project, but that the elders are always the ones who have done this. The respect was not only for the elderly people, but it was also respect for nature, for traditional medicine and there was also what was referred to as Nasa ethics; but this came from the family. Here is where we see that there has always been unity and it was always stronger before, than now. (My Translation)[98]

Ultimately, concerns about the youth are linked with concerns about the community's ability to sustain its projects into the future.

Perhaps the Proyecto Global can best be understood as a comunal process that encompasses other processes. It also helps focus participants' energies toward developing a deeper sense of the problems facing the resguardo, as well as opening space for possible solutions that respect the Nasa's values. Aparicio Quitumbo describes it in this way,

> I believe that for many people the Proyecto Global is a school; for others who already understand more it is a university, because a Western school never helps people to identify a problem, but in an assembly of the Proyecto Global one more or less tries to understand this world. The communities are saying: "Look, this

---

[97] Ibid., 95.
[98] Ibid., 63.

106

problem is happening for these reasons." I believe that many of the professors, promoters, and leaders, have taught us many things. (My Translation)[99]

4.9 The Tul Home Garden Project

In the year 2000, the cabildo of Jambaló, along with other northern Cauca communities, began an initiative that reintroduced house gardens (*huerta/ yac tul*). The *tul* is considered part of the traditional agricultural system of the Nasa, along with the *roceria* system (slash-and-burn farming). Generally speaking, house gardens were mostly cultivated by families with elders in the upper and middle sections of Jambaló. Before the cabildo's initiative to reintroduce the tul, most of the resguardo's youth were not continuing the practice. The cabildo of Jambaló wanted to reintroduce the tul for various reasons: (1) community leaders wanted to address the threat to food sovereignty posed by drug crop production; (2) increasing armed conflict in the region was restricting civilian population movements and its ability to access local markets; (3) the project was part of the cabildo's agenda "for bringing distinctive cultural elements (*lo propio*) back into the local economy"[100]; and (4) the house garden also had an important environmental benefit, since it did not require synthetic fertilizers and it helped improve water and soil conservation.[101]

A tul is generally considered a permanent space where a family cultivates various plants, trees, and shrubs. It has most of the following characteristics: (1) it tends to be about .5-1 hectare in size; (2) it mostly consists of subsistence agricultural products such as fruit trees, herbs, medicinal and ornamental plants, as well as small domestic animals; (3) a portion of the tul is set aside for vegetable crops and what is planted depends on the

---

[99] Ibid., 95.
[100] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 209.
[101] Ibid., 208–209.

altitude of the garden's location; and (4) gardens are enclosed in some way by dead stems of sugarcane, maize, or bamboo, or living plants such as sisal or barbed wire in order to keep domestic animals out. It's estimated that there are as many as 150 crops per house garden with 35 being grown at a given time.[102]

The Tul's role in bringing cultural elements back in to the local economy merits further discussion. Besides being an importance source of food and medicinal plants, the significance of the Tul is that it helps to remind the Nasa of their place in the universe. According to Joanne Rappoport,

> The garden is explicitly described as a cosmic microcosm in a CRIC video (Borque and CRIC 1996). The film opens with childbirth and the ritual burial of the newborn's placenta under the three stones of the hearth. The house is like a human being, recalls the video's narrator, with ribs, eyes, ears, a heart, and a stomach, just as the earth has bodily parts and is a living, sentient being. The tul surrounds the household, just as a woman's skirt surrounds and protects the human body; note the common root in *a'ts tul,* the word for the skirt. The spirits similarly protect the house-body from harm. In the house garden are a variety of medicinal herbs, condiments, and edible plants, situated in relation to one another according to their implicit properties, such as whether they are spicy or bland, whether they are "hot" or "cold"—this latter pair denoting essential characteristics of foods, not their degree of heat. Domestic animals, birds, and insects live in symbiosis with the plant world in the tul, as do the humans whose house lies at its heart. All of these beings—people, animals, and plants—are called *Nasa,* thus implicitly identifying humans as just one more component of the cosmos.[103]

By providing an additional source of food for the Nasa, the Tul is a practical tool for increasing the diversity of food stuffs in people's everyday diets and challenging the logic of a monoagricultural economy.   However, it is the Tul's relationship to cosmovision that makes it a project that aims to challenge the Nasa's experience of modernity/coloniality. Indigenous scholar Susana Piñacue "translates cosmovision into Nasa Yuwe as *fi'zenxi*, or 'lived culture'—what they

---

[102] Ibid., 209–210.
[103] Rappaport, *Intercultural Utopias*, 148.

108

call *vivencia*, which is also translated as *fi'zenxi*—thus linking the concept of unconscious lived experience to the conscious search by organic intellectuals for a Nasa theory of the cosmos."[104] The Tul is a concrete example of lived culture that serves as a pedagogical tool for those who maintain it. Its significance has been incorporated into the curriculum of local community schools where students learn about the Tul through a school garden and engage in projects such as the cultivation of organic fertilizer. The Tul reminds those who care for it of their interconnectedness with other living beings. This interconnectedness requires constant work by humans "who must perpetuate its diversity by continually replenishing the plants and animals that inhabit it and who ensure its harmony through ritual."[105] It serves as a contrast to modern/colonial ways of relating to nature, which constitute human beings as being outside of and in a relationship of power over nature.

---

[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 149.

"*Alternative development*, focused on food security, the satisfaction of basic needs, and the well-being of the population; *alternative modernities*, building on the countertendencies effected on development interventions by local groups and toward the contestation of global designs; and *alternatives to modernity*, as a more radical and visionary project of redefining and reconstructing local and regional worlds from the perspective of practices of cultural, economic, and ecological difference, following a network logic and in contexts of power."—Arturo Escobar[1]

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzes the three projects discussed in chapter 4: (1) the development of the communitarian economy; (2) the development of the Proyecto Global; and (3) the Tul home garden project. These projects are analyzed using Arturo Escobar's three concepts that emerge "from the relationship between globalization, development, and modernity"[2]: alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternatives to modernity. After discussing where the three projects from chapter 4 are located on Escobar's spectrum of alternatives, there will be a discussion of the significance of the findings.

