

Université de Montréal

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES AND POWER IN FRICTION WITH HUMAN
RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES:
The Case of the Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan in the Colombian Amazon**

par

Álvaro Diego Herrera Arango

Département de communication

Faculté des arts et des sciences

Thèse présentée à la Faculté des arts et des sciences
en vue de l'obtention du grade Philosophiæ Doctor (Ph.D.) en communication

Septembre 2014

© Álvaro Diego Herrera, 2014

Université de Montréal
Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales

Cette thèse intitulée :

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES AND POWER IN FRICTION WITH HUMAN
RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES:
The Case of the Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan in the Colombian Amazon

Présentée par :

Álvaro Diego Herrera Arango

a été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes :

Tamara Vukov, présidente-rapporteuse
Julianne Pidduck, directrice de recherche
Carmen Rico de Sotelo, membre du jury
George J. Sefa Dei, examinateur externe
Juan Carlos Godenzzi, Représentant du doyen de la FAS

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the intercultural negotiations of the Amazonian multi-ethnic group of the People of the Centre with the universal discourses of human rights and development promoted by the Colombian State. I focus on the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP), which is one of the 73 plans formulated and implemented by the Colombian State to acknowledge the basic rights of indigenous groups endangered by internal forced displacement. I analyze the ESP through the notion of friction (Tsing, 2005), which refers to the complex, unequal, and changing character of contemporary encounters across difference between local and global knowledges. My analysis also draws on Foucauldian and/or subaltern approaches such as anti-colonial and decolonizing research, critical and counter-hegemonic perspectives on human rights, post-development, and feminist critiques of development. I analyze the knowledges (understandings of law, justice, and development), logics of thought (practices, epistemologies, roles, and spaces for sharing and producing knowledges), and power relations (forms of leadership, associations, networks, and forms of empowerment and disempowerment) that the People of the Centre produce and renew in their frictions with human rights and development discourses. I introduce the tri-border Middle Amazon as a region historically connected to unequal global relations of power. I argue that these historical power relations influence the conditions in which the People of the Centre struggle for their rights through the ESP.

I draw my case study on documentary analysis and on two instances of self-reflective and critical ethnographic fieldwork. My methodological reflection explores how researchers' positions in fieldwork influence ethnographic knowledge and can contribute to inclusive and flexible intercultural relations connected to the needs of local groups. My analysis focuses on how power circulates on national, regional, and local scales in the ESP. I analyze how this circulatory power produces individual and collective subjects and is articulated with specific forms of knowledge, influencing both exclusionary and emancipatory possibilities for displaced indigenous people.

Research results suggest that the People of the Centre approach human rights through their indigenous knowledge on the "law of origin." This law asserts their cultural difference as a central basis of recognition of their human rights as displaced indigenous people. Similarly,

the People of the Centre appropriate development discourses and projects through the notion of abundance. Understood as a collective ability connecting spirituality, cultural values, and gender roles, the notion of abundance aims to ensure the physical and cultural group's survival. I argue that, although they are tied to local and unequal forms of power, these indigenous knowledges and their logics of thought can contribute to plural, egalitarian, and situated concepts and practices of human rights and development.

Keywords:

Indigenous knowledges, Power, Human Rights, Development, Amazon, Intercultural Communication, Forced Displacement, Self-reflective Ethnography

Résumé

Cette thèse analyse les négociations interculturelles des Gens du Centre (groupe amazonien multi-ethnique) avec les discours universels de droits humains et de développement mobilisés par l'État colombien. L'analyse se concentre sur le Plan de sauvegarde ethnique Witoto chapitre Leticia (ESP), qui est un des 73 plans formulés et implémentés par l'État colombien pour reconnaître les droits des peuples autochtones en danger par le déplacement forcé causé par les conflits armés internes. J'analyse l'ESP à travers la notion de friction (Tsing, 2005) qui fait référence aux caractéristiques complexes, inégalitaires et changeantes des rencontres contemporaines entre les différences des savoirs locaux et globaux. Mon analyse se base aussi sur des approches foucaaldiennes et/ou subalternes de pouvoir comme la recherche anticoloniale et de la décolonisation, les perspectives critiques et contre-hégémoniques des droits humains, le post-développement, et les critiques du féminisme au développement. L'objectif de la thèse est d'analyser les savoirs (concepts de loi, de justice et de développement); les logiques de pensée (pratiques, épistémologies, rôles et espaces pour partager et produire des savoirs); et les relations de pouvoir (formes de leadership, associations, réseaux, et formes d'*empowerment* et *disempowerment*) produits et recréés par les Gens du Centre au sein des frictions avec les discours de droits humains et du développement.

La thèse introduit comment la région habitée par les Gens du Centre (le Milieu Amazone transfrontalier) a été historiquement connectée aux relations inégalitaires de pouvoir qui influencent les luttes actuelles de ce groupe autochtone pour la reconnaissance de leurs droits à travers l'ESP. L'analyse se base à la fois sur une recherche documentaire et sur deux terrains ethnographiques, réalisés selon une perspective critique et autoréflexive. Ma réflexion méthodologique explore comment la position des chercheurs sur le terrain influence le savoir ethnographique et peut contribuer à la création des relations interculturelles inclusives, flexibles et connectées aux besoins des groupes locaux. La section analytique se concentre sur comment le pouvoir circule simultanément à travers des échelles nationale, régionale et locale dans l'ESP. J'y analyse comment ces formes de pouvoir produisent des sujets individuels et collectifs et s'articulent à des savoirs globaux ou locaux pour donner lieu à de nouvelles formes d'exclusion ou d'émancipation des autochtones déplacés.

Les résultats de la recherche suggèrent que les Gens du Centre approchent le discours des droits humains à travers leurs savoirs autochtones sur la « loi de l'origine ». Cette loi établit leur différence culturelle comme étant à la base du processus de reconnaissance de leurs droits comme peuple déplacé. D'ailleurs, les Gens du Centre approprient les discours et les projets de développement à travers la notion d'abondance qui, comprise comme une habileté collective qui connecte la spiritualité, les valeurs culturelles, et les rôles de genre, contribue à assurer l'existence physique et culturelle des groupes autochtones. Ma thèse soutient que, même si ces savoirs et logiques de pensée autochtones sont liés à des inégalités et à formes de pouvoir local, ils peuvent contribuer à des pratiques de droits humains et de développement plurielles, égalitaires et inclusives.

Mots clé :

Savoirs autochtones, Pouvoir, Droits humains, Développement, Amazonie, Communication interculturelle, Déplacement forcé, Ethnographie autoréflexive

Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral analiza las negociaciones interculturales de la Gente de Centro (grupo amazónico multiétnico) con los discursos universales de derechos humanos y desarrollo promovidos por el Estado colombiano. La investigación se concentra en el Plan de salvaguarda étnica Uitoto capítulo Leticia (ESP), uno de los 73 planes formulados e implementados por el Estado colombiano para reconocer los derechos básicos de los grupos indígenas en riesgo de desplazamiento forzado. Mi análisis emplea la noción de “fricción” (Tsing, 2005), la cual se refiere a las características complejas, desiguales y cambiantes de los encuentros contemporáneos entre las diferencias que existen entre saberes locales y globales. El análisis se basa además en perspectivas foucaultdianas y/o subalternas como la investigación anticolonial y la descolonización, perspectivas críticas y contra hegemónicas de los derechos humanos, el post-desarrollo, y las críticas feministas al desarrollo. Analizo los saberes (conceptos de ley, justicia y desarrollo), lógicas de pensamiento (prácticas, epistemologías, roles y espacios para producir saberes), y relaciones de poder (formas de liderazgo, asociaciones, redes, y formas de empoderamiento y desempoderamiento) que la Gente de Centro produce y recrea a través de sus fricciones con discursos de derechos humanos y desarrollo. Contextualizo la región habitada por la Gente de Centro (la triple frontera del Medio Amazonas) como un área históricamente influida por relaciones inequitativas de poder global. Sostengo que estas relaciones globales inequitativas influyen en las condiciones desiguales en las que la Gente de Centro lucha por el reconocimiento de sus derechos a través del ESP.

Mi estudio de caso se basa en análisis documental y en dos períodos de trabajo de campo desde perspectivas etnográficas críticas y auto reflexivas. Mi reflexión metodológica explora cómo las posiciones de los investigadores en el campo influyen el conocimiento etnográfico y pueden contribuir a relaciones interculturales incluyentes, flexibles y conectadas con las necesidades de los grupos locales. La sección analítica presenta cómo formas de poder nacional, regional y local circulan en el ESP. Analizo cómo estas formas de poder producen sujetos individuales y colectivos y se articulan con formas de saber global o local, produciendo tanto exclusiones como posibilidades de resistencia entre los desplazados indígenas.

Los resultados de la investigación sugieren que la Gente de Centro se aproxima a la noción de derechos humanos a través del concepto indígena de la “ley de origen.” Esta ley propone las diferencias culturales indígenas como una base para el reconocimiento de sus derechos humanos como pueblos afectados por el desplazamiento forzado. Además, la Gente de Centro se apropia de los discursos y proyectos de desarrollo a través de la noción de abundancia. Entendida como una habilidad colectiva que conecta visiones espirituales, valores culturales y roles de género, la noción de abundancia contribuye a asegurar la supervivencia cultural y física del grupo indígena. Mi tesis sostiene que, aun cuando estos saberes y lógicas de pensamiento indígena están ligados con formas de desigualdad y poder local, pueden contribuir a conceptos y prácticas de derechos humanos y desarrollo con una visión plural, igualitaria y localmente incluyente.

Palabras clave:

Saberes indígenas, Poder, Derechos humanos, Desarrollo, Amazonia, Comunicación intercultural, Desplazamiento forzado, Etnografía auto-reflexiva.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my family members, professors, colleagues, indigenous leaders and community members, and friends whose generous support to and participation in this research project made possible completing this dissertation. My PhD research results from all their joint efforts.

I am thankful to my family: my mother, partner, brother, nephews, father, sister in law, cousins, aunts, and uncles whose permanent presence in my life despite the geographical distance has been critical to complete my PhD. Our permanent dialogues encouraged me to pursue this ambitious project.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Julianne Pidduck, my thesis supervisor, whose continuous confidence in my work motivated me to complete this dissertation despite many obstacles. I am grateful to her personal and academic qualities, which are evident in her thorough readings of several versions of this thesis, accurate comments to refine my ideas, openness to my proposals, and academic and personal advice. This dissertation was possible thanks to Julianne Pidduck's personal and academic commitment.

I am also indebted to Dr. Carmen Rico de Sotelo, who also believed and valued my academic and professional abilities throughout this PhD. Our academic dialogues and research projects from a Latin American perspective highly contributed to qualify this dissertation. Similarly, I am thankful to Dr. Line Grenier, whose inspiring positive energy, commitment to my scholarship applications, and inspiring research and teaching reinforced my motivation to complete this study. I am profoundly grateful to each member of my PhD doctoral examination and research proposal committees: Doctors Boris Brummans, Monika Kin Gagnon, Lorna Roth, and Krista Lynes. Your questions, comments, and suggestions were a common thread throughout these five years of reflection and writing. I also express my gratitude to all professors of my PhD seminars whose teaching, methodologies, and constructive feedbacks enriched several sections of this dissertation.

My gratitude is also for each member of the CPCC (*Culture populaire et connaissance critique*) laboratory and to my closest friends at the University of Montreal's Department of Communication. Your ideas and careful listening at academic and spontaneous meetings

highly enriched this academic process. In particular, I thank to Fannie Valois-Nadeau, Maude Gauthier, Thomas Martine, and Pedro Reyes for their valuable friendship during this process.

I express deep gratitude to all my students who attended the courses that I taught or where I was teaching assistant at the University of Montreal. Students' questions, comments, evaluations, presentations, and papers were a bridge between my research work and a new generation of ideas and visions in communication.

I owe this work to the openness and generosity of several indigenous community members and friends of the Amazon. Either through interviews or collective activities, advice, or by suggesting some informants, they made possible an exciting, insightful, and challenging fieldwork. I thank to my friends Sonia Uruburu and Juan José Vieco, whose conversations and guidelines clarified my questions, intentions, and steps during my fieldwork. I am deeply grateful to members of the Witoto 11th kilometre community: Lucinda Vásquez, Walter Morales, Casia Soria, Laura Albán, Tomasa, Miguel Ángel Sandoval, governor Wellington and all the members of the indigenous council, José Tanimuca, Alfonso García, Rosalía Rubio, and all their families who contributed to this work. I express my gratitude to the Leticia Witoto ESP team: the chief elder Antonio Cayetano, the elders Armando Yacob, Nicanor Morales, Bonifacio Agga, Romualdo Gutiérrez, Cirilo Apolinar, and Alonso Arango; the secretary Johnny Zumaeta; the indigenous professionals Carlos Lozano, Eduardo Sarmiento, and Rubén Agga; and the indigenous community promoters Libardo Santana Flores, Silvestre Teteye, John Jairo Guzmán Santo, Alirio Florez Bora, Regina Dutcha Kuyuedo, Charli Ipuchima Cuelo, and Robinson Ariram. I highly appreciated my personal and professional exchanges with Juan Castro Patiño and Élver Isidio Viena, whose friendship provided me with deep insights into the ESP and the Witoto and Bora cultures. I am also grateful to Sandra Fernández, Jesús Teteye, and Astrith Rodríguez, whose insightful thoughts helped me understand better my research object. Furthermore, I thank professors Carlos Zárate and Maria Cristina Peñuela of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Leticia, who provided me with clues to apprehend several complexities of the tri-border Middle Amazon.

I am deeply grateful to all the Brazilian Tikuna participants in this dissertation. In particular, I thank Irandy Araujo Coelho and Geovane Moraes for their generosity, patience, and commitment to my work. Likewise, I thank Enildo Manoel, Ismael Araujo Coelho, Sildoney, Telé Cordeiro, José Mendes, the elder Genouca Alvino, and the cacique Gustavo

Albino. Our relationship inspired most of my ethnographic reflections in this dissertation. I also thank all friends I met during my fieldwork in the Amazon who helped me see this region from alternative and more spontaneous perspectives.

I am grateful to the Department of Communication at Université de Montréal for their generous support either through student scholarships, assistantships, or work as *chargé de cours*. These employment opportunities allowed me to gain rich research and teaching experiences. Your integrated financial support exemplifies a fruitful experience of collaborative work between doctoral students and academic institutions. I extend my gratitude to the Department's alumni association: the Club des Cents, whose scholarship financed my second stint of fieldwork. Similarly, I thank the Faculté des Études et Postdoctorales for their financial support during my fourth academic year. I am also grateful to the departments of communication of the joint PhD program (UQÀM and Concordia University) where I could work as research assistant. These work experiences reinforced my research profile and helped me finance this dissertation.

I acknowledge my friends in Montreal (Monica Cuervo, Wilfried Mabonzo) and Colombia (Isabel Torres, Nakarina Restrepo, Sandra Guínguer, Juliana Castellanos, Julián Ortiz, Marcela Rodríguez) for their continuous encouragement throughout these studies. I also thank my roommates Rhailane El Hajjam, Kevin Lelièvre, Camille Babin, and their families who shared with me their daily life during this lonely and arduous academic journey. I am also grateful to Miriam Papps, whose editing suggestions helped me clarify my ideas in English writing.

I am very grateful to the life for giving me the opportunity to studying and living in a city and country where I had great conditions to understand the complex situation of the People of the Centre. Paradoxically, from this foreign location, I could better understand the complex experiences of this indigenous multi-ethnic group that reflects several contradictions and possibilities to overcome marginalization in Colombia and Latin America.

DEDICATION

Para Chemi: *tu amor, paciencia y sabiduría han sido una base fundamental durante estos cinco años de crecimiento juntos, de encuentros y de despedidas.*

I dedicate all the efforts I made to complete this dissertation to the buddhas who accompanied me throughout my PhD studies, to the blossoming of a pure dharma in this world, and to my friends at the Canadian and Colombian Kadam sangha. I dedicate this personal and academic accomplishment to my spiritual teachers Gueshe Kelsang Gyatso, Gen-La Kelsang Dekyong, Gen Donsang, Kelsang Chögyan, and Drenpa Kelsang. Your wisdom and compassion inspired me to continuously transform several adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment. May your pure virtues increase and ripen within each being related to this dissertation and among those who will read it.

GLOSSARY

Ambil: paste of tobacco powder mixed with vegetable salt, used in the People of the Centre's rituals. *Ambil* is one main form of tobacco, which is a main symbol of abundance in the People of the Centre's culture.

Cacique or Capitán: indigenous traditional chief. Cacique's authority comes from his family lineage or from his spiritual preparation to heal and guide the community. Among the People of the Centre, *caciques* inherited their legitimacy from their direct links with the Creator.

Caguana: cassava juice consumed in People of the Centre's rituals and *mingas*. The production of *caguana* is intrinsically interwoven with the roles of women as producers of abundance in the People of the Centre's communities.

Casabe: manioc bread made by women.