5.1 Orthodox Development and Escobar's Three Concepts

This section will briefly introduce the term orthodox development and review the meaning of alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternatives to modernity. Orthodox development will be juxtaposed with the other terms that were initially introduced in chapter 2.

The work of Philip McMichael is helpful for a discussion of orthodox development. McMichael argues that the concept of "development" has been appropriated as an ideological expression of capitalist development. According to McMichael,

---

[1] Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Duke University Press, 2008), 162.
[2] Ibid., 179.

Across all these periods capitalist agriculture has matured, from colonial plantations to bio-engineered agricultures, via social and ecological relations specific to each set of political relations. That is, capital's need to convert natural processes into value relations is realized politically, and in each case this generates specific new social and ecological barriers to further development. In attempting to overcome these barriers, but always within the limits of its specific agro-industrial narrative, capital constantly deepens the developmental crisis.[3]

In his analysis of different phases of orthodox development, McMichael observes two important processes of ecological rupture that emerge as capitalism passes through different historical phases. These are referred to as the "metabolic rift" and the emergence of a "world agriculture." The "metabolic rift" can be described as the process through which industrialized agriculture becomes detached from its natural biological base, reducing the possibility of recycling nutrients through the soil and water. Petroleum facilitates this process by serving as a major input for the production of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that become increasingly necessary as ecological conditions worsen. The subordination of agriculture to capitalist production relations allows agriculture to be seen as a process that can be abstracted and relocated to different locations with the right inputs and little regard to environmental conditions. This type of industrial agriculture leads to erosion, soil salinization, soil saturation, and the loss of groundwater. As agriculture has been relocated across the world, food miles have increased, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

The other process of ecological rupture, the spread of a "world agriculture" was brought about by the exportation of Britain's beef culture to the Americas. For England, South American land was an important source of beef with certain countries specializing in the production of meat for different class

---

[3] Philip McMichael, "Feeding the World: Agriculture, Development and Ecology," *Socialist Register* 43 (January 1, 2007): 2, http://thesocialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/view/5863.

segments of the British population. Rising global consumption of animal protein,

divided into low and high-income consumers has had dire ecological

consequences along with directing resource use towards livestock farming. The

world is becoming increasingly divided between those who suffer from

malnutrition, due in part to a lack of access to foodstuffs that has been replaced by

feed for animals, and those who consume more than they need.[4]

During processes of alternative development, communities engage with the logic

of capitalist development and are able to have some control over the terms of the process.

They are also able to enjoy more of development's benefits without deeply questioning

its premises. Processes of alternative modernity involve more of a fundamental challenge

to the goals and terms of capitalist development from the perspective of place based

cultural difference.

Alternatives to modernity are about imagining the creation of another world from

the perspective of the colonial difference. What is meant by colonial difference here is

not some kind of trait that is inherently unique to subaltern people but rather difference in

terms of knowledges and cultural practices that exist on the margins of the global

modern/colonial system. According to Escobar,

> Alternatives to modernity is the expression of a political desire, a desire of the
> critical utopian imagination, not a statement about the real in a strict sense,
> present or future. Operating in the cracks of modernity/coloniality, it gives
> content to the World Social Forum slogan, *Another world(s) is (are) possible*
> (Escobar 2004).[5]

---

[4] Ibid., 177–184.

[5] Escobar, *Territories of Difference*, 196.

Escobar does not cite an example of a project of alternative to modernity in his study of different projects being undertaken by Afro-Colombians in his book, *Territories of Difference*. According to Escobar,

> Alternatives to modernity are intended as a reformulation of the modern colonial world system but still operating within modern/decolonial critical languages, that is, without giving full weight to, much less bringing into life, those other worlds that nevertheless are part of what inspires the notion.[6]

In other words, the phrase alternatives to modernity speaks of a place that we can only begin to imagine but for which we do not yet have the words to describe in detail.

It's worth discussing what's at stake for the Nasa in futures determined by: (1) orthodox development, (2) alternative development, (3) alternative modernity, and (4) alternatives to modernity.

If the territories that the Nasa inhabit are increasingly subjected to orthodox/capitalist development, the Nasa would have to contend with processes of "metabolic rift" and participation in a "world agriculture" with all that this implies. These processes would take place in the context of ongoing conditions of violence along with a history of colonialism and attempts to dismantle the Nasa's cultural and territorial autonomy. Processes of orthodox development in Nasa territory could be expected to precipitate: (1) a loss of culture; (2) displacement either due to the violence (and lack of solidarity or cultural cohesion in the face of it) or deteriorating ecological conditions; (3) a loss of autonomy and perhaps in the long run, a parceling out of the resguardo lands.

If projects of alternative development in Nasa territories were to thrive they may bring more benefits to the community in the short term because

---

[6] Ibid., 196–197.

development is directed by the community on behalf of the community. In the long run, if these projects do not question development as an ideological expression of capitalist development, contradictions arise between the imperatives of development and the cultural values of the community.

Under projects of alternatives to modernity, communities protect their placed based cultural differences and practices, which are expressed through certain projects. These projects may coexist and be in tension with projects of alternative development and orthodox development. Orthodox development still threatens to stamp out or erase projects of alternative modernity because it is part of an agenda that remains dominant at a national and international level. The same issues that threaten projects of alternative modernities, also threatens alternatives to modernity. If projects of alternative modernity are destroyed then it becomes even more difficult to imagine the construction of another world from place based cultural difference.

5.2 Escobar's Three Concepts and the Three Nasa Projects

In chapter 4 the discussion of the communitarian economy was subdivided into three areas: (1) global adjudication and the community enterprise of Chimicueto; (2) individual adjudication; and (3) the relationship between land and Nasa cosmology. Each of these spoke to a vision of a communitarian economy that can be characterized as being both alternative development and an alternative modernity.

The process of global adjudication and the creation of the community enterprise of Chimicueto was born out of a struggle for self determination. The values that motivated this struggle were summarized in the seven demands of the CRIC previously

114

discussed in chapter 1: (1) the repossession of resguardo lands; (2) the expansion of the resguardos; (3) the strengthening of cabildos; (4) an end to sharecropping; (5) the promotion of the knowledge of indigenous legislation and the demand that it be applied; (6) the defense of the history, language, and customs of native communities; and (7) the training and employment of indigenous teachers. The repossession of resguardo lands in Chimicueto and other areas was an important achievement that opens up the possibility for projects of alternative development and alternative modernity. The story of the community enterprise (CE) of Chimicueto seems to defy easy categorization. The Chimicueto CE can be considered an example of alternative development, however there was also a period early in its evolution when it also appeared to be a project of alternative modernity. The Chimicueto CE is a project of alternative development because it was founded as an autonomous enterprise that operates without outside intervention. The Chimicueto CE belongs to the members of the community and allows them to engage with development on their own terms, while enjoying its benefits.

The early period in the evolution of the community enterprise, between 1981-1983, seemed to involve a brief flirtation with a process of alternative modernity. During that period both the community enterprises and the agricultural production on people's individual plots of land was geared towards producing to meet people's basic needs for foodstuffs. Beyond this, there was an effort to revive traditional methods of production such as communal labor parties and inter-community barter trade. These efforts signaled a more critical approach to development. Ultimately, this critical approach was abandoned out of community members desire to focus on more profitable projects and because government food programs undermined the value of subsistence production.

Although the Chimicueto CE initially questioned the premises of market driven development, government policies made it very difficult to sustain that perspective. Since the project eventually succumbed to the priorities of capitalist development, it can be more clearly identified as an example of alternative development.

The other topics that were discussed under the communitarian economy, individual adjudication and the relationship between land and Nasa cosmology both seem to speak to the ways in which the communitarian economy is a project of alternative modernity. The process of individual adjudication speaks to the Nasa's commitment to relating to their land as a place from which they derive cultural, social, and spiritual meaning. This is explicitly different than a vision of land as property, which can be bought and sold at any time. The relationship between land and Nasa cosmology helps to illustrate what that cultural and spiritual meaning looks like. The Nasa's cultural and spiritual relationship with the land establishes certain boundaries since certain places cannot be planted with crops because of their sacred significance. Nasa cosmology puts clear limits on agricultural development. Nasa cosmology also expresses the way that they relate to the land as a place of spiritual meaning. There are places within Nasa territory that are considered places of historical and mythological significance. The *The' wala*, or traditional medicine person, collects medicinal plants, prevents and cures diseases, and interprets signs in the natural world. In this way they serve an important role as a mediator between the spiritual world and the material world.

The Proyecto Global can be considered a project of alternative modernity because it went well beyond being a project that merely encouraged self-directed development. It was a project that enabled a critical conversation about the kind

116

of development that the Nasa wanted for the resguardo of Jambaló. This was apparent in the interviews with community leaders. The Proyecto Global provides a forum and a process for the whole community to try to articulate its values. It is also a space that facilitates thinking about how those values can be brought to bear on different areas of concern to the Nasa. This includes things such as bilingual education, healthcare, and housing. It also included thinking about the challenges facing the resguardo such as the need for income generating projects and alternatives to fique and coca. The critical view of development that was articulated by participants in the Proyecto Global was symbolized by the conversation around work versus employment. The participants expressed a negative view of employment and wage labor. They saw employment as being focused on promoting materialistic behavior and personal gain, as opposed to work, which was considered to be more meaningful and in service to the greater good.

The Tul home garden project also appears to be a project of alternative modernity. It is a simple project, focused on attempting to stimulate smallscale agricultural production for domestic production. However, this project is not only a source of foodstuffs but is also part of an effort to educate young people about their place in the universe and their relationship to the natural world. By challenging the underlying cultural premises of development, the Tul home garden project should be considered a project of alternative modernity.

None of the projects discussed in this thesis can be considered an alternative to modernity. According to Escobar, one way we would know that we

are in a space of alternatives to modernity would be when "social life is no longer

so thoroughly determined by the constructs of economy, individual, market,

rationality, order, and so forth that are characteristic of the dominant Euro-

modernity."[7] He does not articulate a precise metric for how this might be

measured. However, none of the projects discussed in this thesis seemed to come

close to fulfilling Escobar's criteria. At best, all three projects discussed in this

thesis seemed to support or "shelter place-based cultural constructions and

practices (e.g., so-called traditional production systems; local models of nature;

local knowledge; social, spatial, and territorial practices), thus keeping alive the

more radical option of alternatives to modernity."[8] But none seemed to have

managed to create a full-throated alternative world from the basis of these place-

based cultural constructions and practices.

5.3 Significance of the Findings

This section will examine the following topics: (1) why this study matters for the

Nasa; (2) why this study matters for us; (3) the larger implications of the thesis; and (4)

the questions raised by this study.

An examination of the Nasa indigenous movement in Jambaló is relevant for the

Nasa for several reasons: (1) the Nasa continue to face violence arising out of conditions

of modernity/coloniality; and (2) the Nasa continue to find new ways to resist their

conditions of modernity/coloniality and remain engaged with debates about development.