Cauchero: rubber man or rubber foreman. Normally, a mestizo person dedicated to collect rubber with economic purposes. This term was also commonly used to refer to foremen of rubber companies. In the rubber boom period (see Chapter One), the *caucheros* gathered rubber that indigenous people collected in the forest or close to their community settlements.

Chagras: Parcel of land belonging to an indigenous family. *Chagras* are the space where the People of the Centre's families produce their food, establish gender distinctions through differentiated tasks, and start passing on knowledge (languages, practices, tactics of cultivation) from one generation to another.

Curaca: Indigenous political governor of the indigenous community. In the Leticia area, curacas are democratically elected every year.

Endeude: system of indenture labour and peonage based on the subjugation of the indigenous labour force.

Maloka: community house which represents the origin and strength of the community. *Malokas* constitute both the basis and the origin of community life. According to Witoto traditional narratives, the *maloka* space reflects the Witoto world vision and cultural understanding of power hierarchies within the community.

Mambe: coca powder consumed in People of the Centre's rituals. The consumption of *mambe* is restricted to men in *mambeaderos*. Together with *ambil* and *caguana*, *mambe* is a product that requires collective work and whose basis is a main symbol of abundance.

Mambeadero: space to chew coca, normally situated within the *maloka*. *Mambeaderos* are sacred spaces of discussion where only men can participate. *Mambeaderos* are the places where the People of the Centre's men elders "teach the principles, norms and codes of work" (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 62, my translation).

Mestizo: people who result from the crossbreeding between Hispanic and indigenous heritage. *Mestizos* are both demographically and politically dominant in most Latin-American countries. On a daily basis, *mestizos* and indigenous people do not make distinctions between white and *mestizo* people.

Minga: collective work in Quechua. In the Witoto culture, *mingas* are called *cõnima caycon ñicub*, which means "let's work together" or *coní-ma caroye* – "let's help others," heal those who are in need.

Muchacho del servicio: indigenous members of the *patrones'* paramilitary army. The *muchachos del servicio* were commonly indigenous orphans whose families had been killed by enemy indigenous groups in the intertribal wars that had taken place since the colonial period.

Paisanos: In the Colombian Middle Amazon, *paisano* means indigenous person. This is the term through which an indigenous person refers to another indigenous person.

Patrón (plural: *patrones*): Colonizers, normally mestizos from the Andes or coastal regions, established in the Amazonian region to exploit raw materials (e.g., rubber, lumber, fur, minerals, etc.). Throughout the 19th and 20th century, the *patrones* established economic domination on indigenous people through threats of physical violence, their own paramilitary army, and systems of indenture labour.

Rescates: System of recruitment in which religious and military agents 'rescued' indigenous people who had been enslaved by other tribes. Priests and soldiers converted the rescued people, converted them to Christianity, and left them available as labour force to colonial agents. *Rescates* replaced one form of domination with another.

LIST OF ACRONYMES

ACCIÓN SOCIAL: is the Colombian Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation. Its main goal is to “mobilize Colombia to overcome extreme poverty, advance reconciliation and lead the international cooperation agenda of the country. It also benefits the poorest through programs such as Families in Action, income generation, infrastructure, and food security. *Acción Social* aims to contribute to the creation of conditions for peace and prosperity”. <http://www.accionsocial.gov.co/contenido/contenido.aspx?catID=3andconID=544andpagID=820> (My translation).

AZCAITA: Is the Zonal Association of the Council of Indigenous Authorities of Autochthonous Traditions (Asociación Zonal del Consejo de Autoridades Indígenas de Tradición Autóctono) that brings together the authorities of the Ticuna and Ticuna-Witoto reserves situated between the 2nd and the 11th kilometre of the Leticia – Tarapacá road.

ESP: Ethnic Safeguarding Plans (Planes de Salvaguarda Étnica)

ONIC: National Indigenous Organization of Colombia. The ONIC is one of the largest, most influent and visible indigenous organization in the country.

PG: Programme to Guarantee the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Affected by Displacement. Together with the ESP, the PG must focus on prevention and attention to forced displacement, and must “include a differential focus to accomplish the principle of ethnocultural diversity” (Colombia, 2009, p. 30, my translation)

SENA: the Colombian National Service of Learning, whose main goal is the technical and social development of Colombian workers through professional training for productive activities that contribute to economic, social, and economic growth. <http://www.sena.edu.co/Portal/EI+SENA/Objetivo+y+funciones/>(my translation).

LIST OF GRAPHICS

Maps

<i>Map 2.1. The tri-border Middle Amazon in South America</i>	31
<i>Map 2.2. The Leticia Area in Detail.....</i>	31
<i>Map 2.3. The Tri-border Middle Amazon with a Detailed Focus on the Putumayo-Caquetá Region.....</i>	33
<i>Map 2.4. Borders between the Amazonian countries in 1830.....</i>	37
<i>Map No. 4.1. Indigenous Peoples with an Ethnic Safeguarding Plan According to Order 004 vs. Indigenous Peoples at Risk of Extinction.....</i>	194

Diagrams

<i>Diagram 2.1. Approximate Plan of a Witoto maloka.....</i>	92
<i>Diagram 3.1. Codes of the Analytic Family Frictions and Negotiations in Atlas Ti.....</i>	184

Pictures

<i>Picture 2.1. A Meeting of the Leticia Witoto ESP Team at the 14th Kilometre Mambadero.....</i>	92
<i>Picture 2.2. The Maloka of the 11th Kilometre Community.....</i>	92
<i>Picture 3.1. The People of the Centre’s Dances: “We are people of the dancing”</i>	170
<i>Pictures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4: The Tree-Problem Workshop and Discussion with the Professional and Community Promoter ESP Committees.....</i>	179
<i>Pictures 5.1 and 5.2. Witoto Women Processing Manioc in the 11th Kilometre Community.....</i>	239
<i>Picture 5.3. A Witoto Man Processes Coca Leaves to Produce Mambe</i>	242
<i>Picture 5.4. Ambil (tobacco powder), Mambe, and Caguana (manioc juice) Are Shown During a Ritual Related to the Leticia Witoto ESP.....</i>	242

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Keywords:.....	ii
Résumé	iii
Resumen	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
DEDICATION	x
GLOSSARY	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMES	xiii
LIST OF GRAPHICS.....	xiv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xv
INTRODUCTION	1
The Leticia Witoto	4
Indigenous Knowledges, Decolonizing, and Anti-colonial Perspectives: Analytical Keys	7
Research Questions and Goals	13
Research Methodology	15
Theoretical Approaches	16
Contribution of this Dissertation to Research in Communication	16
Dissertation structure.....	22
CHAPTER ONE	
UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES AND SCALES OF POWER IN THE TRI-BORDER MIDDLE AMAZON	25
1.1. KEY CONCEPTS USED TO FRAME THE RESEARCH CONTEXT	26
1.2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH	31
1.3. HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE.....	35

1.3.1. The Colonial and Early Republican Era: the Subjugation of the Amazon to Global Power Relations.....	35
1.3.2. The Rubber Boom: a Multi-Scalar Structure of Power-Knowledge.....	40
1.3.3. The Integration of the People of the Centre into the State and the 20 th -Century Economic Booms in the Tri-Border Middle Amazon	54
1.3.4. The 1990s to the Present: Multi-ethnic Encounters and Direct Negotiations with Universal Discourses on the Local and Community Scales	61
1.4. CONCLUSIONS.....	69
CHAPTER TWO	
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	72
2.1. INTERCULTURAL FRICTIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCE IN GLOBALIZATION .	74
2.2. POWER: A CONTINUOUSLY CONSTRUCTED RELATION	79
Resistance, the Reinforcement of Identity and Empowerment: Producing Power from Subaltern Positions	83
2.3. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES: A STRATEGIC CONNECTION BETWEEN CULTURE AND POWER	86
2.3.1. Indigenous Knowledges as Situated Knowledge.....	89
2.3.2. Tradition, Experience, Revelation, and Contact: Indigenous Knowledges' Main Sources.....	94
2.3.3. Indigenous Knowledges in the Production of Identity and Ethnicity	98
2.3.4. How Can Indigenous Knowledges Establish Egalitarian Dialogues with Universal Discourses?	102
2.4. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT: TWO UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES ...	105
2.4.1. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS.....	106
2.4.1.1. Human Rights: A Western Product of Modernity	106

2.4.1.2. Homogeneity, Individualism, and the Centrality of the State: Three Main Claims of Universal Human Rights Discourse	108
2.4.1.3. Counter-Hegemonic Movements: The Other Side of Human Rights	113
2.4.1.4. Post-socialist Feminist Perspectives: A Complementary View of Global Justice	118
2.4.1.5. Proposals: Intercultural Dialogues between Different Understandings of Human Rights.....	120
2.4.2. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES OF DEVELOPMENT.....	122
Development: A Western Colonial Idea.....	123
2.4.2.1. Modernization: Economic Growth Drawn on Knowledge Transfer.....	125
2.4.2.2. Latin American Critics of the Modernization Paradigm of Development	127
2.4.2.3. Participatory Paradigm: Economic Growth through Other Means?.....	128
2.4.2.4. Rights-Based Approaches to Development.....	132
2.4.2.5. Post-development.....	135
2.4.2.6. Feminist Critiques of Development: The Recognition of Subaltern Specificity	137
2.5. CONCLUSION	139

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH AND THE RESEARCHER IN FRICTION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THIS DISSERTATION 141

3.1. DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES THROUGH INDIGENOUS RESEARCH. 143	
3.1.1. Research as an Act of Power	144
3.1.2. Research as a Process of Negotiation	146
3.2. TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED ETHICS IN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH.....	147
3.2.1. Self-reflexivity: An Ethical and Methodological Commitment to Research	150

3.2.2. Situated Reflections on Documenting Information and the Informed Consent Form	153
3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH	155
3.4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT	157
3.4.1. From Local Cultures to Indigenous Knowledges	158
3.4.2. From Two Case Studies to One Case Study	162
3.4.3. From Development to Universal Discourses.....	166
3.4.4. The Researcher in Friction: Negotiations of Power in the Fieldwork	168
3.5. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES.....	174
3.5.1. Documentary Analysis	175
3.5.2. Observation	176
3.5.3. Workshops	178
3.5.4. Interviews	180
3.5.5. Focus Groups.....	182
3.6. DATA ANALYSIS	183
3.7. CONCLUSION: WHY CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA?	186

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ETHNIC SAFEGUARDING PLANS: LOCALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES 189

4.1. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES IN THE ETHNIC SAFEGUARDING PLANS	191
4.1.1. Human Rights Discourses in the ESP’s Main Legal Framework.....	192
4.1.1.1. ‘Low Intensity Democracy’ Models in the ESP	198
4.1.1.2. The Production of Displaced Subjects through Human Rights Discourses	203

4.1.2. Universal Discourses of Development in the ESP: from Modernization to Participatory Approaches.....	205
4.1.2.1. The Modernization Paradigm of Development in the ESP’s Legal Framework	206
4.1.2.2. Participatory Development in the ESP’s Legal Framework.....	211
4.2. VISIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: POSSIBILITIES OF EMANCIPATION THROUGH THE ESP.....	217
4.3. CONCLUSION	219
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE “WORD OF LIFE AND ABUNDANCE” IN FRICTION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT	
222	
5.1. THE LETICIA WITOTO ESP: A HISTORY OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRICTIONS	226
5.1.1. Intergenerational and Epistemological Frictions	231
5.1.2. Epistemological, Linguistic, and Gender-based Frictions in the ESP Community Negotiations	235
5.2. THE PEOPLE OF THE CENTRE’S NOTION OF ABUNDANCE	236
5.2.1. Power, Differences, and Abundance	244
5.2.2. Challenging Marginality through Spatial Appropriation, Community Organization, and Language Recovery	247
5.3. THE PEOPLE OF THE CENTRE’S LAW OF ORIGIN.....	252
5.3.1. The Law of Origin in the People of the Centre’s Inter-ethnic Negotiations	254
5.3.2. Ethnicity, History and Land Access: The Intersection of Power and Differences in the ESP.....	259
5.3.3. Indigenous, National, and International Law in the Leticia Witoto ESP	261
5.3.4. Frictions between Subjects Produced through Different Legal Knowledges.....	264
5.3.5. The Law of Origin in Friction with Human Rights	266

5.4. CONCLUSIONS	269
CHAPTER SIX	
CONCLUSIONS	275
6.1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	287
6.2. DISSERTATION'S LIMITS	293
6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	296
6.4. FUTURE RESEARCH	299
REFERENCES.....	301

INTRODUCTION

Colombia is one of the three countries in the world with the greatest number of internally displaced people (United Nations, 2013). Between 1998 and 2010, the Colombian government registered 3,110,598 displaced people – approximately 7% of the national population (SNAIPD, 2010, p. 95). Among these displaced populations, 2.5% were registered as indigenous people (p. 95).¹ Peace Brigades International (2010) suggests that 45,399 indigenous people were displaced in Colombia between 2002 and 2009 (p. 11). In view of the Colombian State's inaccurate attention to displaced indigenous people, the Colombian Constitutional Court issued Order 004 in 2009. This Order compelled the national government to lead Ethnic Safeguarding Plans (ESP) which aim to prevent the cultural and physical extinction of 34 indigenous peoples threatened by forced displacement (Colombia, 2009).² These Plans aim “to address all displaced indigenous persons and prevent further acts of forced displacement” (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 10, my translation). Although the Court defined July 2009 as the deadline to formulate and implement the ESPs, as of 2012 only three Colombian indigenous peoples (the Totoro, Cofán and Yanacona) had formulated and started implementing their ESP. Most indigenous peoples included in Order 004 are still in the pre-plan phases of presentation and assessment (Colombia, 2012).³ Several factors have hampered the ESP's implementation: administrative obstacles, geographical distance, and State bureaucratic procedures. Despite these obstacles, as of 2012, the Colombian state had extended the ESP to more than 73 indigenous peoples (Colombia, 2012, p. 8). In this thesis, I

¹ Drawing on data collected by grassroots movements, Peace Brigades International identifies the indigenous groups with highest cases of forced displacement: the Nasa (10,659 displaced people), the Awá (9,652 displaced people) and the Embera (8,484 displaced people). These indigenous groups are situated in the Colombian Western Andean region (Mesa de Trabajo Mujer y Conflicto Armado, 2009, cited in Peace Brigades International, 2010, p. 11).

² In addition to the ESP, Order 004 of 2009 compelled Colombian State institutions to formulate the Programme to Guarantee the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Affected by Displacement (PG). According to the Court, this latter Programme must focus on prevention and attention to forced displacement, and must “include a differential focus to accomplish the principle of ethnocultural diversity” (Colombia, 2009, p. 30, my translation). Just like the ESP, the PG's design must take into account Constitutional participatory mechanisms to include organizations working for indigenous peoples' rights and indigenous leaders of groups most deeply affected by forced displacement.

³ In 2010, the Ministry of Internal Affairs established the phases for all the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans: presentation (installation and information); community assessment formulation; analysis of the community assessment; Plan formulation; prior consultation on the Plan's implementation; legal register; and implementation and monitoring by State local authorities (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 33).

analyze the ESP as a State-led participatory process of rights recognition and development focused on displaced indigenous populations.

This dissertation focuses on the ESP that the Witoto indigenous people living in the tri-border Amazonian city of Leticia began to formulate in April 2012.⁴ I analyze the formulation of the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan⁵ as the encounter between two culturally different world visions of rights and development. The first vision is mainly informed by indigenous knowledges, while the Colombian State's vision is informed by international agreements on human rights, national constitutional rights, and Western views of development. I analyze this ESP as a participatory process of intercultural negotiations between the Witoto indigenous knowledges and universal and State discourses of rights and development.

Drawing on feminist post-colonial views, post-development and counter-hegemonic human rights perspectives, I see human rights and development as universal discourses. Tsing characterizes universal discourses as “knowledge that moves – mobile and mobilizing – across localities and cultures. Whether it is seen as underlying or transcending cultural difference, the mission of the universal is to form bridges, roads, and channels of circulation” (2005, p. 7). Such bridges and circulations are possible through the connection of universal discourses with local practices in historical conjunctures. To illustrate, Tsing refers to how Indonesian environmentalists reinforced their struggles by appealing to universal ideals of science and modernity that corresponded to the anti-communist regime of the Indonesian Suharto's dictatorship in the 1980s (2005, p. 8). Abstract discourses of science and modernity became universal through their engagement with local practices and beliefs in the conjuncture of 1980s and 1990s Indonesia.

As I suggest in Chapter One, the articulation between Eurocentric colonial discourses and powerful (mainly Western and masculine) positions has contributed to naturalize certain knowledges as universal. Eurocentric knowledges such as civilization, progress, and literacy have become universal through scientific and technological arguments that suppose the ability

⁴ Leticia is the capital city of the Amazonas province. Situated in the southern extreme of Colombia, Leticia is the confluence point of the Colombian, Peruvian and Brazilian borders.