The Nasa face violence in several ways including: (1) the occupation of

community spaces; (2) harassment; (3) threats of violence against indigenous activists;

---

[7] Ibid., 196.
[8] Ibid., 195.

and (4) killings of indigenous leaders. One of the issues of greatest concern for the Nasa

is the occupation of public spaces by the Colombian military and National Police. The

Nasa claim that the presence of government security forces in civilian areas tends to

generate more conflict with guerrillas and more civilian deaths, rather than reduce

violence. One example of this was a car bomb that exploded in front of a police station

on the night of April 26th, 2011 in the municipality and resguardo of Jambaló. The bomb

injured two civilians and five policemen, killed three policemen, and damaged over forty

houses. The Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN) issued the

following statement:

> We are particularly concerned with damages to public resources that are
> indispensable to the civilian population such as the hospital, the aqueduct... The
> Indigenous Cabildo's house and the Church were also impacted, which were
> community spaces and spaces of protection... We also reject the installation of
> the high mountain battalion near the town of Toribio, as this leads to increased
> confrontations, where civilians are exposed to higher risks of injuries and deaths,
> as well as physical and emotional problems. The presence of the military also
> impacts the daily activities of community members and the ability to exercise the
> right to an education and free movement. We reiterate the duty of the legal and
> illegal armed actors to comply with international humanitarian law, and we reject
> the occupation and transit of armed actors in urban and rural zones.[9] (My
> translation.)

Harassment is another kind of violence that the Nasa face. The ACIN

documented an incident that occurred on April 6th, 2013 in the district of La Esperanza in

the resguardo of Jambaló. Soldiers part of the military's 29th Brigade and the Apollo

Task Force detained a community member named Gerardo Tombé, coordinator of the

indigenous guard for Jambaló. After demanding that he identify himself, they ordered

him to buy them cigarettes. When he resisted, they forced him to accompany them to a

mountain, where they made him get naked and they took photos of him. One of the

---

[9] Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte del Cauca - ACIN, "El Conflicto Armado Extremece a
Jambaló Cauca," accessed May 10, 2013, http://www.nasaacin.org/component/content/article/1-
ultimas-noticias/1992-el-conflicto-armado-extremese-a-Jambaló-cauca.

soldiers put a gun to his head and another told him that he was a guerrilla militant and threatened to kill him. The soldiers started to kick him and only stopped when they felt the presence of a community member watching them. According to the ACIN:

> These kinds of abuses committed by soldiers are not new issues in this region. So far this year (2013), members of the army have killed two indigenous people in Cauca, specifically in the municipality of Caldono. The army has also committed abuses in other municipalities but the courts haven't punished the perpetrators and masterminds of these crimes.[10] (My translation.)

Two more important instances of violence against the Nasa include threats of violence against indigenous activists and kilings of indigenous leaders. Both kinds of violence were present in the killing of Edwin Legarda, which occurred early in the morning of December 16th, 2008. Legarda was driving his wife Aida Quilcué, a leader and chief counsel for the CRIC, when the Colombian Army fired 17th shots at the CRIC's official marked car. According to Mario Murillo,

> Most people close to CRIC said they believed the bullets were meant for Quilcué, one of Colombia's most prominent indigenous rights activists. At the time of the killing, she had just returned from Geneva, where she had been a delegate to the Universal Periodic Review sessions on Colombia held by the United Nations Human Rights Commission. And Quilcué was one of the most visible leaders of the six-week Indigenous and Popular Minga, an unprecedented nationwide mobilization that began in October, culminating the following month in a massived demonstration in Bogotá.[11]

The attack and suspicions about the Army's motives took place against the backdrop of threatening emails that were sent to both the CRIC and the ACIN. One of the emails received by the CRIC on August 11th, 2008 came from an unknown group called the Furious Peasants of Cauca. The email attacked the indigenous movement's efforts to recover lands from which they had previously been displaced and accused the movement

---

[10] Consejeria Mayor de la ACIN, "Fuerza Pública Agrede a Guardia Indígena En Jambaló – Cauca," accessed May 11, 2013, http://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/fuerza-publica-agrede-a-guardia-indigena-en-Jambaló-cauca/.

[11] Mario A. Murillo, "Embattled Cauca: A New Wave of Violence and Indigenous Resistance," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 42, no. 4 (August 2009): 25.

of being connected with the FARC. In the months after the email was received, gunmen

killed eight Nasa people. Several indigenous activists were forced into hiding and in

some instances into exile abroad. Quilcué received many threats before the killing of her

husband. The Army claimed that troops fired on the vehicle when it failed to stop at a

military checkpoint. The Nasa have disputed the official version of events with the

following: (1) Witnesses never saw a checkpoint in the area; (2) The vehicle should have

been recognized by the Army given the military's longtime presence in the area; (3) the

Indigenous Guard of the Nasa, conducting their own investigation, found bullet holes in

places on the CRIC's vehicle that indicated a premeditated attack rather than shots fired

at a vehicle running a checkpoint. The Indigenous Guard is a volunteer force that uses

nonviolent strategies for addressing security and conflict situations.

The modernity/coloniality framework continues to be relevant for analyzing these

conditions of violence and occupation because it shows how these dynamics are part of a

history of interactions between the Nasa, the state, and capital going back to 1492.

The Nasa have been finding new ways to resist their conditions of

modernity/coloniality such as: (1) organization of a referendum on free trade; and (2)

direct nonviolent confrontations with the state and guerrillas. Since the mid-2000s, there

has been an increasing awareness that the Nasa have to engage with issues at a national

level that end up impacting local conditions. They have been trying to address three main

problems: (1) mitigating the effects of the civil war in their territories; (2) opposing the

neoliberal policies of the state; and (3) holding the government accountable for its

121

promises to help address "the precarious economic situation and land scarcity in indigenous communities."[12]

One of the ways that the Nasa have recently been resisting their conditions of modernity/coloniality and participating in national debates about development was by organizing a referendum on free trade. In March of 2005 the Nasa held a vote on a FTA (free trade agreement) that was in the process of being negotiated between Colombia and the United States. The decision to hold a referendum came out of a march held in 2004 called the Minga for Life, Justice, Liberty, Happiness, and Autonomy. The march was focused on opposition to the FTA being negotiated by the government of Alvaro Uribe. These were a few of the reasons that the ACIN opposed the FTA: (1) "the negotiations are unequal and framed by the economic, political, and military power of the United States"; (2) "it's not just a commercial treaty, it is a negotiation over the territorial, institutional, juridical, political, economic, and cultural restructuring that allows corporations to appropriate and exploit the riches of countries converted into territories"; and (3) "the loss of food sovereignty, productive capacity, concentration of land and the importation of food." (My translation.)[13] Six municipalities in Cauca participated in the referendum: Toribio, Jambaló, Caldono, Silvia, Paez, and Inza. Out of 68,000 eligible voters, more than 50,000 responded to the question "Do you approve of the Colombian government signing a free trade agreement with the government of the United States?