⁵ Since the Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan is conducted in various geographical locations in several Colombian provinces (see Chapter Four), I must include the word Leticia to clarify which Plan I refer to.

of an unmarked knower to see, classify, and understand everything equally and from nowhere (Haraway, 1991). From the unmarked position of white men, colonizer agents have used these knowledges “in the interests of unfettered power” by discarding or devaluing local forms of knowledge (Haraway, 1991, p. 188). Articulating their Eurocentric origin as a natural position of power, colonizer agents have established binary distinctions such as civilized and barbaric peoples or rational and irrational beings. These distinctions have strengthened colonial and neo-colonial structures of power such as those experienced by the Witoto people in the late 19th and early 20th century (see Chapter One).

Universal human rights and development discourses have defined power relations on a global scale, especially since the mid-20th century. Grewal (2005) recalls that human rights have been instrumental for States, activists, and organizations who fix distinctions between Western and Third World countries. The unquestioned use of human rights as a universal category has depicted "Third World" countries and subjects as naturally 'backward' given their failure to recognize human rights (Grewal, 2005, p. 182). Further, Western States or multilateral organizations have used the discourse of human rights as a standardized index of social improvement (Grewal, 2005). Western agents have exerted political or economic pressure on countries and communities in the global South by forcing these countries to improve their human rights indexes as a condition for economic agreements or foreign investments. As a result, these discourses represent Western agents as ‘naturally’ authorized to guide the Third World in its necessary search for human rights recognition. These biased representations tend to dismiss the existence of human rights inequalities within Western societies and assume that Western views on human rights are universally applicable to all cultural groups. Consequently, unquestioned distinctions based on the universality of human rights have contributed to marginalizing subaltern subjects, producing stereotypes of these subjects, dismissing their knowledges, and reinforcing the dominant positions of Western agents (Grewal, 2005; Santos, 2002a).

Similarly, universal discourses of development have been instrumental in the production of a geopolitical order convenient to the capitalist system. Western development discourses promote standardized views on linear economic growth as a common human goal. Based on this view, Western institutions have classified the world into developed, developing and underdeveloped countries (Cowen and Sherton, 1995). Drawing on these distinctions,

development aid programs privilege Western economic concepts and practices as the natural means to produce economic growth. Most of these programs assume that local populations lack the ability to improve their current conditions. Furthermore, these programs perceive local cultures as a main obstacle to growth and development. For this reason, knowledge and technology transfer are central in development programs (Escobar, 1995). In short, assumed as the universal aspiration for all human groups, universal discourses of human rights and development have become instrumental to global exercises of power.

The Leticia Witoto ESP reflects complex relations between local and global discourses, agents, and forms of power related to human rights and development. I see this Plan as a relational process that localizes universal discourses of human rights and development among the Witoto and ten additional indigenous groups of the Leticia area. Like other global phenomena, universal discourses have local roots: they are Eurocentric discourses that can only produce globalization through localization (Santos, 1997, p. 14-15). For this reason, in analytical terms, Santos suggests, “it would be equally correct if the present situation and if our topics of research were defined in terms of localization, rather than globalization” (1997, p. 14, my translation). In the same vein, Hall refers to globalization as a process possible through negotiation with local cultures: “What we usually call the global... negotiates particular spaces, particular ethnicities, works through mobilizing particular identities and so on. So there is always dialectic, a continuous dialectic, between the local and the global” (Hall, 1998, p. 62). Instead of a homogenizing uprooted force, globalization is thus produced through continuous dialectic connections between different local and global agents, discourses, understandings, and practices. This dissertation studies the Leticia Witoto ESP in order to understand how universal discourses of human rights and development are localized in indigenous Amazonian communities. I analyze how indigenous people experience, resist, challenge, and eventually reorient globalization in their unequal and situated intercultural negotiations with universal discourses.

The Leticia Witoto

My previous experiences with the Witoto people in 2008 led me to analyze the Leticia Witoto ESP. As a professional researcher in communication, I conceived and led with other scholars a project on indigenous people’s development and communication strategies in the

Leticia area (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011). Drawing on synergetic and human development perspectives (Boisier, 2005; Sen, Rabasco and Toharia, 2000), this research project focused on participatory and culturally-based strategies through which indigenous people attempted to gain visibility and recognition among the multi-ethnic groups of indigenous people and migrants living in the Leticia area. The study acknowledged the potential of traditional practices and spaces for indigenous people to produce empowered positions from which they may engage global flows of ideas, merchandise, capital and peoples increasingly present in their territories. Throughout this dissertation, I integrate some conclusions of this study. Indeed, I conducted most of this dissertation's research activities with members of communities – such as the 11th kilometre Witoto community – who took part in the project that I led in 2008. My previous experiences with the Witoto of Leticia opened opportunities to conduct the research activities necessary to produce this dissertation.

The Witoto groups currently number approximately 8,000 people located in four Colombian provinces (Amazonas, Putumayo, Caquetá, and Meta) and in some Peruvian locations – notably Pebas, in the Ampiyacu River (Colombia, 2012). This geographical dispersion results from forced migration due to rubber exploitation that Colombian and Peruvian entrepreneurs established in their home region, the Putumayo and Caquetá interfluve (currently the northern part of the Amazonas province), between the 1880s and 1930s (see Chapter One). More recently, in the 1980s and 1990s, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas came into contact with the Witoto and other indigenous peoples of the Putumayo-Caquetá interfluve. This guerrilla group recruited indigenous youth, controlled or blocked river navigation, and disrespected indigenous sacred places (Franco, 2012, p. 99). During the 1999-2002 failed Peace Talks between the Colombian government and the FARC leaders, this guerrilla group took over the traditional territories of the People of the Centre in the Caquetá and Amazonas provinces (Franco, 2012, p. 98; Tobón, 2008, p. 47). While some indigenous people resisted the presence of the guerrillas by destroying their vehicles and machines or stealing their food, others fled their traditional territories (Franco, 2012). In order to gain protection from the State, the Witoto and other displaced indigenous peoples fled to several Amazonian and Andean locations, including the Leticia urban and suburban area.

The Witoto are one of the seven Peoples of the Centre. Data from 2012 refer to approximately 2,300 People of the Centre living in the urban and suburban areas of Leticia⁶ (AZCAITA, 2008; Colombia, 2012; Uitoto, 2012). After their first contacts with white people in the late 19th century, seven indigenous peoples of the Putumayo-Caquetá (the Witoto, Bora, Ocaina, Nonuya, Muninane, Andoque, and Miraña) forged an interethnic alliance that drew on mythic narratives about their common origin in “the Centre of the World” in La Chorrera, Amazonas (Echeverri, 1997, p. 102). Since the rubber boom period (late 19th century), the alliance of the People of the Centre has been strategic for these peoples to recover from physical and cultural devastation after several economic exploitive processes (see Chapter One). Even in the present, these peoples take up this alliance as a strategic mechanism of collective cohesion to negotiate with non-indigenous agents such as the State.

To formulate their ESP, the Witoto have extended the alliance of the People of the Centre to include the Tikuna (who are the most numerous indigenous group in the area and have occupied this territory from the 17th century), the Yagua, Cocama, and Inga,⁷ who arrived in Leticia after the 1990s mostly due to forced displacement (Huérffano Belisamón, 2010). As a result, the Leticia Witoto ESP involves at least 4,300 people of eleven indigenous groups situated in eight indigenous communities of the Leticia area. Leaders participating in this Plan attempt to influence the local, regional, and national governments to create public policies that will recognize indigenous people’s rights to land, political autonomy, and education and health care systems adapted to the cultural, economic, and other realities of these indigenous groups. Despite their historical differences, these groups attempt to reinforce themselves as a unified alliance of indigenous negotiators in relation to the State. In this thesis, I explore the role of

⁶ Although the full name of this multi-ethnic formation is the People of the Centre of the World, I abbreviate this name according to how these people refer to themselves on a daily basis. According to an unpublished Leticia Witoto ESP document, the People of the Centre in Leticia numbered approximately 2,100 in 2011 (Uitoto, 2012). The Life Plan of the Indigenous Association of the Amazonian Trapezoid refers to 511 Witoto people living in the Leticia area in 2008 (AZCAITA, 2008, p. 69).

⁷ The Leticia area is situated on the territory of the ancient Omagua, a group that became extinct as a result of contact and conflicts with Spanish and Portuguese colonizers (Goulard, 2009). In 2008, the Tikuna numbered approximately 2,426 in the Leticia suburban area, where they have been established in fluctuating ways since approximately the 17th century (AZCAITA, 2008, p. 65). The Tikuna have shared their territory with the Cocama and Yagua. The former numbered approximately 792 people and, similar to the Tikuna, are a riverine people across the tri-border Middle Amazon. The latter number approximately 300 people and share a similar location, although some Yagua communities also inhabit the north of the Amazonian Trapezoid (Arango and Sánchez, 1998; Bellier et al., 1994).

indigenous knowledges in the strategic and complex construction of these inter-ethnic negotiations in the ESP.

Suburban communities participating in the Leticia Witoto ESP live on the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, which was legally recognized as an indigenous community property in 1986 (AZCAITA, 2008). The Leticia Witoto ESP aims to benefit people established in the main communities of this reserve, situated on the 3rd (San Miguel), 6th, 7th, 9th, and 11th kilometres of the Leticia-Tarapacá road. Situated in the rural Leticia area, these indigenous settlements are near the services of the city, yet also offer displaced people a certain access to land, which helps them maintain some indigenous rural practices. For these reasons, the Tikuna-Witoto reserve has become a strategic place for indigenous people to rebuild their lives after forced displacement.

Paradoxically, although the ESP is oriented toward indigenous people's autonomy, the Colombian State controls this Plan's economic resources and conditions of implementation. In the Leticia Witoto ESP, State agents define whether or not a community initiative is accepted. The ESP compels the People of the Centre to communicate through Western codes of human rights and development, in accordance with national and international economic and legal discourses. Indigenous participants in the ESP must express their claims according to Western-based visions that may exclude the heterogeneity and complexity of their voices and positions (see Spivak, 1999, p. 6). For this reason, the ESPs are all but egalitarian relationships between indigenous and State agents.

Indigenous Knowledges, Decolonizing, and Anti-colonial Perspectives: Analytical Keys

Given the multiple connections with indigenous peoples, places, histories, and practices to share knowledge, this dissertation refers in plural to indigenous knowledges. With this plural denomination, I aim to convey how several indigenous peoples see and understand the world in multiple and differentiated ways (see Chapter Two). Also, this conceptual framework draws on work by sociologists of knowledge who speak of knowledges in plural in order to indicate the disappearance of a unified mental world (McCarthy, 1996, p. 19). This plural denomination both recognizes the heterogeneity of world visions present within indigenous knowledges and challenges hegemonic views on knowledge as a unified framework, commonly associated to dominant power positions.

Indigenous knowledges can be understood as the variety of knowledges that indigenous people produce. The Maori researcher Linda Tiwhai Smith conceives indigenous people as

the assembly of those who have witnessed, been excluded from, and have survived modernity and imperialism. They are peoples who have experienced the imperialism and colonialism of the modern historical period beginning with the Enlightenment. They remain culturally distinct, some with their native languages and belief systems still alive. They are minorities in territories and states over which they once held sovereignty. Some indigenous peoples do hold sovereignty, but of such small states that they wield little power over their own lives because they are subject to the whims and anxieties of large and powerful states. Some indigenous communities survive outside their traditional lands because they were forcibly removed from their lands and connections (Smith, 2005, p. 86).

Given their cultural differences, indigenous people have experienced modernity through exclusion. From these marginal positions, indigenous people have resisted colonial agents through practices, concepts, and claims drawn on their cultural differences. For this reason, the continuous and strategic production of difference is a core element of indigenous identities, knowledges, and struggles.

Indigenous identity or indigeneity is far from being a monolithic category. Although they are commonly seen as minorities in their own territories, indigenous people number more than 370 million individuals, representing approximately 5% of the global population in 170 independent states (see Stavenhagen, 1990, p. 2 cited in Santos, 2002, p. 240). Kincheloe and Steinbert (2008) recall that the category of indigenous conflates many different groups from North America, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and parts of Europe (p. 141). Taking into account this diversity, Smith recalls that indigenous people “carry many names and labels, being referred to as natives, indigenous, autochthonous, tribal peoples, or ethnic minorities” (2005 p. 86). Furthermore, indigenous peoples cannot be confined to community or local scales but “come together at regional and international levels to argue for rights and recognition” (2005 p. 86). Thus, indigenous peoples are diverse, demographically representative, and contemporary populations actively struggling on several geographical scales and locations.

Despite their cultural differences, indigenous groups share the experience of exclusion and subordination. From a Maori perspective, Meyer (2011) argues that indigenous groups share a “different-sameness” from which they share particular world visions: “There is a tacit understanding of life we all [indigenous people] seem to share” (p. 11). “Different-sameness” sets the bases for indigenous groups to establish the connections and worldviews necessary to

overcome marginalization. To illustrate, in Latin America, multiple indigenous people call themselves as *indigenas* – opposed to *indio* – in order to convey the necessary transformation of historical hegemonic structures (Perez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011, p. 289). *Indigena* is a politically charged signifier that conveys the struggle of multiple Latin American groups sharing experiences of subjugation and struggles for rights recognition. Similarly, in Africa, “indigeneity is linked to the possession of space, land and language, and the pursuit of politics and economics” (Dei, 2000, p. 126). Thus, indigeneity is a political form of identity produced from shared marginal positions. Indigeneity encompasses distinct but interconnected cultural, linguistic, political, territorial, and economic claims for equality and recognition.

If power relations define indigeneity, power is also central to indigenous knowledges. Decolonizing and anti-colonial perspectives directly connect indigenous knowledges to indigenous people’s survival as culturally distinct groups in spite of their continuous contact with modernity. In Smith’s view,

Our [indigenous people’s] survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing, we had to predict, to learn and reflect, we had to preserve and protect, we had to defend and attack, we had to be mobile, we had to have social systems which enabled us to do these things. We still have to do these things (1999, p. 13).

In other words, indigenous knowledges are not only esoteric or spiritual, but also materially connected to the daily struggles for collective survival. From a decolonizing perspective, Briggs and Sharp (2004) argue that “indigenous knowledge is not simply about language and expression, but about these material conditions through which people must survive” (p. 674). For their part, Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg define indigenous knowledges as “[the] traditional norms and social values... [and the] mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate people’s way of living and making sense of their world” (2000 p. 6). Indigenous knowledges concern people’s daily lives, are influenced by indigenous groups’ material living conditions, and guide these groups’ ways of living.

The study of indigenous knowledges is politically linked to the goal of identifying alternative understandings of the world. Indigenous knowledges reflect the “power of individual and collective agency for change” and the richness of “oral, visual, textual, political and material resistances of colonial groups” (Dei, 2000, p. 117). Indigenous knowledges celebrate the diverse systems of thought and means of expression through which indigenous

people theorize and conceptualize their social and natural worlds. These knowledge systems are neither folkloric nor exotic; they are reflections of local logics through which indigenous people attempt to understand and transform their historical marginalization.

Since indigenous knowledges are produced within unequal power relations, they challenge hegemonic and exclusionary worldviews. Anti-colonial perspectives identify, describe, recognize, and value “other valid ways of knowing in order to destabilize colonial imperialist projects” (Dei, 2000, p. 117-118). From this perspective, “local peoples must be seen as key players in the construction of knowledge about their societies” (p. 116). In short, the anti-colonial emphasis on indigenous knowledges recognizes alternative world views, challenges dominant forms of knowledge, and confers relevant positions to local subjects as agents of social transformation.

This dissertation applies these decolonizing and anti-colonial perspectives to describe the versions of human rights and development that the People of the Centre produce, renew, and mobilize through the Leticia Witoto ESP. Through the use of oral narratives, rituals, and cultural concepts, these indigenous knowledges reflect their culturally situated logical systems. This dissertation privileges the study of indigenous knowledges and acknowledges their intrinsic connection to local cultures. McCarthy uses a sociological approach to knowledge, stating that “knowledge is best conceived and studied as culture, and the various types of social knowledges communicate and signal social meanings” (1996, p. 1). This author conceives of knowledges as “powerful cultural forms” that “also constitute meanings and create entirely new objects and social practices” (p. 1). For McCarthy, “*Knowledge refers to any and every set of ideas accepted by one or another social group or society of people, ideas pertaining to what they accept as real*” (1996, p. 2, original emphasis). Thus, knowledge is the framework that allows individuals or groups to understand, create and act in their realities. As such, “reality is as variable as the knowledge that people have about it. We have no ‘reality’ at all, unless we have knowledge to tell us about it” (1996, p. 2). Knowledge shapes the understandings and actions of groups in the world.

Harmaan (2007) applies an anthropological linguistic viewpoint to establish that knowledge requires a social network and a frame of beliefs and values to evolve (2007, p. 118). From this perspective, cultures are constituted by knowledge systems logically interconnected through meanings that guide social and individual actions. Knowledges are

produced within cultures and circulate through them. In the same vein, McCarthy draws on critical ethnographic approaches and cultural studies to define culture as webs of signification that human beings produce in order to support their lives (Geertz, 1973, cited in McCarthy, 1996). Culture thus produces social realities:

‘Cultural practice’ and ‘cultural production’... are not simply derived from an otherwise constituted social order but are themselves major elements in its constitution... culture [is] the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored (Williams, 1981, pp. 12-13, cited in McCarthy, 1996, p. 24).