[12] Joris Jan van de Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition: Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia* (Universiteit van Amsterdam [Host], 2007), 225–226.
[13] "Consulta Popular En El Cauca Frente Al TLC," *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte Del Cauca*, May 28, 2010, http://www.nasaacin.org/consulta-popular-no-el-tlc.

(yes or no)" 98% voted against signing an agreement and 2% voted in favor of the FTA.[14]

Another way that the Nasa have been resisting their conditions of modernity/coloniality is by using nonviolent strategies to directly confront the armed actors that threaten them. In July of 2012, escalating tension between the Nasa and armed actors culminated in several confrontations. Much of the tension centered around the municipality of Toribio which had been subject to over 500 instances of combat during the previous 10 years and had been attacked 12 times by the FARC in the first half of July, 2012.[15] In this context, the ACIN published an open letter demanding that all armed actors leave the area:

> We declare ourselves to be in permanent resistance until the groups and armed actors leave our home. We are in our home and we will not leave, those who need to leave are the groups and the legal and illegal armed actors that sow death in our territories.[16]

On July 11th, 2012 the Nasa began confronting armed actors in Toribio and asking them to leave. They removed police trenches and disassembled bombs made by the FARC. They also began to gather around and observe Colombian Army soldiers who were positioned on a sacred mountaintop site called *El Berlin*. The soldiers were protecting private cell phone towers from guerrilla attacks. When the military did not depart from *El Berlin* by a proposed deadline, a group of 200 Nasa physically removed Colombian soldiers. Several soldiers were picked up and physically removed from their posts resulting in significant domestic and

---

[14] Sandt, *Behind the Mask of Recognition*, 229–230.

[15] Gina Spigarelli, "Indigenous Nasa Resist Militarization in Cauca," *End U.S. Military Aid to Colombia*, July 31, 2012, http://forusa.org/blogs/for-colombia/indigenous-nasa-resist-militarization-cauca/10742.

[16] Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte del Cauca, "Carta a Los Grupos Armados," July 8, 2012, http://www.nasaacin.org/comunicados-nasaacin/4277-acin-a-la-opinion-publica-guerrillas-y-gobierno-nacional-?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=.

international media attention. The Nasa's Indigenous Guard carried out the action. The Indigenous Guard is composed of volunteers who are given a basic training but they depend on using the overwhelming force of their numbers to confront armed actors. On July 18th, the Indigenous Guard also detained FARC guerrillas who were armed with explosives and guns. It wasn't the first time the Indigenous Guard confronted the guerrillas. In 2004, 400 members of the Indigenous Guard marched for two days into the jungle to rescue the kidnapped mayor of Toribio, Arquimedes Vitonás. In 20 days they were able to retrieve him without any bloodshed.[17]

An analysis of the indigenous movement in Jambaló is relevant for us for two reasons: (1) the resolution of land conflicts is key to ending Colombia's civil war; and (2) modern problems require a search for non-modern solutions.

An examination of the indigenous movement in Jambaló is relevant for us because the resolution of conflicts over land is an important element in resolving Colombia's civil war. In October 2012, the FARC and the Colombian government, entered peace negotiations to find a political solution to end Colombia's decades long civil war. They have been the most serious negotiations since peace talks were held with the government of Andrés Pastrana from 1998 to 2002. On May 26, 2013, the FARC and the Colombian government reached an agreement on the first point of a six point negotiating agenda. The first point revolved around land and rural development. The actual text of the land and rural development agreement remains secret under the

[17] Spigarelli, "Indigenous Nasa Resist Militarization in Cauca"; Jim Wyss, "Sticks vs. Guns: The Rise of Colombia's Indigenous Guard," *The Miami Herald*, August 7, 2012, http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/07/2938476/sticks-vs-guns-the-rise-of-colombias.html; "Desde El Cauca, Desarmar La Guerra," *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia Y Paz*, July 23, 2012, http://justiciaypazcolombia.com/Desde-el-Cauca-desarmar-la-guerra.

principle that "nothing is agreed upon until everything is agreed upon." The agreement

covers the following topics: (1) Access and land use, unproductive lands, formalization of

property, agricultural frontier and protection of reserve zones; (2) Development programs

with a territorial focus; (3) Infrastructure and land improvements; (4) Social

development: health, education, housing, irradication of poverty; (5) Stimulus of

agricultural production and a cooperative and solidarity based economy, technical

assistance, subsidies, credits, income generation, labor formalization; and (6) food and

nutrition policies.[18] In a blog post about the significance of the land reform agreement,

Christian Voelkel, an analyst for the International Crisis Group writes:

> Land reform is not a minor problem—it is the issue at the heart of the Colombian conflict. FARC have long argued that their rebellion was sparked—and remains justified—by unjust landholding patterns that have forced peasant communities into political, social and economic marginalisation. While this stance hardly justifies the extent of FARC's violence and the serious international crimes it has committed over the course of its insurgency, there is an increasing consensus that violence in the Colombian countryside has thrived upon land inequality and a failed model of rural development. There are other sources and causes of violence in Colombia, but reaching an agreement with FARC on rural development addresses the conflict at the deepest level possible.[19]

Time will tell whether the details of any final agreement between the FARC and the

government will seriously address rural land inequality and much will depend on the

government's political will to implement any agreement. However, any final agreement

should be informed by the lessons of the Nasa's struggle for land and autonomy.