Accordingly, social actions are primarily symbolic. Culture results from how human beings perceive themselves, their activities, and their worlds. Symbols that circulate within culture produce logics realized, tested, and confirmed in and through material actions: “Without symbols and ideas ‘material production’ never amounts to anything at all. It never even gets off the ground. It never becomes filled with life, energy, interest, hope, and greed” (McCarthy, 1996, p. 21). These symbols guide individuals’ actions and interpretations of their daily life challenges. Knowledge produces a cultural context of meanings that shapes the mental maps, guides individual and collective actions, and helps individuals and groups to act within their social and material realities.

My analysis focuses on indigenous knowledges, exploring the concepts, guides and logical systems of thought used by indigenous people in their negotiations with concepts assumed to be universal. These knowledges are produced within a particular cultural context of meanings. They are logically interrelated across world views that reflect the specific ways through which indigenous people understand and take a position within their own realities. Since these world views are made of knowledge that circulates through culture (e.g., narratives, rituals, dances, and concepts), cultural manifestations are also manifestations of indigenous knowledges.

Whereas culture can be understood as the context of meanings where knowledge is produced and put into circulation, epistemology refers to philosophical reflections on knowledge. This dissertation situates the ESP as an encounter between distinct epistemologies influenced by different cultural contexts. Anti-colonial and decolonizing perspectives suggest that epistemologies constitute a philosophy or a theory of knowledge (Meyer, 2011; Marglin, 1990). Anti-colonial indigenous authors describe epistemologies by asking the following types

of questions: What is knowledge? What is the process of its acquisition? What is its social and cultural meaning? (Meyer, 2011). Decolonizing perspectives suggest that each cultural system has its own epistemology (Marglin, 1990). Accordingly, every culture has rules for producing and sharing knowledge, distinctive ways to define what counts as knowledge, and political rules that govern relationships between group members and any particular knowledge system (Marglin, 1990, p. 24). To illustrate, the Mayan culture integrates science, philosophy, and spirituality within its epistemology (García Ixmatá, 2010, p. 228). This holistic epistemology is coherent with a cultural vision where all elements of reality are logically interconnected. Mayan knowledge about life “begins by understanding that everything has life and purpose, relationships, compatibilities and complementarities, and other natural aspects that grant it vitality” (García Ixmatá, 2010, p. 229). The emphasis of Mayan systems of knowledge on mathematical interconnections between different elements of the world is one example of this holistic epistemology (García Ixmatá, 2010). Epistemologies are thus cultural constructs evident in world views, concepts, criteria, and reflections on what knowledge is and how groups put knowledge into practice.

Since all knowledge depends on the context, values, and groups that generate it, there is no universal knowledge, no epistemology “above history,” and no “context-free” truths (Scheurich and Young, 1997). Rather, “different social groups, races, cultures, societies, or civilizations evolve different epistemologies, each of which reflects the social history of that group, race, culture, society, or civilization” (Scheurich and Young, 1997, p. 8). Thus, concepts, paradigms, analytical frameworks, and epistemologies derive from cultural baggage and historical contexts that shape intellectual work (Stanfield, 1994, cited in Scheurich and Young 1997, p. 8). Cultural and historical contexts largely circumscribe how groups create, define, and validate their social knowledges (Stanfield, 1985, p. 388, cited in Scheurich and Young 1997, p. 8).

Accordingly, although inextricably interwoven, culture, knowledge, and epistemologies are different concepts. The first refers to the systems of signification through which social order is produced. Knowledge refers to the socially constructed and accepted categories and practices used to understand and act upon reality. Finally, epistemologies are theoretical reflections on what counts as knowledge and how it is applied. Culture is the logical system

through which knowledge is produced and circulated – a system that influences the production of specific epistemological views.

This dissertation argues that encounters between indigenous people and human rights and development agents and discourses are encounters between different epistemologies produced within different cultural systems. I propose theoretical and methodological strategies to recognize and value these epistemological differences. Furthermore, I analyze how indigenous epistemologies attempt to challenge and enrich dominant views on human rights and development. This dissertation acknowledges indigenous epistemological differences as the basis for more egalitarian, reciprocal, and respectful negotiations between indigenous people and agents influenced by global discourses and forces.

Research Questions and Goals

I frame my study of the Leticia Witoto ESP through one preliminary question: How do indigenous people appropriate universal discourses of human rights and development in order to overcome their historical positions of marginalization? I answer this question in part with reference to the indigenous notions of abundance and the law of origin. The former articulates gender and generational roles, power positions, and collectively shared responsibilities to ensure a group's survival (see Chapters Two and Five). The latter constitutes a form of indigenous legislative knowledge that connects indigenous people's identity with their territory, history, and principles necessary to their survival as culturally distinct groups (see Chapters Two and Five). I study power positions produced by the People of the Centre through the re-articulation and use of these notions in their negotiation with universal discourses of human rights and development. On the one hand, I argue that this appropriation process has produced new forms of indigenous leadership and embryonic forms of indigenous organizations and networks. On the other hand, these appropriations may have produced or intensified inequalities among the ESP team members.

The dissertation goals are three-fold. First, this dissertation analyzes how universal discourses of human rights and development are localized in specific indigenous Amazonian contexts that have been historically connected to global relations of power. I identify different power and knowledge positions and tactics that indigenous people produce and exert in such localization processes. Second, I analyze how indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto

ESP use their knowledges such as the notion of abundance and the law of origin to understand, appropriate, and benefit from their contact with human rights and development. Third, I outline how these forms of power-knowledge may challenge and eventually complement discourses commonly assumed to be universally beneficial for all cultural groups. I argue that indigenous knowledges and power positions produced or reactivated through these frictions may contribute to plural, inclusive, and situated concepts and practices of human rights and development. Inclusive policies on human rights and development would both acknowledge and deal with multiple inequalities on the global scale, and respect the values and practices of local groups (see Santos, 1997, p. 13). My ultimate goal is to explore how negotiations that localize universal discourses may lead to more inclusive and fair practices of human rights and development for indigenous people.

I analyze these intercultural negotiations through the notion of friction, which refers to the complex, unequal, and changing character of encounters across difference (Tsing, 2005). Tsing (2005) uses friction to explain how “cultures are continually co-produced in the interactions.” This author describes friction as

the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference. . . . A study of global connections shows the grip of encounter: friction. A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick. As a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power (Tsing, 2005, p. 4-5).

The notion of friction allows me to chart power positions, concepts, practices, and subjects that emerge from unequal connections between local and global knowledges. The notion of friction provides insights into the ways in which culturally distinct groups negotiate with one another in contemporary globalization processes. Through the notion of friction, I propose to illustrate the power tactics and positions (e.g., community cohesion, visibility, identity reinforcement, leadership) and disempowerment outcomes (e.g., rivalries and new forms of marginality) that emerge from unequal encounters between indigenous knowledges and human rights and development discourses, agents, and procedures. Through the use of frictions as an analytical category, I acknowledge that human rights and development, as other universals, do not work equally, everywhere. Rather, in spite of their alleged universal character, human rights and development can be challenged, re-articulated, and even complemented by specific indigenous understandings and practices.

Research Methodology

I propose to reach these goals through an ethnographic case study based on indigenous decolonizing perspectives. I compiled this dissertation's data through documentary analysis and research relations established with indigenous leaders in two periods of fieldwork conducted in 2011 and 2012. I analyzed the content of the main documents that regulate the ESP. Through this content analysis, I aim to identify the power inequalities that the Colombian Constitutional Court and the State may create through their particular uses of human rights and development universal discourses. Furthermore, during my fieldwork, I contacted research participants, conducted observations, interviews and workshops, and collected documents to complement my observations (see Chapter Three). This ethnographic method allowed me to focus on how indigenous agents construct and express their own meanings about their experiences in the Leticia Witoto ESP assessment phase (Geertz, 1986). Further, decolonizing perspectives also led me to reflect on the multiple connections and potentialities of indigenous research and power (Overing, 2006; Smith, 1999; 2005). From these methodological perspectives, this dissertation acknowledges the nature of research as a human activity that can exert power on research participants, leads researchers to experience power relations existent in the fieldwork, and may contribute to indigenous people's struggles.

This conscious meditation on the connection between research and power leads me to challenge my own position as researcher. I position myself as a *mestizo* researcher formed according to the Colombian mainstream culture and open to learning from indigenous people. Learning from cultural groups who continue with some of their practices, beliefs, and goals despite historical marginalization can alert researchers to the need for research engaged with subaltern struggles for equality. Drawing on critical ethnographic approaches, I maintain a self-reflexive attitude toward my position and limits as researcher. From these positions, I aim to analyze the everyday lives and narratives of 'ordinary' people (Overing, 2006, p. 15). I see these practices and narratives as "counter-stories": powerful forms of resistance that can offer insights into indigenous people's reality from the viewpoint of indigenous alternative concepts, narratives, and practices (Smith, 1999, p. 2). These positions attempt to produce situated, limited, non-generalizable, and contextually produced knowledge on indigenous people's power relations.

This dissertation can strengthen the work of human rights and development researchers and practitioners, and of indigenous and other subaltern subjects engaged in counter-hegemonic struggles. Human rights and development practitioners can learn the contemporary value of indigenous people and knowledges to envision more culturally inclusive and locally connected programs. Drawing on this dissertation, these practitioners can also learn methodologies to construct more inclusive relationships. Marginalized subjects can learn from the People of the Centre that, since inequalities circulate on several geographical scales, possibilities exist to collectively imagine and practice inclusion through global intercultural connections. My anti-colonial and decolonizing focus on the continuous and changing production of power relations aims to challenge inequalities by understanding them, making them visible, and valuing subaltern people's strategies to overcome marginalization.

Theoretical Approaches

I draw on several critical subaltern perspectives on human rights and development: counter-hegemonic subaltern studies on human rights, post-colonial theory, cultural studies, Foucauldian critiques of human rights discourses, post-development, and feminist critics to development and globalization. These perspectives share a common interest in the agency of indigenous people, women, sexual minorities, and other disenfranchised subjects who attempt to challenge global unequal relations. These subaltern perspectives focus on the forms of power — resistance practices, networks, forms of consciousness, local knowledges — that emerge from such negotiations. These approaches emphasize the historical, situated, incomplete, and continuously constructed character of human rights and development in order to question their universality and to explore possibilities to complement them. From these subaltern perspectives, I analyze the ESP as a Plan that may challenge and, eventually, re-articulate universal discourses according to indigenous worldviews, concepts, and practices. This analysis seeks to explore more inclusive understandings of human rights and development according to the specific conditions of local cultural groups.

Contribution of this Dissertation to Research in Communication

This dissertation is situated in the fields of intercultural communication and communication for development and social change. Intercultural communication focuses on

identity negotiation, communication networks, cultural adjustment, intercultural reconstruction of meanings, localization of global discourses, and encounters with otherness (Barnett and Lee, 2002; Gudykunst, 2002; Hsab and Stoiciu, 2011; Servaes and Lie, 2008). On the other hand, communication for development and social change focuses on the multiple structures and discourses involved in processes that intervene in people's daily lives, and on the organizational mechanisms through which subjects produce transformations within power structures (Wilkins, 2000; Huesca, 2000). This thesis contributes to these interdisciplinary fields through an exploration of epistemological differences between culturally distinct groups who participate in a process of rights recognition related to development concepts and practices.

Few communication scholars have focused on epistemological differences between culturally distinct groups. Recent research in intercultural and development communication focuses on topics such as: media access (Roughi, 2007; Soidze, 2006); communication practices related to media in intercultural contexts (Kaba, 2006); alternative media (Mailloux Beique, 2006); power relations in intercultural partnerships (Corriveau, 2008; Navarro-Flores, 2006); and intercultural communication in humanitarian organizations (Matte, 2007; Roughi, 2007). Other PhD researchers in communication have explored topics related to this dissertation such as tensions between modern and traditional discourses and practices in Venezuela, Senegal, and Peru (Kane, 2008; Méloche, 2007; Nahon-Serfaty, 2005). These studies focus on health programs or on the ethics of development in intercultural interventions. In Colombia, some scholars have thoroughly documented the complexity of intercultural communication and development processes, particularly in contexts affected by the internal armed conflict (Cadavid, 2005; Cadavid, Fayad, Casadiegos, and Luna, 2007; Rueda Barrios, 2006). Importantly, Cadavid and Rueda Barrios' research explores the role of participatory communication strategies in the social reintegration of displaced people after traumatic experiences of violence in the regions of Montes de María and Magdalena Medio. Despite the richness of these studies, the role of knowledge differences in intercultural encounters has rarely been addressed.

Furthermore, the anthropology of human rights has widely contributed to the critical analysis of intercultural relations. Scholars in this field have explored topics such as human rights and difference (Turner, 1997); the role of Western human rights values in Asian

contexts of tyranny (Aung-Thwin, 2002; Shi-Xu, 2012); cultural relativism versus feminist universal claims (Nayak, 2013); and tensions between universal human rights and customary laws in patriarchal practices that affect African women (Hellum, 1998). In short, a number of scholars have explored the complex encounters between the universalism of human rights and marginalized subjects. Several Latin American scholars have also addressed these complexities by exploring the intercultural encounters between human rights discourses and indigenous peoples (Stavenhagen, 2003; Zambrano, 2003; Gómez, 1995; Krotz, 2004). For example, drawing on research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, Krotz identifies a lack of knowledge about how indigenous people conceive the notion of human rights. This author raises the need for research making visible indigenous principles of human coexistence that may contribute to greater social justice. Krotz also warns about the need to rethink more inclusive means to research, disseminate, and produce social change by using such indigenous principles within institutional plans and projects, including development programs (Krotz, 2004, p. 80; 81). This dissertation contributes to answering to some of the questions that Krotz proposes.

This dissertation aims to enrich these fields with a detailed focus on the cultural epistemological logics that indigenous people recreate and mobilize in their encounters with the discourses and practices of human rights and development. I identify the epistemological, ontological and axiological connections that indigenous people produce in such encounters in order to ensure their physical and cultural survival (see Chapters Two and Five). I explore the potential of indigenous knowledges to produce culturally situated and inclusive practices that may lead to more inclusive positions for indigenous groups and contribute to more fair practices between indigenous and non-indigenous agents and institutions.

I propose to achieve this contribution through a multi-scalar analysis of power relations related to development and human rights. I analyze intercultural relations that reflect the influence of global capitalist structures and discourses on the People of the Centre's territories, practices, and communities (see Chapter One). To illustrate, Chapter Four provides a documentary and ethnographic macro-analysis of the ways in which human rights and development influence unequal relations of power and knowledge in the ESP's formulation on the national scale. Furthermore, Chapter Five details how indigenous communities negotiate with local, regional, national, and global agents and discourses to formulate this Plan in the

Leticia area. This analysis provides insights into the ways that power circulates, is reproduced, and negotiated in global and local structures. Thus, I study intercultural and development communication from the viewpoint of the mutually constitutive character of local and global scales (Mohanty, 2003; Dirlik, 1996).

My analysis privileges indigenous people's points of view. I describe negotiation tactics that may produce new forms of leadership, shared consciousness, strategies of commonality, and forms of organization among the People of the Centre. Drawing on the power of research through representation (Smith, 1999), I contribute to understanding intercultural and development communication as a politically engaged field connected with subaltern subjects' political, cultural, and economic struggles.

My case study reflects how these claims are situated in the specific conditions of a multi-ethnic Amazonian indigenous group affected by forced displacement. While migration or refugee movements have drawn the attention of several researchers who study globalization (see for instance Dembour, 2011; Malkki, 1997), the phenomenon of displacement – notably indigenous displacement – has been rarely treated in intercultural and development communication. On an international level, studies focus on internal displacement related to natural catastrophes or economic processes of resettlement (Sastry, 2014; Fujiwara, 2013). Other scholars focus on the production of leadership during or after the experience of internal displacement caused by war (Bode, 2014). These topics are also addressed from economic perspectives such as human development indexes in Sudan, food security in South Sudan, the economic impact of forced migration, and some experiences of international cooperation with displaced people in Colombia (Klassen, 2011; Ruiz, 2013; Sudan Country Review, 2011). However, apart from the conditions of disability among displaced people in some refugee camps (Mirza, 2011), the cultural specificities of displaced populations are less documented in research with internal displaced people.

In Colombia, in addition to the research mentioned above (Cadavid, 2005; Rueda Barrios, 2006), scholars address internal displacement from the viewpoint of State legislation (Fadnes and Horst, 2009). Other studies reconstruct lessons from the Colombian experience on migration and violence and apply them to the whole region of the Americas (Salcedo, 2013). These scholars agree on the urgent need for making visible the impact of forced displacement in Colombia on an international scale. For her part, Moulin (2009) analyzes how displaced

indigenous and non-indigenous people create the meanings of borders in the bi-national Amazonian cities of Leticia and Tabatinga. Moulin's work provides insights into the ways that displaced Amazonian people symbolically appropriate this tri-border zone.