An analysis of the indigenous movement in Jambaló is also relevant for us

because modern problems require a search for non-modern solutions. Arturo Escobar

---

[18] "Comunicado Conjunto, La Habana, Mayo 26 de 2013," *Presidencia de La República*, May 26, 2013, http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2013/Mayo/Paginas/20130526_03-propaz.aspx.
[19] Christian Voelkel, "Three Reasons Why Colombia's Land Reform Deal Is Significant," *Latin America Crime & Politics*, May 28, 2013,
http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/crimeandpolitics/2013/05/28/three-reasons-why-colombias-land-reform-deal-is-significant/.

argues that, "The increasing realisation that there are modern problems for which there are no modern solutions points towards the need to move beyond the paradigm of modernity and, hence, beyond the Third World."[20]   President Obama's 2013 State of the Union speech was an excellent example of the ongoing attempt to find modern solutions to modern problems. In one breath Obama acknowledges the seriousness of our situation, "But for the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change…the fact is, the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15."[21] Later on in the speech he proposes that we solve the problem with the same logic that created it, "The good news is, we can make meaningful progress on this issue while driving strong economic growth. I urge this Congress to pursue a bipartisan, market-based solution to climate change."[22] The current popular discourse can't engage with the possibility that prioritizing economic growth and market-based solutions are part of the same logic that has stimulated climate change in the first place. All of this points towards the urgent need to look for alternative projects and making them more visible. So it is important to analyze the Nasa's attempts to challenge their conditions from a place of colonial difference to see whether there is truly an alternative vision there and what might be learned from that vision.

There are several larger implications of this thesis. First, it's important to acknowledge that the three Nasa projects analyzed in this work stand in for a large number of projects similar in scale and implications, both within and outside of

---

[20] Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 207.

[21] "Text: Obama's 2013 State of the Union Address," *The New York Times*, February 12, 2013, sec. U.S. / Politics, 5, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/13/us/politics/obamas-2013-state-of-the-union-address.html.

[22] "Text."

Colombia, even within Nasa territories. Some places have whole communities dedicated to a single project, while many others have communities that are bound together by a common set of values that serve as the driving force for a set of diverse projects. Some organizations are engaged in important projects across dispersed geographical areas. Many of these projects could also be analyzed using Arturo Escobar's three concepts of alternative development, alternative modernity, and alternatives to modernity. One Nasa project that was briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter but that deserves to be looked at in further detail is the Guardia Indígena. Other communities in Colombia engaged in projects that challenge dynamics of modernity/coloniality include: the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, Antioquia department; communities in the municipality of San Francisco, Antioquia department; communities in the *Curbaradó* and *Jiguamiandó* river basins, Choco department; and Wayuu indigenous communities, La Guajira department. Some organizations that are also doing important work: the *Asociación Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra* (Peasant Association of the Cimitarra River Valley); the *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* (Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission); the *Ruta Pacifica* (the Peaceful Path); and the ACOOC, *Acción Colectiva de Objetores y Objetoras de Conciencia* (Conscientious Objectors Collective Action).

The projects of these communities and organizations, along with many others, have a cumulative effect as well as a stand-alone effect. One can think of them as having an effect like an acupuncturist's needles does on a human body. Where as an acunpuncturist's needles redirect the flow of chi in a human body, the projects of these communities and organizations change the flow of the reproduction of capitalist modernity.

127

There are many possible agendas for research that arise from the implications of this thesis. Only a few can be described here. It would probably be most appropriate to organize them using a participatory action research framework. One aspect of this thesis was its reliance on secondary material, particularly the work of Joris van de Sandt and his research regarding Nasa land tenure in Jambaló. One agenda would be to approach the Nasa and engage them in conversations about which projects they might consider to be the most symbolic of their resistance to modernity/coloniality. One remarkable Nasa project, the Guardia Indígena, deserves to be part of any future research agenda. This agenda might explore the intersection between efforts to sustain projects of alternative development and alternative modernity in contexts of violence and war. One question that might ground this agenda would be: How does the Guardia Indígena provide an alternative vision of addressing conflict and providing security in response to conditions of modernity/coloniality? As the effects of climate change are becoming clearer, various regions of the world are being presented with different challenges. One research agenda might explore the ways in which the Nasa are coming to terms with the reality of climate change, examining whether they've been feeling any dramatic effects, and how that might be impacting their social and cultural practices.

This study raises several questions. Does the state have a positive role to play in fostering projects of alternative modernity and alternatives to modernity? Despite the contentious history of struggle between the Nasa and the state, they've also come to rely on the state for certain revenues and infrastructure. Interviews with indigenous leaders and engaged community members might help to give us some insight into how to best answer this question. Does this concept of colonial difference essentialize afro-

128

descendent and indigenous peoples to the extent that it does not account for the ways that these groups may engage in practices that are harmful to their existence even outside of an interaction with European modernity? While it seems valuable to try to seek out and understand perspectives emanating from the colonial difference, it also seems worthwhile to investigate the history of pre-Columbian indigenous cultures to see if they might complicate our understanding of the colonial difference. For instance, in Jared Diamond's book *Collapse*, Diamond raises questions about the hierarchical nature of classical Mayan civilization (C.E. 250-C.E. 909) and whether that contributed to its collapse.[23] More work needs to be done to articulate what aspect of the colonial difference might be most helpful in creating alternatives to modernity. Which leads me to my last question, if one were to articulate a more affirmative vision of an alternative to modernity, what would that look like?

The Nasa provide us with a hopeful example of resistance to modernity/coloniality that is worth further research and debate.   It seems most appropriate to end with their words:

> It has always served us to return to our roots, to draw upon the wisdom contained
> in our collective memories, listen to the elders and get closer to nature to be part
> of all life and by defending it, defending ourselves. In each era we've had to
> learn to resist and to do it in a different way that was appropriate for the
> challenge that we were confronting. We've marched from far away, for a long
> time, through the path of history. (My translation.)[24]

---

[23] Jared M Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2005).
[24] "Mandato Indígena Y Popular de La Minga Por La Vida, La Justicia, La Alegría, La Libertad Y La Autonomía," *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Del Norte Del Cauca*, September 18, 2004, http://www.nasaacin.org/mandato-indigena-y-popular.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"About the ACIN." *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte Del Cauca - ACIN*.
Accessed September 20, 2012. http://www.nasaacin.org/sobre-acin.

Annual Report 2011: The State of the World's Human Rights. 38th ed. London, UK:
Amnesty International, 2011. http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/colombia/report-
2011.

Antonil. *Mama Coca*. London, UK: Hassle Free Press, 1978.

Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte del Cauca. "Carta a Los Grupos Armados,"
July 8, 2012. http://www.nasaacin.org/comunicados-nasaacin/4277-acin-a-la-
opinion-publica-guerrillas-y-gobierno-nacional-
?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=.

Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte del Cauca - ACIN. "El Conflicto Armado
Extremece a Jambaló Cauca." Accessed May 10, 2013.
http://www.nasaacin.org/component/content/article/1-ultimas-noticias/1992-el-
conflicto-armado-extremese-a-jambalo-cauca.

Avilés, William. "Colombia's Left." *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1,
2012): 5 –9. doi:10.1177/0094582X11422209.

Benavides-Vanegas, Farid Samir. "Indigenous People's Mobilization and Their Struggle
for Rights in Colombia." *SSRN eLibrary* (December 2009).
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1884151.

Bob, Clifford. *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International
Activism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Burawoy, Michæl. *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four
Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*. 1st ed. Berkeley:
University of California Press, 2009.

Catedra Nasa Unesco, ed. *Los Lideres Cuentan Sobre El Proceso Organizativo Del
Resguardo de Jambalo Y Del Proyecto Global*. Santander de Quilichao,
Colombia: Catedra Nasa Unesco/ACIN, 2002.

"Colombia Has Biggest Humanitarian Crisis in Western Hemisphere, UN Says." *UN
News Centre*, May 10, 2004.
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=10691&Cr=colombia&Cr1.

"Comunicado Conjunto, La Habana, Mayo 26 de 2013." *Presidencia de La República*,
May 26, 2013.
http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2013/Mayo/Paginas/20130526_03-
propaz.aspx.

Consejeria Mayor de la ACIN. "Fuerza Pública Agrede a Guardia Indígena En Jambaló –
Cauca." Accessed May 11, 2013. http://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/fuerza-
publica-agrede-a-guardia-indigena-en-jambalo-cauca/.

"Consulta Popular En El Cauca Frente Al TLC." *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas
Norte Del Cauca*, May 28, 2010. http://www.nasaacin.org/consulta-popular-no-el-
tlc.

"Desde El Cauca, Desarmar La Guerra." *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia Y Paz*, July
23, 2012. http://justiciaypazcolombia.com/Desde-el-Cauca-desarmar-la-guerra.

Diamond, Jared M. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York:
Viking, 2005.

Escobar, Arturo. "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 207–230.

———. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

———. *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

———. "Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise: The Latin American Modernity/coloniality Research Program." Amsterdam: CEDLA, 2002.

Findji, María Teresa. "From Resistance to Social Movement: The Indigenous Authorities Movement in Colombia." In *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

———. "Tras Las Huellas de los Paeces." In *Encrucijadas de Colombia Amerindia*, 49–70. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, 1993.

Findji, María Teresa, and José María Rojas. *Territorio, Economía y Sociedad Páez*. Cali, Colombia: Universidad del Valle, 1985.

Forero, Juan. "Colombia War Spills Into Indians' Peaceful World." *The New York Times*, May 2, 2005, sec. International / Americas. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/02/international/americas/02indians.html.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation Of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1977.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

Gerring, John. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. 1st ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Gow, David D. *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and the Moral Imagination*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2008.

Gray, Vanessa Joan. "Nonviolence and Sustainable Resource Use with External Support." *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 43 –114. doi:10.1177/0094582X11423225.

Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism*. First Printing. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Hodgson, Dorothy L. "Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on the Indigenous Rights Movement in Africa and the Americas." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 1037–1049. doi:10.1525/aa.2002.104.4.1037.

Hristov, Jasmin. "Legalizing the Illegal: Paramilitarism in Colombia's 'Post-Paramilitary' Era." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 42, no. 4 (August 2009): 12–19,38–39.

Hylton, Forrest. *Evil Hour in Colombia*. 1st ed. London, UK: Verso, 2006.

"Indigenous, Adj. : Oxford English Dictionary." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed September 15, 2012. http://www.oed.com.ezproxy2.lib.depaul.edu/view/Entry/94474?redirectedFrom=indigenous#eid.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. *Case 11.101 "Caloto" Massacre Colombia*. Organization of American States, April 13, 2000. http://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/99eng/Merits/Colombia11.101.htm.

International Fund for Agricultural Development. "Rural Poverty in Colombia." *Rural Poverty Portal*. Accessed September 8, 2012. http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/rural-poverty-portal/country/home/tags/colombia.

Jackson, Jean. "Caught in the Crossfire: Colombia's Indigenous Peoples during the 1990s." In *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Jackson, Jean E., and Kay B. Warren. "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992–2004: Controversies, Ironies, New Directions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (October 2005): 549–573. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.34.081804.120529.

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds. *Social Suffering*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Kraul, Chris. "Village's Unarmed Rebellion." *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 2006. http://articles.latimes.com/2006/sep/18/world/fg-peacetown18.

Langer, Erick D., and Elena Muñoz. *Contemporary Indigenous Movements in Latin America*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2003.

Leroke, Windsor S. *"Koze Kube Nini?" The Violence of Representation and the Politics of Social Research in South Africa*. Working Paper. University of the Witwatersrand, July 13, 1994. http://digi.nrf.ac.za/dspace/handle/10539/7896.