My dissertation addresses some complexities of forced displacement among indigenous people. I document how an intercultural negotiation (the ESP) influences identity and ethnic negotiations within the multi-ethnic alliance of the People of the Centre. I explore how the experience of being an indigenous and displaced person influences the possibilities to negotiate with State institutions related to human rights and development universal discourses. I detail such specific experiences through a focus on several axes of differentiation such as ethnic, gender, and generational belonging (see Chapters Four and Five). I argue that these processes of negotiation may lead indigenous people situated in disadvantageous power positions to overcome or intensify their current marginalization.

The tri-border Amazonian context is relevant to intercultural communication and development studies in globalization as it reflects several contemporary global complexities. The People of the Centre are situated in the Amazon, a region geopolitically strategic to global conservation and access to resources (see Chapter One). Furthermore, since the 19th century, this region has been intensely connected to power structures of global trade and resource exploitation (see Chapter One). These groups also experience the effects one of the oldest internal armed conflicts in the world (the Colombian State-guerrillas conflict). The origin of this conflict can be traced to 1948, when liberal and conservative parties started a bloody struggle of mutual political persecution. This struggle gave birth to several guerrilla leftist groups (the FARC and ELN in 1950s, the M-19 in the 1970s, and the EPL in the 1980s) and to multiple paramilitary groups (the Chulavitas in the 1950s and the AUC in the 1980s and 1990s). In more recent decades, these conflicts have been exacerbated given the influence of drug-dealers and the association of some of these armed agents (notably the paramilitary forces) with the national army. The Colombian civilian population, including indigenous people, has remained either a spectator or victim of this conflict (see Alape, 1985; Guzmán Campos, Fals-Borda, and Umaña Luna, 2005).

This dissertation explores how subjects who experience multiple and historical forms of marginalization appropriate universal discourses in order to experience modernity and globalization from more egalitarian positions. For this reason, this dissertation studies

intercultural development communication in the context of global relations. I chart counter-hegemonic forms of power through which indigenous people attempt to challenge globalization from below – that is, from the marginal positions that colonial structures have imposed on them through global power relations.

My analysis of articulations between human rights and development constitutes an additional contribution to intercultural and development communication. I study these articulations through rights approaches to development (see Chapters Two and Four). I identify the Constitutional Court's discourses and State measures that promote predominantly Western development views as a right to be applied to all cultures without distinction. These views and measures may affect indigenous people's autonomy to define their own goals and mechanisms of material improvement according to their own cultures. Discussing the right to development among indigenous people is highly relevant at this time, one year before the evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals (2015), the main program that has promoted development as a right on a global scale (Cox, 2009). This dissertation contributes to such debates from indigenous people's experiences of negotiation within a Plan that articulates human rights and development.

My dissertation's focus on power and difference represents another contribution to these communication fields. This dissertation studies the constant production of differences as a strategy to overcome marginalization from multiple power positions. I argue that indigenous people rearticulate or intensify their identity differences through negotiations with human rights and development discourses and agents in the ESP. Since these differences involve strategic practices of recognition and visibility, power becomes a central topic in intercultural and development communication. I explore how new differences and distinctions (e.g., multi-ethnic identities, indigeneity based upon different histories of displacement, new forms of leadership) produced in these negotiations may challenge, enrich and reorient universal discourses that shape global relations. This analysis allows me to understand intercultural communication not only as the analysis of encounters between culturally distinct groups, but as a process that can influence the strategic production of ethnic, gender or generational differences in such encounters.

Dissertation structure

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. *Chapter One* introduces some preliminary key concepts and reconstructs four historical periods starting in the colonial period and ending in the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP). I explore how historical power and knowledge relations have influenced the positions from which the Leticia Witoto people formulate the ESP. I describe the tri-border Middle Amazon as a regional space unequally connected to global flows of capital, discourses, ideas, and exploitive agents. These unequal connections result from articulations between colonial positions of power and universal discourses of civilization, progress, civilization, human rights, and development. These inequalities influence the conditions of the Leticia area and the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, where the People of the Centre conduct their ESP. The Chapter also clarifies some cultural characteristics of the People of the Centre as a multi-ethnic regional agent historically produced with strategic purposes.

Chapter Two introduces the dissertation's main analytical concepts and theoretical approaches. I start by situating this PhD research in the fields of intercultural and development communication. I contribute to such a field from anti-colonial, Foucauldian, post-colonial, counter-hegemonic and post-development perspectives. Indigenous anti-colonial perspectives allow me to discuss the situated character of indigenous knowledges, their connection with power and identity processes, and possibilities for balanced dialogues between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses (Castellano, 2000; Dei, 2000; Dei et al., 2000; Meyer, 2011; Haraway, 1991). I also explore the complex connections between indigenous knowledges, identities, and power from anthropological and cultural studies perspectives (Hall and Du Gay, 1996; Grossberg, 1992; Barth, 1995; Jenkins, 1994; Weber, 1995). From Foucauldian perspectives, I refer to the circulatory character of power, its articulations with knowledge in discourses, and its ability to produce subjects (Foucault, 1980a; 1980b; 1980c; 1982; Foucault and Gordon, 1980). From a post-colonial perspective, I refer to grounded forms of power such as resistance, empowerment, and the reinforcement of identity (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Malkki, 1997; Melkote, 2000). From critical feminist and subaltern perspectives on human rights, I establish the need to understand how subaltern subjects have appropriated and recreated these discourses in counter-globalization movements (Fraser, 2009;

Santos, 2002; Santos and Rodríguez Garavito, 2005). I also refer to critical approaches that see human rights as incomplete discourses problematically connected with Western, class, and gendered positions of power (Brown, 1995; Dembour, 2010; 2012; Ishay, 2004). Finally, drawing on post-development, feminist critiques to development and critical development studies, I introduce my approaches to understand subaltern forms of agency and knowledge within the intercultural negotiations in question.

In *Chapter Three*, I introduce my methodological approach. I narrate the processes through which I developed my research questions, positions and techniques according to power relations the fieldwork. I also analyze possibilities for situated ethics constructed according to indigenous understandings of respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. I introduce my own position as researcher in order to acknowledge this ethnographic research as a limited representation influenced by my relations in the fieldwork and my constraints in the analysis phase. I argue that this dissertation not only studies but emerges from intercultural frictions between indigenous people's practices and my institutional practices of research. I conclude by reflecting on the relevance of indigenous research to strengthen subaltern struggles against marginality. This Chapter proposes a lived and situated reflection on the powerful significance of research with indigenous people.

Chapters *Four* and *Five* comprehend the dissertation's analytical section. *Chapter Four* analyzes the ESP legal framework according to universal discourses of human rights and development. Through content analysis, I unveil how universal human rights discourses produce unequal conditions of negotiation for indigenous peoples in the ESP. I problematize the ways that these Plans have promoted "low-intensity" democracy models that have merely focused on minimal political rights and produced the displaced indigenous subjects according to State technical and exclusionary practices disconnected from their local realities. I also introduce some limits and contradictions of modernization paradigm of development, rights-based approaches to development, and participatory development. I argue that this legal framework articulates the discourses of human rights and development in ways that lead the State to provide the indigenous displaced people with some immediate relief, while leaving the structural causes of displacement untouched.

Chapter Five analyzes the People of the Centre's notions of abundance and the law of origin. I analyze the role of these two indigenous concepts on two negotiation levels: first,

inter-ethnic negotiations between indigenous people who participate in the Leticia Witoto ESP; second, their negotiations with State knowledges, concepts, and agents. At the inter-ethnic negotiation level, the People of the Centre use the notions of abundance and the law of origin to produce cohesive mechanisms and spiritual and practical engagements between members of eleven indigenous groups taking part in this Plan. I also analyze how the notion of abundance has deepened and formalized new forms of exclusion for some participants in this Plan – namely women and elders. At the second negotiation level, the People of the Centre connect the law of origin with international law in order to demand the State’s recognition of their right to cultural differences. I analyze the production of these empowering and disempowering positions according to differences of gender, generation, historical experiences of displacement, ethnic belonging, and access to land. The analysis aims to demonstrate how power circulates and reproduces inequalities in negotiations between local agents and universal discourses, even if the latter discourses are commonly rooted in a quest for social justice and equality. This chapter also discusses some of my research results in relation to the main theoretical approaches. I outline how the notion of abundance challenges power positions produced through Western paradigms of development and how the law of origin may challenge individualistic and homogenizing views on rights. These challenging positions offer clues for rearticulating universal discourses in more inclusive and egalitarian ways that recognize indigenous people’s rights to cultural differences.

I conclude in *Chapter Six* with the question: What can scholars and practitioners learn from indigenous people’s negotiations with human rights and development? I describe how this thesis contributes to understand indigenous subjects’ agency within their unequal negotiations with human rights and development agents, concepts, and procedures. I propose to understand human rights as a methodological domain able to identify connections between situated knowledges, languages, and practices on human dignity. Similarly, I suggest some recommendations to avoid inequalities and positions of disempowerment produced through decontextualized programs of development in the studied area. I also outline new possibilities to strengthen the ESP as an embryonic experience of resistance that can potentially transform inequalities. Finally, I introduce the research interests that I constructed through this dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE

UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES AND SCALES OF POWER IN THE TRI-BORDER MIDDLE AMAZON

This chapter introduces the geographical and historical context and the relations and positions of power from which the People of the Centre create the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP). I understand this Plan as a strategic negotiation in which indigenous people aim to produce power within historical power relations established since the colonial period. This chapter describes such historical relations and positions through the articulation between universal discourses and specific positions and scales of power. I aim to demonstrate how global, national, and regional agents have articulated universal discourses such as progress, civilization, human rights, and development to unquestioned positions of power. From these positions, political, economic, and religious agents have historically produced the Amazon either as a transnational region connected to the global market or as a national space that must be “civilized,” “developed,” or incorporated into international or Andean economic and legal systems. These articulations have authorized violent practices to the detriment of local indigenous agents, knowledges, and practices. The chapter also refers to indigenous forms of resistance within these historical power relations. I refer in particular to the emergence of the alliance of the People of the Centre, to which the Leticia Witoto ESP team members belong. I characterize this alliance as an interethnic construction that emerges from seven indigenous people’s historical resistance against marginalization – an indigenous articulation of power and knowledge that produced indigenous subjects as regional agents.

I start this chapter by defining key concepts such as universal discourses, scales and articulation. Then, I introduce some geographical elements to understand the historical contexts in question. Finally, I analyze four historical periods that have influenced the current positions of the Leticia Witoto ESP team in their negotiations with the Colombian State. I define this periodization according to historical, anthropological, and communicational research conducted in the region (Barbosa Mendoza, 2006; Echeverri, 1997; Franco, 2012; Micarelli, 2003; Nieto, 2006; Pineda Camacho, 2000; Stanfield, 1998; Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011; Zárate Botía, 2008). Furthermore, I rely upon oral histories that I collected through interviews and observations during my ethnographic

work in 2012.⁸ I conclude with some specific research questions that guide this dissertation. The chapter introduces the Leticia Witoto ESP as a case study to understand how global forces and discourses localize in specific contexts leading indigenous people to particular positions of negotiation with human rights and development.

1.1. KEY CONCEPTS USED TO FRAME THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

I understand universal discourses through their connections with power positions. Drawing on Foucault, Hall refers to discourse as the production of knowledge through language. Discourse defines and produces the objects that we know by producing a context where some categories become meaningful (Foucault, 1972, quoted in Hall, 1997, pp. 44-45). Discourse “governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about” (Hall, 1997, p. 44). As a result, discourse creates disciplinary regimes where some objects and practices are accepted while others are excluded. Discourses contribute to producing normative contexts in which some objects and practices achieve meaning and are hierarchically classified according to values that this meaning regulates.

These forms of normativity and hierarchy are accentuated when a discourse is assumed to be universal. From a critical feminist viewpoint, Haraway sees universal discourses as a form of relative knowledge “promising *vision from everywhere* and nowhere *equally and fully*” (1991, p. 191, my emphasis). This promise is possible through a form of relativist knowledge that reproduces the viewpoint of “Man and White,” whose unmarked position “claims the power to see and not to be seen, to represent while escaping representation” (Haraway, 1991, p. 188). Accordingly, universal discourses can be seen as abstract forms of knowledge articulated with specific and unmarked positions of power. I refer here to articulation in the cultural studies’ sense as the “the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions” (Hall, 1996, p. 142). Articulations are made of different elements that are not necessarily related – for instance, European ideas and economic progress or universal and human rights. Given their contingent and non-essential connection, articulations “can be potentially transformed,” that is, re-articulated

⁸ I collected most of the oral testimonies introduced in this chapter in a meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP council of knowledgeable elders in September 2012. Led by the ESP group of indigenous professionals, the meeting focused on the causes and cultural consequences of forced displacement for the People of the Centre. Both the elder and professional groups authorized me to participate in and record this meeting.

(Hall, 1996, p.142). Slack establishes articulation as a theory that understands the contexts in which particular connections are made in order to create and maintain consensus or coordinated interests (Grossberg, 1994, p. 4, cited in Slack, 1996, p. 114). Since groups emotionally invest in the connections that they create, articulations “enable ideological relations to be internalized, and consequently naturalized” (Grossberg, 1992, p. 83). The concept of articulation is useful to understand how certain connections empower some agents to act according to the meaning they confer on two distinct elements under specific conditions (Hall, 1996, 142).

In colonial contexts, the articulation between some Eurocentric discourses and scientific rhetoric has been crucial to naturalize distinctions between European knowledges (assumed as the only valid form of civilization) and indigenous knowledges. The connection between universal discourses and scientific rhetoric has contributed to what Foucault calls a “society of *normalisation*” in which people see domination as normally accepted and taken for granted (1980, p. 207). Binary distinctions between humanity and nature have been instrumental to processes of colonization (Suchet, 2002). The mobilization of universal discourses through statistics, methods of observation, indexes, indicators, and other “apparatuses of control” has naturalized or normalized binary relations of power (Foucault, 1980a, p. 102). Through these “subtle mechanisms” power has evolved and circulated through particular forms and apparatuses of knowledge (1980a, p. 102). As a result, universal discourses such as civilization and progress articulated to scientific claims have been crucial in the classification of indigenous or feminine knowledges as inadequate or insufficient and have subjugated these knowledges given their spiritual and non-Western character and their radically different epistemological grounding (see Spivak, 1994, p. 14). In this dissertation, I use the concept of articulation to provide insights into connections between human rights, development, and knowledge assumed as superior given their Eurocentric origin.

In this chapter, I describe how some historical agents have connected Western ideas such as progress, civilization, development, or human rights to unmarked Eurocentric positions of power. These articulations have favoured the naturalization of physical and symbolic forms of violence experienced by the Leticia Witoto ESP team members. Further, this chapter identifies the specific positions from which indigenous people have resisted these articulations of power.

Cowen and Shenton (1995) trace the emergence of the idea of progress as the main goal of humanity in the 19th century. This idea was connected to the ideal of “prosperity and growth of all” (Cowen and Shenton, 1995, p. 32). On behalf of such prosperity, the 19th-century Saint-Simonian and Positivist promoters of ‘progress’ saw industrialization as a harmful and critical, but a “necessary and indispensable” epoch in which “destroying ‘antiquated’ forms facilitates the emergence of ‘better forms’”(Iggers, 1972: 28, quoted in Cowen and Shenton, 1995, p. 33). The articulation of industrialization with prosperity naturalized the destruction of tradition, seen as one main obstacle to progress.

Several private and State agents have mobilized similar articulations of progress and civilization in the Middle Amazon. To illustrate, Hispanic and Andean colonizers guided their relation with the Amazon through discourses of civilization drawn from binary distinctions between human and nature. Santos-Granero (2002) reconstructs opposing narratives of wilderness and civilization that historically created unquestioned positions of power from which European agents or their Andean inheritors felt authorized to determine the fate of the Amazonian region. Some of these narratives belong to mid-19th century *mestizo*⁹ technical elites that referred to the Amazon’s need for colonization by the “civilized man.” Santos-Granero refers to a Peruvian engineer’s letter (whose last name is Capelo) sent to his government suggesting possibilities for progress in the Amazon:

If the unfortunate savage, who ignores and lacks so many things, can ensure his subsistence, and that of his family, with *only a few days* of work, what could not the civilized man do; for he owns from his cradle the countless benefits with which civilization shows us the great law of universal solidarity (sic) (Capelo 1895[1892]: 152; author’s emphasis, quoted in Santos-Granero, 2002, p. 557).

Santos-Granero emphasizes the economic character of Capelo’s view on the Amazon:

With the aid of science and technology, the Amazon region can surrender its riches for the benefit of man and nation... He [Capelo] sees the Amazon as a vast and abundant reservoir of resources waiting to be tapped by men of science, with the support of progressive governments. In contrast, his view of native Amazonians is rather bleak. He argues that nature may have done its part in the Amazon, but man has not (Santos-Granero, 2002, p. 556, my emphasis).

This discourse associates indigenous people with ignorance and the ‘civilized’ man with the adequate knowledge to exploit the Amazonian resources. These articulations naturalize Eurocentric knowledge as intrinsically beneficial to the *mestizo* Peruvian ‘man and nation’.

⁹ Mestizo people result from the crossbreeding between Hispanic and indigenous heritage. Mestizos are both demographically and politically dominant in most Latin-American countries.

From an unmarked masculine, Andean, and technical position, this engineer authorizes himself to devalue the actions of the Amazonian peoples and to promote Eurocentric ‘civilization’ as the unquestioned means to produce ‘benefits’ and ‘progress’ for the nation. These kinds of discourses established the bases of symbolic and physical violence against indigenous Amazonian inhabitants since the 19th century.

By the end of the same century, similar discourses had reinforced the power positions of Eurocentric subjects through their connections with scientific rhetoric. Stanfield (1998) describes how some 19th-century scholars mobilized the Darwinist evolutionist theory to establish hierarchies between the Europeans and the “Indian savages.” From this historical period onward, several Amazonian agents, including the Colombian and Peruvian States, used technical discourses that articulated civilization and progress with the unquestioned supremacy of European agents and cultures (Stanfield, 1998, p. 118).

These articulations have facilitated the connection of the Middle Amazon to specific scales of power according to the particular interests of some agents. I refer here to scales as:

The spatial dimensionality necessary for a particular kind of view, whether up close or from a distance, microscopic or planetary. I argue that scale is not just a neutral frame for viewing the world; scale must be brought into being: proposed, practiced, and evaded, as well as taken for granted. Scales are claimed and contested in cultural and political aspects. A ‘globalism’ is a commitment to the global, and there are multiple, overlapping, and somewhat contradictory globalisms; a ‘regionalism’ is a commitment to the region; and so on (Tsing, 2005, p.58).

Accordingly, geographical scales depend solely upon particular projects or interests. The production of scales is directly connected to discourses of power that “make us imagine scales – local, global, regional” (Tsing, 2005, p. 58). From a similar perspective, Dirlik (1996) refers to the establishment of power relations drawn on binary oppositions between local and global. These binary oppositions also establish distinctions between local knowledges and universal scientific rationality, oral and written knowledge, heterogeneity and homogeneity, native sensibility, spirituality in relation to reason, and so on (Dirlik, 1996, p. 27). This discursive production of scales is directly connected to the construction of power positions associated with the particular interests of agents able to define themselves as global or transnational. This production of scales is coherent with Santos’ definition of globalization as “the process by which a given local condition or entity extends its influence across the globe and, in doing so, develops the capacity to designate as local other rival social condition or entity” (1997, p. 14, my translation).

In the historical periods studied in this chapter, articulations between universal discourses, scales, and the particular interests of historical agents have produced positions of exploitation, resistance, fragmentation, or disempowerment among indigenous people related to the Leticia Witoto ESP. In the first two periods studied (the colonial and rubber boom eras, which span from the 15th century until the 1820s and between the 1880s and the 1930s respectively), agents of economic and political colonization – including State agents – promoted economic progress and Christian civilization through technical or scientific means mobilized from the unmarked positions of ‘white’ or mestizo agents. In these historical periods, the unclear definition of national borders inherited from colonial policies influenced the Amazon’s early and problematic connection to the global economy.

In the last two periods (1930s-1990s and 1990s to the present), I refer to some power and knowledge relations produced through the localization of universal discourses in the communities of the People of the Centre. The 1930s-1990s historical period can be seen as inaugurating the complex inclusion of these people to the Colombian nation through the devaluation and dismissal of their indigenous knowledges. Also in this historical period, waves of economic exploitation devaluated or subjugated indigenous knowledges and people to establish new regimes of exploitation and indentured labour. These economic processes, in conjunction with the presence of illegal armed agents in the People of the Centre’s territories, caused the forced displacement or economic migrations of the latter to the Leticia area.

In the fourth period (1990s to the present), I focus on power relations between development and human rights discourses and agents and indigenous people in the Leticia area. I describe how the nation-State has reinforced its presence in this area through the implementation of development programs and measures guided by indigenous people’s rights acknowledged in the 1991 Colombian Constitution. Development programs have influenced individualistic visions of indigenous economy and relations of competition between members of indigenous communities. Similarly, State measures regarding indigenous political government have created new indigenous leadership positions whose power derives from direct connection with the State. New indigenous leaders have entered in friction with existing authorities of the indigenous communities that are legitimated by traditional forms of power. Forced displacement and direct connections of indigenous leaders with the State have brought complex national and regional dynamics and conflicts to the indigenous communities taking

part in the Leticia Witoto ESP. These multi-scalar complexities influence the positions from which the People of the Centre negotiate with human rights and development concepts, procedures, and institutions in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

1.2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH



Map 2.1. The tri-border Middle Amazon in South America
Source: (Aponte Motta, 2011)



Map 2.2. The Leticia Area in Detail
Source: Google earth with my intervention

The Middle or Central Amazon¹⁰ basin is situated between the cities of Iquitos (Peru) and Manaus (Brazil), where the Amazon River becomes navigable. This region comprises cross-border watersheds such as the Colombo-Brazilian Caquetá (Japurá in Brazil) and the Colombo-Peruvian-Brazilian Putumayo (Içá in Brazil). The Caquetá and Putumayo are two parallel rivers that originate in the Andes and are rich in minerals. For this reason, these rivers have historically concentrated a greater number of inhabitants than black rivers that originate in the forest (Stanfield, 1998). The Putumayo is the only navigable Colombian river in the Amazon region (Franco, 2012). In contrast, navigation of the Caquetá is hindered in several

¹⁰ Other authors, such as Stanfield, refer to this region as the Northwest Amazonia, situating it with respect to the remaining Brazilian basin. I use the name “Middle Amazon” taking into account the three different sections in which the course of the Amazon River can be divided. I privilege the river as a reference point given its character as the main axis of regional transportation and integration.

stretches by violent rapids. These rapids isolated indigenous peoples from outside contact prior to the rubber boom era (Stanfield, 1998, p. 5).

In the Colombian Amazonas province,¹¹ both rivers form the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluvium, home of the People of the Centre. In this region, rivers flow from the Andes toward the east. Rivers constitute natural highways to transport goods and people in the region. In fact, rivers represent 90% of transportation in the Central Amazon (Bara Nieto et al., 2006, p. 15). This geographical fact has affected the integration of the basin with Andean centers (such as Bogotá and Lima) and favoured connections with Amazonian Brazilian urban centers such as Manaus and Belem. Apart from some traditional tracks and short paved routes, land transportation is scarce or nonexistent in most of the Middle Amazon region. As a result, most regional inhabitants communicate by air or river transportation with the main urban centers of the Andes and the Upper and Lower Amazon.¹² Given its distance from Bogotá and Manaus (situated 1000 kilometres to the north and east of Leticia) and Iquitos (situated 400 kilometres to the west), the Middle Amazon has become a cross-border region with constant flows of people, merchandise, technologies, and capital between the three countries. Some authors refer to the Middle Amazon as a zone of cultural contact, social exchange, and political conflict between multiple South American, European and indigenous cultures (Stanfield, 1998, p. 5; Zarate Botía, 2008).

The tri-border Middle Amazon is the convergence point of three marginal regions of three countries: the Colombian Amazonas province, the Peruvian Loreto region, and the Alto Solimões “micro-region” in the Brazilian Amazonas state. In this dissertation, I focus on two parts of the Colombian tri-border Amazon: the Caquetá-Putumayo¹³ interfluvium and the Leticia area. Since 2008 I have visited the Leticia area five times and have conducted two stints of fieldwork directly related to this dissertation. In contrast, I have never visited the Caquetá-

¹¹ The original territorial division in Colombia uses the word *departamento*. This territorial division imitates the French *département* which is a territorial entity depending on a national centralized power. I use the word *province*, which is more commonly used in English. Both *departamento* and *province* contrast with the American and Brazilian notion of federal *state*.

¹² The Upper Amazon basin is constituted mainly by the Marañón, Ucayali, and Napo rivers, which come from the Andes and converge not far from Iquitos. The Lower Amazon is characterized by its high volume of water due to tributaries born in the forest such as the Negro (Black), Xingu and Tocantins rivers (see Bara Nieto, Sanchez, and Wilmsmeiner, 2006).

¹³ It is important to distinguish this region from the provinces of Caquetá and Putumayo, which surround the region, but are external to the interfluvium inhabited by the People of the Centre.

Putumayo region. I describe this interfluve according to indigenous people’s narratives and documentary sources.

The Colombian Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve is situated to the north of the so-called Colombian Amazon Trapezoid¹⁴ and is surrounded by Brazil to the east and Peru to the south (see Map 2.1). The Caquetá-Putumayo was the main epicenter of the exploitative regime that forced thousands of indigenous Amazonian inhabitants to collect rubber for exportation between the 1880s and 1930s. Several indigenous survivors of this regime fled to other Amazonian locations, notably the Leticia area. For this reason, although the Caquetá-Putumayo is situated approximately 600 kilometres to the northwest of Leticia, there is a historical and symbolic connection between both regions (see Map 2.3). Indigenous people who currently work on the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP) are first or second generation migrants from the Caquetá-Putumayo. They have attempted to reconstruct their original indigenous practices and living conditions in the Leticia area.



Map 2.3. The Tri-border Middle Amazon with a Detailed Focus on the Putumayo-Caquetá Region. Source: Stanfield, 1998, p. 2

¹⁴ Seen on a map, the Colombian borders with Brazil, Peru and the Amazon River form a trapezoid (Map 2.1).

The Leticia area is an urban and suburban zone with a relative high concentration of State services. With a population of 32,450, this port city is the capital of the Colombian Amazonas province (Colombia, 2005). Situated on the north bank of the Amazon River, Leticia constitutes the main political and economic center of the tri-border Middle Amazon. It is connected to the Brazilian port of Tabatinga (42,652 inhabitants) and is near other administrative centers of the region such as Benjamin Constant, Brazil, or Caballo Cocha, Peru (Prefeitura de Tabatinga, 2009). These urban centers concentrate most of the Middle Amazon population and constitute a cross-border and multiethnic zone with their own trade, cultural, and political dynamics, influenced by the three nation states yet distinct from their main centers (Zárate Botía, 2008). Furthermore, this semi-urban zone reflects broader tendencies in the entire Amazon region such as continuous population growth, deforestation, and absorption of indigenous peoples by urbanization (Gutiérrez Rey, Acosta and Salazar Cardona, 2004, p. 48).¹⁵

The Leticia area is situated on the territory of the ancient Omagua – an indigenous group that was wiped out as a result of contact and conflicts with the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers – and the territory occupied by the Tikuna indigenous people since the 17th century.¹⁶ Both indigenous and *mestizo* migrants have arrived in this area due to violence or poor economic conditions in their homelands. They have been attracted by the safety offered by the Colombian and Brazilian border armies and by the educational and health services provided in Leticia and Tabatinga. The tri-border character of the region has also appealed to several merchants who transport goods from the Andes or coastal regions and vice-versa. As a result of migrations from the three countries, indigenous people have become a demographic, cultural and political minority in their ancestral territories. In 2002, indigenous people represented only 5.8% of the 26 million of Amazonians¹⁷ (Gutiérrez Rey et al 2004, p. 42).

¹⁵ The population of the whole basin has tripled from 1983 to 2003 (Gutiérrez Rey et al., 2004, p. 41). In the Colombian province of Amazonas, population increased five times in forty years reaching 67,726 in 2005 (Amazonas, 2008). Given this rapid demographic increase, among other factors, most Amazonians lack basic infrastructure services such as sustained health care, sewage systems, aqueduct, roads, landlines, and electricity (see Gutiérrez Rey et al 2004, p.51).

¹⁶ The Tikuna are a cross-border ethnic group numbering approximately 41,400 people in the tri-border Middle Amazon, including 55% who live in Brazil, 27% in Colombia and 18% in Peru (Ramos, 2010, p. 23).

¹⁷ 62.3% of Amazonian inhabitants live in Brazil, 22.1% in Peru and 5.1% in Colombia (Gutiérrez Rey et al., 2004, p. 41).

Multiethnic encounters have increased through the presence of national and international State and NGO staff, missionaries, scholars, and tourists. Drawing on universal discourses such as progress, civilization, development, and human rights, these various actors lead or take part in projects that target rural people, which in this province are mainly indigenous people. The Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan is one of these projects. These agents have introduced multiple ideas, practices, forms of exchange, and other complexities common on the global and national scales into indigenous communities.

1.3. HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

1.3.1. The Colonial and Early Republican Era: the Subjugation of the Amazon to Global Power Relations

The first Spanish conquistadors arrived in the Amazon from the Andes in the 16th century attracted by legends about the abundance of gold and spices in this region (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011, pp. 18-19; Stanfield, 1998; Ospina, 2008). Although the Portuguese arrived some years later, they easily expanded from the mouth of the Amazon to the west (Pineda Camacho, 2000). This geographical position helped them dominate the more navigable rivers of the Amazonian lower and middle basins. The Portuguese expansion contrasted with that of the Spaniards, which was hindered by the Andean piedmont and its torrent and narrow rivers (Zárate Botía, 2008). These geographical differences shaped the priorities and actions of both colonizing forces in the Amazon. For Portugal, the Amazon River constituted a main way to extend its empire through the mobilization of military, trade, and missionary forces from the Atlantic coast to the Center and west of South America (Stanfield, 1998; Zárate Botía, 2008). In contrast, Spain was more focused on the exploitation of Andean gold and the establishment of sea harbours, delegating the Amazon conquest to the Franciscan missionaries (Echeverri, 1997, p. 58). As a result, while the Portuguese Crown soon constructed two strategic cities in the mouths of the Amazon and Negro rivers (Belém do Pará and Manaus), Spain only constructed two military forts (San Felipe and San Carlos) and several missionary towns with unstable populations (Zárate Botía,

2008, p. 105).¹⁸ Of the 28 Spanish-controlled towns founded by missionaries in the late 17th century, only seven remained by 1750 (Stanfield, 1998, p. 10).

Whereas the Portuguese used the Amazon River to structure their colonies in America, the Spanish empire divided its Amazonian possessions among its colonies: the viceroyalties of Peru and New Granada (contemporary Colombia) and the province of Quito – contemporary Ecuador (Zárate Botía, 2008). As a result of these colonial measures, the Middle Amazon became a region of border disputes throughout the late colonial and early republican period. In 1723, the Spanish crown divided the northern territory of the Viceroyalty of Peru to create the Viceroyalty of New Granada.¹⁹ With its capital in Santa Fe – present-day Bogotá – New Granada's southern borders extended to the south of the Amazon River, including the Putumayo-Amazonas interfluvium, known as the province of Maynas. However, in 1802, a Spanish Crown Royal document (*Cédula real*) incorporated Maynas again into the Peruvian viceroyalty, extending its borders almost to Quito, in the Andes (see Map 2.4). Peru and New Granada did not comply with this decision given the distance of the Maynas province from Lima and Santa Fe and their main interest in trade through the Pacific and Caribbean harbours. New Granada continued to exert formal but weak sovereignty on the Maynas province until the independence period (Cutter, 1995).

After independence (1810-1830s), countries that emerged from the Spanish colonies inherited this unclear delimitation of the Amazonian borders. After its separation from *Gran Colombia*²⁰ (Great Colombia) and drawing on the Royal Audience of Quito (1563), the new Republic of Ecuador argued that its limits included the Maynas province. For its part, New Granada (present-day Colombia) claimed the region according to the limits established at the creation of the Viceroyalty. Similarly, Peru claimed possession of Maynas through the Royal *Cédula* of 1802 (Cutter, 1995). In the independence and early republican periods, three countries claimed sovereignty on the former Spanish possessions in the Middle Amazon.

¹⁸ Portugal and Spain defined their limits in South America in the 1759 Treaty of Madrid, where Portuguese attained control of most of the Central Amazonian basin. Movements of Portuguese colonizers forced the crowns to the 1777 San Ildefonso treaty on limits (Zárate Botía, 2008).

¹⁹ This new kingdom comprised the current countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama, and some territories of Costa Rica, Surinam, Guyana and Brazil.

²⁰ Although its official name was Republic of Colombia, *Gran Colombia* is the name given to the country founded by Simón Bolívar after the 1819 independence campaign. With Bogotá (the former Santa Fe) as its capital, Gran Colombia embraced the current republics of Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. *Gran Colombia* disintegrated in 1830 with the secession of Venezuela and Ecuador (see Gran Colombia, 2014).



Map 2.4. Borders Between the Amazonian Countries in 1830. Source: *Gran Colombia*, 2014

Unclear colonial delimitation influenced a differentiated presence of these new Republics in the Middle Amazon. Colombia and Ecuador’s presence was almost reduced to diplomatic claims drawn on the colonial titles inherited from Spain. As a result, their presence in the region was inefficient and weak (Zárate Botía, 2008). In contrast, Brazil and Peru invested in infrastructure and navigation, which motivated migrations from the Coastal and Andean regions, favouring a de facto possession of the Amazon (Zarate Botía, 2008).