Levi, Jerome M., and Biorn Maybury-Lewis. "Becoming Indigenous: Identity and Heterogeneity in a Global Movement." Unpublished Book Chapter, March 2010. http://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:wDICtQp4SnYJ:scholar.google.com/+%22Indigenous+Peoples+Poverty+and+Development%22&hl=en&num=100&as_sdt=0,5&as_ylo=2010&as_yhi=2011.

Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*. London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951. http://archive.org/details/accumulationofca00luxe.

"Mandato Indígena Y Popular Indígena Y Popular de La Minga Por La Vida, La Justicia, La Alegría, La Libertad Y La Autonomía." *Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Del Norte Del Cauca*, September 18, 2004. http://www.nasaacin.org/mandato-indigena-y-popular.

Martinez Cobo, José. *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*. Geneva, Switzerland: UN Commission on Human Rights, September 30, 1983. http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/LibraryDocuments/Mart%C3%ADnezCoboStudy.aspx.

McMichael, Philip. "Feeding the World: Agriculture, Development and Ecology." *Socialist Register* 43 (January 1, 2007). http://thesocialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/view/5863.

Mignolo, Walter. "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)Coloniality, Border Thinking, and Epistemic Disobedience." *Transversal*, September 9, 2011. http://eipcp.net/transversal/0112/mignolo/en.

"Modernity, N." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed December 30, 2013. http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.depaul.edu/view/Entry/120626.

Murillo, Mario. "Confronting the Dilemmas of Political Participation." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 29, no. 5 (March 1996): 21.

———. "Embattled Cauca: A New Wave of Violence and Indigenous Resistance." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 42, no. 4 (August 2009): 25–29, 25–29.

———. "The 2008 Indigenous and Popular Minga in Colombia: Civil Resistance and Alternative Communication Practices." *Socialism and Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2009): 137–156. doi:10.1080/08854300903180804.

Ng'weno, Bettina. *On Titling Collective Property, Participation, and Natural Resource Management: Implementing Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Demands : A Review of Bank Experience in Colombia*, 2000.

Prada Ramirez, Fernando. "Epistemología Y Poder En La Alimentación Soberanías Fragmentadas Y Expansión Biotecnología." In *Desde Los Andes Al Mundo, Sabor Y Saber : Primer Congreso Para La Preservación Y Difusión de Las Cocinas Regionales de Los Países Andinos : Lima, Perú, Noviembre 2003*. Lima, Perú :: Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Escuela Profesional de Turismo y Hotelería,, 2005.

Press, Associated. "Colombia's Stubborn Conflict Bared as Frustrated Indians Revolt." *The Washington Post*, July 21, 2012, sec. World. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/colombias-stubborn-conflict-bared-as-frustrated-indians-revolt/2012/07/21/gJQALypazW_story.html.

Puig, Salvador Martí i. "The Emergence of Indigenous Movements in Latin America and Their Impact on the Latin American Political Scene Interpretive Tools at the Local and Global Levels." *Latin American Perspectives* 37, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 74–92. doi:10.1177/0094582X10382100.

Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America." *International Sociology* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 215–32. doi:10.1177/0268580900015002005.

Rappaport, Joanne. "Civil Society and the Indigenous Movement in Colombia: The Consejo Regional Indigena Del Cauca." *Social Analysis* 51, no. 2 (2007): 107–123. doi:10.3167/sa.2007.510206.

———. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

———. *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.

Rice, Roberta. *The New Politics of Protest: Indigenous Mobilization in Latin America's Neoliberal Era*. 1st ed. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012.

Richani, Nazih. *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.

Romero, Simon. "Wider Drug War Threatens Colombian Indians." *The New York Times*, April 21, 2009, sec. World / Americas. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/22/world/americas/22colombia.html.

Sanabria, Olga Lucía. *Manejo vegetal en agroecosistemas tradicionales de Tierradentro, Cauca, Colombia*. Popayán, Colombia: Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2001.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. London, UK: Zed Books Ltd, 2012.

Sandt, Joris Jan van de. *Behind the Mask of Recognition: Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2007.

Spigarelli, Gina. "Indigenous Nasa Resist Militarization in Cauca." *End U.S. Military Aid to Colombia*, July 31, 2012. http://forusa.org/blogs/for-colombia/indigenous-nasa-resist-militarization-cauca/10742.

Survival International. *Colombia Indians Massacred to Make Way for Opium Fields.* London: Survival International, 1991.

———. *Colombia Priest Murdered, Indians Evicted.* London: Survival International, 1985.

Tarrow, Sidney G. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

"Text: Obama's 2013 State of the Union Address." *The New York Times*, February 12, 2013, sec. U.S. / Politics. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/13/us/politics/obamas-2013-state-of-the-union-address.html.

Troyan, Brett. "Ethnic Citizenship in Colombia: The Experience of the Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca in Southwestern Colombia from 1970 to 1990." *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 166–191.

"United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples : Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly." UN General Assembly, October 2, 2007. http://www.refworld.org/docid/471355a82.html.

Van Cott, Donna Lee. "Constitutional Reform in the Andes: Redefining Indigenous-State Relations." In *Multiculturalism in Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

———. "Indigenous Peoples' Politics in Latin America." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, no. 1 (May 2010): 385–405. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.032708.133003.

Vanegas, Farid Samir Benavides. "Indigenous Resistance and the Law." *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 61 –77. doi:10.1177/0094582X11423221.

Voelkel, Christian. "Three Reasons Why Colombia's Land Reform Deal Is Significant." *Latin America Crime & Politics*, May 28, 2013. http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/crimeandpolitics/2013/05/28/three-reasons-why-colombias-land-reform-deal-is-significant/.

Wyss, Jim. "Sticks vs. Guns: The Rise of Colombia's Indigenous Guard." *The Miami Herald*, August 7, 2012. http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/07/2938476/sticks-vs-guns-the-rise-of-colombias.html.