In the mid-19th century, the Middle Amazon became the place of encounter for three population movements from the Brazilian, Peruvian, and Colombian urban centers. In the name of “expanding civilization,” a political movement called the *Bandeirantes* enlarged the Brazilian territory through occupation of the western borders, including the Amazon (Zárate Botía, 2008, pp. 96, 98). In Peru, Loreto was expanding as a prosperous society of exchange based on rubber exploitation and fur trade (Pineda Camacho, 2000). In Colombia, quinine traders – led by Rafael Reyes, who would become the Colombian President in 1904 – opened the Amazon and Putumayo rivers to both Colombian and Brazilian shipping (Stanfield, 1998, p.15). The 1870-1880 quinine boom attracted fortune seekers, stimulated exploration, fostered the exchange of quinine for imported goods between white and indigenous people, and “opened a remote corner of Amazonia to world commerce and modern transportation” (Stanfield, 1998, p. 18). Although the quinine boom was a short economic movement, it

favoured migration from the Andes and established a network of tracks, fluvial routes, bridges, and contacts crucial to later exploitation of rubber (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 42).

As a result of these demographic movements, from the late 19th century, the Middle Amazon can be considered a multiethnic region with people and agents from several countries. In this cross-border *mestizo* society, local indigenous people lost their relevance as the main inhabitants of the Middle Amazon region. Consequently, the population of non-indigenous inhabitants continued to increase and became the majority at the beginning of the 20th century.²¹ In these historical periods, indigenous people lost their influence as regional actors and started being confined to localities and communities.

This relevance of transnational agents, goods, and movements increased in 1866 with the bi-national agreement on the Amazon River navigation between Brazil and Peru. Through this agreement, both nations (notably Brazil) began dominating the lumber, rubber, and imported merchandise trades through the Amazon River. To break the Brazilian monopoly, the U.S. government pressed Peruvian authorities to allow the navigation of other Amazonian basin countries in the name of “the good of humanity” (Zárate Botía, 2008; Brasil, 2013). Likewise, England pressed Brazil to allow its citizens and entrepreneurs navigation on the river as a means of compensation for ancient treaties that legitimated Portugal’s possessions in the Amazon (Zárate Botía, 2008, p. 105). As a result, in 1867, Brazil and Peru signed an international treaty of free navigation on the Amazon, which opened the region to international exploitation and trade (Zárate Botía, 2008, p. 71; Embajada del Brasil en Perú, 2013). Since these emergent republics’ presence was still ineffective in the region, it can be argued that the Middle Amazon was first a transnational and global space rather than a region integrated into national scales. Without clear protection from the State, the international free navigation agreement subordinated Amazonian inhabitants and territories to global trade agents.

The 19th-century idea of civilization contributed to the subordination of the Amazonian region and people to global relations. Echeverri refers to how, in the new Republics, the Amazon was often represented as a “largely ‘unoccupied’ region (that is, by Europeans and their descendants)” and open to the occupation of economic colonizers and enterprises (1997,

²¹ While in 1906 there were 32,500 indigenous people and 2,200 mestizo colonizers in the tri-border Middle Amazon, in 1933 the indigenous population had decreased to 13,997 and mestizo colonizers increased almost ten times, up to 21,587 (Zárate Botía, 2008).

p. 60). Since they knew very little about the Amazon and its inhabitants, people from the Colombian, Peruvian, or Brazilian centers fantasized about the Amazonian people through tales of cannibalism and savagery (p. 65). Drawing on these unquestioned narratives, the first rubber entrepreneurs and their descendants saw themselves as ‘civilizers’ and ‘pacifiers’ of ‘cannibalistic and wild tribes’ (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 61). From these unmarked positions, Andean European descendants used universal discourses of ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ as means to subjugate the Amazon and its indigenous inhabitants to economic exploitation.

However, the subjugation of indigenous people and interethnic conflicts were not an exclusive practice of non-indigenous agents. In the same historical period, there were also unequal power relations among indigenous tribes. Stanfield describes how, prior to contact with 19th century colonizers, indigenous people continuously fought over choice lands and hunting grounds; raids against captains or shamans responsible for presumed spiritual illness were constant means of revenge between indigenous tribes; and indigenous tribes caught enemy warriors, women, and children to ritualistically slay them or to subjugate them as low-status ‘orphans’ (1998, p. 8). Echeverri also refers to how, between the 17th and 18th century, some indigenous people traded with white people or with members of other indigenous groups caught as war prisoners (1997, p. 58). Similarly, Pineda refers to how indigenous people took part in the *rescate* (rescue practices), in which indigenous peoples sold their indigenous prisoners of war to the colonizers in exchange for metal axes, tools, or merchandise (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 23). Religious and military agents ‘rescued’ indigenous people “captive of hostile, slave-trading or cannibalistic” groups and settled them in missionary towns (Stanfield, 1998, p. 10). Converted to Christianity in these towns, the former prisoners became a labour force available to colonizers.

These “rescue” practices affected the People of the Centre. The Carijona attacked the Witoto and Ocaina to capture prisoners who would be later traded for European goods (Stanfield, 1998, p. 9). Also some People of the Centre (such as the Muinane) were known for their alliances with indigenous slave traders. According to some Witoto people, some Muinane chiefs accumulated great power over their neighbouring Peoples of the Centre who feared being enslaved (Echeverri, 1997, p. 100). As I discuss in the next section, these practices were later used by rubber entrepreneurs to dominate indigenous peoples.

These violent inter-ethnic relations, the lack of border delimitation between Amazonian States, the persistence of power relations based on unequal exchange created by religious and economic agents, and the early connection with the global scale influenced unequal power exercises on indigenous people throughout the rubber boom and the twentieth century. Universal discourses took a central role in these historical power relations.

1.3.2. The Rubber Boom: a Multi-Scalar Structure of Power-Knowledge.

The rubber boom historical period is highly present in the memories of several tri-border Middle Amazon inhabitants that I interviewed. Whereas some elders of the Leticia Witoto ESP refer to this period as the ‘time of slavery’, others are reluctant to talk about it. In a talk given in Leticia about his recent experiences with the Witoto people in La Chorrera, the anthropologist Roberto Pineda Camacho referred to the reaction of some indigenous people to the possibility of shooting a film about a massacre perpetrated by rubber exploiters in a place called Jarocamena. According to oral histories, in this massacre, rubber foremen burned more than 70 living Witoto people who resisted collecting rubber. Although the film aimed to highlight indigenous people’s revolutionary potential, the Witoto leaders of Jarocamena were reluctant to talk about the massacre or to reconstruct it through visual images. In their views, simply talking about the massacre may revive the spirit of violence present during the rubber boom era. Likewise, indigenous participants in this dissertation still experience the consequences of violence during rubber exploitation. Forced displacement from their traditional territories and relations of distrust with the State and non-indigenous agents are some of these consequences. Both in Jarocamena and in Leticia, the People of the Centre fear that violence will come back through the projects proposed by non-indigenous agents.

Some studies refer to the rubber exploitation period as the “Holocaust in the Amazon” (Pineda Camacho, 2000) or the “Devil’s Paradise” (Hardenburg, Reginald, and Casement 1912). In the rubber boom era, economic agents articulated geographical scales to power positions in ways that undervalue indigenous people and their knowledges. These articulations legitimated exploitive practices against indigenous people. I describe this historical period through power and knowledge relations influenced by geographical conditions, indigenous people’s symbolic beliefs, the mobilization of universal discourses regarding progress and civilization, and connections between the State, religious and private economic forces.

From a geographical viewpoint, the systematic exploitation of *castilloa* rubber trees in the Colombian and Peruvian Upper Amazon almost led to their extinction. As a result, rubber exploiters were impelled to expand to the east, where they found the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve, a region where *castilloa* trees were abundant, indigenous populations were familiar with the plant, and the State's borders were unclear.

From a symbolic viewpoint, the cultural significance that the People of the Centre attributed to axes and metal tools created the conditions for their unequal relations with these colonizers. Although necessary to survive in the hostile Amazon forest, tools and the materials to produce them were scarce in the Caquetá-Putumayo region. Given the absence of stones, the main raw material used to produce tools, the People of the Centre saw metal tools as sacred objects (Echeverri 1997, pp. 92-93). These indigenous peoples valued their contacts with early rubber exploiters and traders as sacred encounters to gain the necessary tools to survive.

Contact with colonizers introduced axes (among other tools), which had economic, social and political repercussions among the People of the Centre. Some indigenous chiefs saw metal goods as “hot” sources of envy and greed for indigenous societies (Stanfield, 1998, p. 9). Given the benefits they possessed for efficient work, axes became a source of power. Axe owners could enlarge their cultivation areas and increase their efficiency in clearing the forest for agriculture (Echeverri, 1997, p. 93). In the late 19th century, when the presence of merchants and economic explorers intensified in the Caquetá-Putumayo, the People of the Centre saw metal tools as a central instrument to agricultural abundance (p. 96). Therefore, prior to the rubber boom, the People of the Centre had already produced forms of power based on the incorporation of non-indigenous technologies and practices through metal tools.

From a political viewpoint, Colombian political agents privileged missionaries and private actors in the Caquetá-Putumayo region to the detriment of its indigenous populations. Given its continuous failed attempts to integrate the Amazon into the nation, from the late 19th century the Colombian State – just like the Spanish Crown – had delegated its presence in this region to the Catholic Church.²² In 1872, the Colombian Congress established that indigenous

²² In 1888, the Concordat between the Colombian State and the Holy See conferred precedence to the Catholic Church to influence national institutions such as schools, hospitals, and local authorities such as mayoral offices.

people had to convert to Catholicism in order to be recognized as Colombian citizens (Zárate Botía, 2008, p. 237). This measure allowed the Colombian State to deny the recognition of indigenous people as citizens and, therefore, to refuse to protect them according to the norms of this period. Thereafter and almost until the first half of the 20th century, the Church became the main State agent to educate people, construct infrastructure, and found Colombian towns in the diffuse Amazon border region (Zárate Botía, 2008, p. 242; Stanfield, 1998). Consequently, State institutions were controlled by the clergy, whose power drew on the devaluation of indigenous beliefs and practices. The missionaries' actions put indigenous people in an inferior position as non-citizens needing continuous evangelization or guidance.

The Colombian State also privileged private economic interests in the Middle Amazon. In 1906, the Colombian dictator Rafael Reyes – who led business with several economic agents in the Putumayo-Caquetá – signed a *modus vivendi* agreement with the Peruvian government (Pineda Camacho, 2000). The agreement sought the region's economic development by preventing the Peruvian and Colombian States from exerting authority in the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve. Instead, the agreement proposed to “leave that river [the Putumayo] in the hands of industrial entrepreneurs” (Zárate Botía, 2008, p. 215, my translation). In 1907, the same president approved a border treaty that conceded the Lower Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve to Brazil. Some scholars understand this cession as a means through which Reyes compensated his Brazilian associates in the trade and importation of quinine and manufactured products (Pineda Camacho, 2000). With these measures, the Colombian State surrendered its presence in the Amazon to private economic agents whom they considered capable to produce the economic development that the State had not accomplished.

These State measures legitimated power positions from which Colombian and Peruvian rubber companies justified their violent regimes. These companies justified their enterprises as means to extend national sovereignty on a vast and uncultivated land inhabited by “natural” indigenous servants (Pineda Camacho, 2008; Vargas Llosa, 2010). In the 1900s, administrative and political staff of the main rubber company (the Peruvian Casa Arana Hermanos) referred to Putumayo as “populated by 50,000 ‘mostly cannibalistic Indians’ whom the Arana company was putting on the road to *civilization*” (Stanfield, 1998, p. 122, my emphasis). In public discourses, rubber exploiters (*caucheros*) were compared to national

heroes and their armed collaborators were praised “for protecting the national interests and territorial integrity of Peru” (Stanfield, 1998, p. 134). Rubber exploiters articulated these economic and political goals with universal discourses of progress or national claims of sovereignty.

Colombian and Peruvian entrepreneurs established systematic rubber exploitation in the Caquetá-Putumayo at the beginning of the 1880s. Motivated by the increasing rubber prices in the British and U.S. markets, these entrepreneurs founded companies that competed against each other to dominate the whole rubber business. The Casa Arana Hermanos resulted from the enlargement of a rubber company whose one main associate was the Colombian consul in Manaus (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 77). Simultaneously, in 1907 and with the support of U.S. investors, Fidel Cano Cuéllar founded the Amazon Colombian Rubber Company. However, The Arana Hermanos’ monopoly on Putumayo River transportation ensured Peruvian interests to the detriment of their Colombian competitors (p. 76). After taking over almost all of the Colombian rubber companies, Julio César Arana (the elder of the Arana brothers), established the Peruvian Amazon Company, a firm registered in Great Britain, where it raised “capital of one million pounds in the London stock market” (Echeverri, 1997, p. 61). The union of British capital and Colombian and Peruvian elites made rubber exploitation possible in the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve.

The Arana Anglo-Peruvian Company established its main operation centers in La Chorrera and El Encanto, two ancient Colombian rubber stations situated in the People of the Centre’s homeland. From there, the Peruvian Amazon Company expanded over the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve through a stratified and multi-scalar structure of production. On the global and transnational scales, associates based in Iquitos coordinated shipments from El Encanto and La Chorrera and connected directly with British shareholders and rubber importers. On a regional transnational scale, a chief (*patrón*) based in La Chorrera and El Encanto ruled the main stockpile centers of rubber gathered from the Igaraparaná and Caraparaná basins. These *patróns* coordinated several foremen (*caucheros* in Spanish) located in at least 19 barrack huts spread throughout the interfluve (see Santos, 1980, cited in Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 33). The *caucheros* gathered rubber that indigenous people collected in the forest or close to their community settlements. This multi-scalar structure was possible through the telegraphic connection of rubber stations with Loreto and through the

incorporation of modern riverine transportation and communication systems that tied the Putumayo into the world economy (Stanfield, 1998, p. 117).

The whole rubber exploitation system depended on the forced labour of indigenous populations. The *caucheros* ensured indigenous people's subjugation by training a force of paramilitary people and young indigenous local people called the *muchachos del servicio* (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 92). The rubber exploiters brought their paramilitary force from Barbados and other British Caribbean colonies.²³ Known as the Barbadians, the paramilitaries led raids to capture or slaughter indigenous people in the forest (Stanfield, 1998). Similarly, indigenous members of this army (*muchachos del servicio*) were orphans whose families had been killed by enemy indigenous groups in the intertribal wars that had taken place since the colonial period. Given these orphans' positions of exclusion, becoming a *muchacho del servicio* was an opportunity to gain recognition from the *caucheros* or to take revenge on enemy groups. In other words, the rubber men wielded power from existing interethnic divisions among indigenous people. This black-indigenous paramilitary force was crucial to increase the enslaved indigenous population through raids on indigenous settlements and to watch, punish, or pursue indigenous people who disobeyed or tried to escape the *caucheros'* orders (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 73). The production of unquestioned race-based distinctions between white/*mestizo* capitalists and foremen, black or indigenous soldiers, and indigenous slaves made possible the exploitative rubber regime.

These distinctions drew on articulations between races and positions of power and knowledge. In the rubber stations, *mestizo* and white people's houses were called "*la casa del racional*," which means the 'rational man's house' (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 62). This designation suggests that rubber exploiters represented themselves as 'rational' subjects to differentiate themselves from other non-white populations that they felt authorized to dominate. This racialized representation of the white and *mestizo* people's superior knowledge situated indigenous people as the paradigmatic irrationals. Rubber exploiters naturalized violence against indigenous people through articulations between ruling positions and narratives on Eurocentric knowledge's superiority. These articulations legitimated the place

²³ The Population from Barbados and other British Caribbean colonies fled or were deported to their original territories when the Arana's Company entered in bankruptcy due to persecution in Great Britain and decrease of rubber prices in the 1920s and 1930s (see Stanfield, 1998; Pineda Camacho, 2000; Vargas Llosa, 2010).

that *mestizo* and white people conferred to indigenous people in the lowest level of the exploitation structure, where the latter were violently forced to collect rubber. This multi-scalar and racialized structure exemplifies the role of power and knowledge in the production of domination structures.²⁴

These power-knowledge relations created the symbolic basis of a system of arbitrary remuneration and enslavement that drew on the violent intimidation of indigenous people. The difficult possibilities of exchange through cash favoured the existence of a system of *endeude* (indenture labour and peonage) based on the subjugation of the indigenous labour force (Stanfield, 1998, p. 120). In this system, a 70- or 80-kilogram load of rubber, which might involve six months of work, was rewarded with a bottle, a cup, or a Peruvian Sol coin (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 97). Given this unequal remuneration system, indigenous people had to cultivate their own crops to sustain their families in addition to gathering rubber. This overload of work weakened and decimated indigenous people either through violence or sickness (Stanfield, 1998; Pineda Camacho, 2000).

The rubber exploitation system awarded violence against indigenous people. The more indigenous people a *cauchero* was able to kill, the higher his remuneration would be (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 98). Indigenous people unable to produce the required quantity of rubber were shot: “Indigenous people were happy when their load was bigger than five *arrobas*.²⁵ Otherwise, they lay face down on the floor to await their punishment” (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 93, my translation). Through these practices, the rubber foremen tried to persuade neighbouring indigenous groups that taking part in rubber exploitation was their only means of survival. “Non-productive” people such as elders were annihilated, while women or children were enclosed in the barrack huts where they died or were transferred to Iquitos to be sold as prostitutes or domestic slaves (Vargas Llosa, 2010). As a result of this regime, the indigenous population decreased from 90,000 in 1905 to 40,000 in 1908 (Pineda Camacho, p. 65).

²⁴ In Chapter Two, I discuss my theoretical understandings of relations of power and knowledge.

²⁵ Arroba is an ancient Spanish weight measure still used in Colombia. One arroba equals approximately 25 pounds.

The Rubber Boom: A Bi-Directional Relation of Power and Knowledge

The rubber boom structures of domination were possible through bi-directional relations of power that rubber exploiters established through strategic connections with the cultural beliefs, practices, and knowledges of indigenous people. This relationship can exemplify how different epistemologies produced within different cultural backgrounds enter in friction, producing new power positions (Marglin, 1990; Tsing, 2005). In the rubber boom case, *caucheros* strategically established connections with indigenous cultural beliefs in order to ensure their domination positions. According to Pineda Camacho, “mythological conceptions established the basis to calculate the ‘risk’ to establish relations with the *caucheros*” (2008, p. 51, my translation). Rubber men (*caucheros*) strategically manipulated the cultural significance of metal tools when they arrived in the Caquetá-Putumayo. To do so, they used the indigenous people’s cultural principle of exchange that establishes receiving and rewarding as inseparable and culturally mandatory:

[Among the People of the Centre] the principles governing trade are founded by ties of consanguinity and affinity. After hunting a tapir, for example, some portions must be given to siblings and allies. Generosity is a critical part of the exchange strategy: the obligation to give - as Marcel Mauss suggests - was accompanied by its other side, the obligation to receive (Pineda Camacho, 2008, p. 52, my translation).

The *caucheros* soon realized that this cultural principle strongly influenced relationships among indigenous people. A Witoto testimony recorded by Pineda Camacho reflects that *caucheros* defined rubber as the only means of exchange for the tools and manufactured goods that they gave to the chiefs of indigenous tribes that they aimed to conquer:

I bring cloths that you *have not seen*; good machetes, axes, all you *need to work*. Look for a tree that gives milk in the forest, called *sernambi*! (2008, p. 60, my translation and emphasis).

Similar forced exchanges of rubber for tools soon became the basis of a system of indenture.

The strategic use of the exchange principle allowed rubber exploiters to make pacific contacts with indigenous people at the beginning of the rubber boom. In their process of expansion, rubber exploiters saw a tribe as ‘conquered’ and ‘civilized’ when their chief or members accepted commerce (Pineda Camacho, 2008, p. 62). These processes are comparable to the thesis of 19th-century British economists who, drawing on colonial processes, saw trade of merchandise as a process fruitful to assimilation to ‘civilization’ (List, 1856, quoted in

Cowen and Shenton, 1995). The universal discourse of civilization through commerce can therefore be seen as contributing to the elite's power positions to exploit indigenous people.

This unequal system of exchange brought together two different epistemological and economic systems of value: while indigenous people lived in an economic system of finite objects, *caucheros* focused on accumulating wealth through the exploitation of resources (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 69). Indigenous people both overestimated the value of tools and were unaware of the market value of rubber, which was abundant in the forest. They also were unaware of the economic value of their work in the rubber industry (Rodríguez and Vanter Hammen, 1993, p. 36). These differences of knowledge, joined to the *chaucheros'* strategic use of the principle of exchange confirm the centrality of epistemological differences in the described exploitative relations. The rubber exploitive enterprise was possible only through the strategic connections that the rubber men established between their economic interests and indigenous people's epistemologies influenced by specific cultural principles and beliefs.

Universal Discourses, the State, and Regional Agents during the Rubber Boom

Peruvian and Colombian State policies facilitated and gave continuity to the rubber boom powerful structures. The Peruvian government feared to take measures that could seem unpopular to the elites of Loreto, where the economy had become highly dependent on rubber entrepreneurs' loans and capital (Zárate Botía, 2008; Pineda Camacho, 2000). Loreto regional inhabitants' imaginaries influenced the Peruvian government's attitude:

[Julio César] Arana was a source of pride among his compatriots in Iquitos. His company was considered by the Loreto people as a good example of the *progress* that could be spread throughout the Amazon, serving the interests of the country, '*civilizing*' Indians and, why not, multiplying capital (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 74, my translation and emphasis).

Accordingly, the violent exploitation of indigenous people resulted from the shared expectations of the emergent *mestizo* societies who saw in violence a legitimate means to produce progress and civilization.²⁶ These popular imaginaries allowed the Peruvian government – of which Julio César Arana became Senator in the 1920s – to evade its responsibility for violence associated with this regime (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 177). In

²⁶ In the same historical period, Colombian identity was produced around regimes of representation focused on the exclusion of indigenous and black people. Authors such as Rojas (2001) suggest that, in 19th-century Colombia, this identity process connected civilization, violence, and identity.

short, the rubber regime was a social and historical process legitimated and supported by regional and State agents' views on the need to civilize the Amazon region.

Also the Colombian State ensured the continuity of bloody rubber exploitation. In the early 20th century, the dictator Reyes censored the press and imposed government silence about the Caquetá-Putumayo conflict. When Reyes was questioned about the topic, he answered contemptuously: "it is a matter of *caucheros*" (Pineda Camacho, 2000, p. 172). In his historical research, Stanfield refers to the common accusations of Colombian State employees and inhabitants of the Caquetá-Putumayo against the close business and political relationship between the Reyes' government and Arana's company (1998, p. 145). Colombian Amazonian inhabitants and rubber entrepreneurs blamed Reyes' policies as the main cause of violence and submission of Colombians by Peruvian *caucheros*. After Reyes' dictatorship, these claims fuelled patriotic discourses on the need to recover and defend the national territory from Peruvian occupation.

The production of civilization and progress in the Amazon remained an unquestioned idea even among those who criticized the rubber exploitive regime. Colombian and Peruvian States attempted to enlarge their power through collaboration with economic agents who promoted civilization and progress by naturalizing the exploitation of indigenous people. These universal discourses were also present among regional inhabitants, including Colombian critics of Reyes complicity with rubber exploiters. These critics' concerns were more a nationalistic claim than a clear rejection of rubber exploitation. In this sense, Stanfield concludes that the "international system, local realities, and national policies collectively shaped life and change in northwestern Amazonia during the rubber boom" (1998, p. 124).

Just as the early connection of the tri-border Middle Amazon to the global economic system was crucial to the rubber regime, global actors and pressures also contributed to stop its atrocities. In 1907, a local Iquitos journalist (Saldaña Roca) denounced Arana's crew's excessive force on the Amazonian population (Stanfield, 1998). However, his denunciations lost credibility because Arana mobilized his resources to publicly devaluate these accusations. The atrocities of rubber exploitation became public only some years later and at the international level. Taking up Saldaña Roca's narratives and drawing on his own experience with the Arana's army, W.E. Hardenburg denounced in the London *Truth* journal the violence of a "Congo with British owners" in the Putumayo (Pineda Camacho, 2008, p. 176).

Hardenburg's denunciations in the British press created a global scandal: "A British company was practicing slavery in South America during the twentieth century in order to amass great profits. Britain, after leading the antislavery cause in the nineteenth century, had an eighteenth-century skeleton in her closet" (Stanfield, 1998, p. 128). In 1912, Roger Casement, an employee of the British Foreign Affairs Office, confirmed Hardenburg and Saldaña Roca's reports in the British Parliament (Ireland, 2006). Casement described a system of terror that the Peruvian Amazon Company employed to "dominate Indians and to force them to collect rubber" (Stanfield, 1998, p. 138). Casement's report unleashed international pressure from international authorities, including British and U.S. politicians and Pope Pius X, to stop the atrocities that a company registered in the London stock market supported (Pineda Camacho, 2000, pp. 175-181). This international pressure, the decrease of rubber prices due to its substitution by oil-derived products, and the transfer of rubber seeds to the Asian British colonies led to less intensive rubber exploitation by the Anglo-Peruvian company (Pineda Camacho, 2000).

Although these forces led to a generalized regional economic crisis, only the 1932-1933 Colombo-Peruvian war ensured the definitive expulsion of the Peruvian Amazon Company from the Caquetá-Putumayo (Echeverri, 1997, p. 63). In this conflict, Peru claimed sovereignty on the interfluvium due to their *de facto* occupation through Arana's company. The Colombo-Peruvian borders had remained unclear until 1922, when the Salomón-Lozano Treaty established the Putumayo River as the limit between both nations:

The Salomon-Lozano treaty promised a new and defined territorial and diplomatic future for the Putumayo. The treaty, approved by Colombia in 1925 and by Peru in 1927... [The Treaty] also stipulated Colombian access to the Amazon River and to Leticia via a trapezoid-shaped territory south of the Putumayo (Stanfield, 1998, p. 102).

This Treaty was highly unpopular among Loreto inhabitants, especially because more than 60 percent of Arana's land "fell under Colombian jurisdiction, real estate the title holder would part with for two million pounds sterling" (Stanfield, 1998, p. 202). As a result, in August 1932,

a 'patriotic junta' in Iquitos pledged to return Leticia to Peruvian sovereignty, with Arana supplying the Winchester rifles to do it. By September, supporters of the junta took Leticia, garnering civil and military support from many areas of Peru, although Lima reassured Bogotá that the Peruvian government had nothing to do with the action (Stanfield, 1998, p. 202).

Henceforth, both countries were headed for a war disputed through ships, submarines, and warplanes, all of which used the Putumayo River. Probably due to its effects on access to

rubber, the United States and Brazil pressured the Peruvian president to end the war as soon as possible (Stanfield, 1998, p. 204). The countries signed a cease-fire agreement on May 25, 1933. The war ended with the mediation of the extinct League of Nations²⁷ which ratified the 1922 Salomón-Lozano Treaty. The British-Peruvian company was forced to leave the region, thereafter internationally acknowledged as part of the Colombian territory.

Consequences of the Rubber Boom for the People of the Centre

The rubber boom situated indigenous people between two extremes: assimilation through exploitation and flight from their region. While some indigenous people patiently accepted the rubber regime, others fled to distant places of the Caquetá-Putumayo. Those who could escape fled to the Colombian Northwest Amazon or to Peru. Many indigenous people died in their long journeys through unknown territories. After the expulsion of the Peruvian Amazon Company from the Colombian territory in the 1930s, the Arana foremen moved indigenous survivors further south to the Ampiyacu River in Peru. Arana's crew produced an additional geographical, cultural, and physical displacement with the aim of restarting rubber exploitation in the recently defined Peruvian territory. As a result of this process, "a measles epidemic killed half of the Casa Arana's Indian personnel in some areas, annihilating entire clans" (Stanfield, 1998, p. 204).

Aura, the only woman elder who participates in the Leticia Witoto ESP team, recounts her family's displacement to Pebas, the main Peruvian harbour on the Ampiyacu River. Aura mixes Spanish words with Witoto grammar in her narrative. In order to emphasize the formal and touching characteristics of her narration, I transcribed it in its original form:

[Mis familiares] Nadaron [navegaron, sic] como cuatro quebradas grandes. Ahí más abuela se volcó con todas sus cosas, se ahogó. Nadie se acordó, nadie miró. Los que más fuerticos [sic], cogieron con mi abuela. Así ella, así se fue. Entonces que mi mamá, llorando se va... desde ahí, nuestro *clan se acabó, se acabó*. Único es [sic] nosotros. Ese Icanto [Los de El Encanto], no sé cómo se quedaron [sic].

Below is the approximate English translation of the testimony:

[My family] swam [navigated, sic] across at least four big streams. My grandmother capsized with all her belongings, she drowned. No one thought of her, no one looked back. The strongest people took my grandmother. So, she was gone, she was gone. Then, my mother continued [her journey] crying... after that, our clan was finished, it was finished. We are the only ones who remain. I don't

²⁷This was the equivalent to the contemporary United Nations.

know what happened to those who stayed in Icanto [El Encanto, sic] (Aura, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

Just like this woman, most Witoto people who take part in the ESP are the first or second generation forcibly subjugated by Arana's exploitive processes and their displacement.

Drawing on historical statistics and on his fieldwork, Echeverri (1997) calculates that the indigenous population of the Caquetá-Putumayo decreased from 46,000 in 1900 to 4,370 in 1990. This author suggests that the rubber boom produced a demographic catastrophe among indigenous groups (1997, p. 75). The exploitive regime disintegrated entire tribes, clans and families; destroyed sacred and ritual spaces; hindered encounters to share indigenous knowledge and to perform rituals; destroyed entire linguistic communities; and forced contact among people of different indigenous groups, including enemy tribes. With their population decimated, situated in new and unknown territories, and fearing new contacts with white exploiters, the Caquetá-Putumayo indigenous people's traditional social structures, cultural practices, and beliefs were dramatically affected by the rubber boom. The shared experience of violence and exploitation, the increased inter-tribal contacts, and the need to survive devastation compelled the Caquetá-Putumayo indigenous peoples to forge an interethnic alliance to face non-indigenous agents.

The Alliance of the People of the Centre: An Interethnic and Regional Articulation of Resistance Practices

The exact moment in which seven former rival tribes of the Caquetá-Putumayo region forged an interethnic alliance may be difficult to identify in a chronological or historical time line. However, narratives of indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP suggest that the alliance of the People of the Centre may have been forged as a means to face the violent aggression of *caucheros* in the rubber boom era. Echeverri (1997) suggests that this alliance was forged through the inclusion of axes in the seven peoples' mythic narratives. The violent and continuous encounters of the Witoto, Bora, Andoque, Muninane, Ocaina, Nonuya, and Miraña with non-indigenous people may have motivated these indigenous groups to seek mechanisms to resist the action of rubber exploiters. In the aftermath of the rubber boom, the alliance of the People of the Centre was strategic for its group members to overcome physical

and economic devastation (Echeverri, 1997, pp. 73, 75). In regards to these peoples' demography, Echeverri asserts:

There are very little population data available for the 1930s. [Indigenous] people's versions suggest that population has grown importantly from 1930 to the present. According to Andoque elders, there were only 9 surviving Andoque in 1935; Jon Landaburu (1970) reports 65 Andoque in 1969; and the Andoque population in the 1990s is 220. Also, there were only 2 Nonuya survivors in the early 1930s, according to a grandson of one of them, and there are about 60 Nonuya in the 1990s. Similar situations occurred for the other groups (1997, p. 76).

The alliance of the People of the Centre has entailed a complex and continuous process that has involved ethnocentrism, the construction of otherness, mythology, geography, and history. Echeverri (1997) suggests that after the rubber boom, instead of traditional gods, foundational narratives focused on “herons,” which symbolized “the human condition, predator and prey at the same time” (Landaburu, 1993, p. 152, cited in Echeverri, 1997, p. 108). In these narratives, herons were central to gain access to tools: white men (probably Luso-Brazilians who approached the region from downriver) were represented as the “Heron-of-the-Mouth-of-the-River.” The latter stole tools and goods from “the Centre,” considered as the origin of humankind, goods, and tools – including axes. Later on, the Witoto and Andoque people – represented as the “Heron-of-the-Centre” – recuperated axes for themselves and other indigenous people (Echeverri, 1997, pp. 95; 96; 109). This narrative situates the “Centre” as the origin of both the seven peoples and the metal axes. Accordingly, the People of the Centre assumed a new complementary name: the People of the Axe (Landaburu and Pineda-Camacho, 1984, pp. 62-66, quoted in Echeverri, 1997, p. 94). This symbolic shift in creation and self-identification mythologies set the basis for a shared commonality between the seven groups of the alliance. Through this alliance, the seven peoples emphasized their common origin in the “Centre of the World”: an opening in the earth situated in the Igaraparaná river (near La Chorrera) known as the “Hole of Humanity” or the “Hole of Awakening” (Echeverri, 1997, p. 102). This hole connects the material and observable world with the underworld, home of Buinaima, the Creator of the seven peoples.²⁸

Through this narrative, the People of the Centre forged an imagined common lineage. As a result, effective connections were created between the Bora, Witoto, and Ocaina peoples, who had previously been constantly at war with each other (Stanfield, 1998, p. 9). Similarly,

²⁸ Other narratives refer to the Creator father as *Naaino* (Preuss, 1994).

the new myths emphasized the Creator father and the “Centre of the World” as the common origin among peoples such as the Muinane, Witoto, Andoque, and Nonuya, whose original founding narratives had previously defined their emergence from “the Centre” in different ways, moments, and sites (Echeverri, 1997). To reinforce this common lineage, each ethnic group’s founding story was “declared ‘private’ or ‘abolished’” (Echeverri, 1997, p. 103). Changes in mythological and geographical referents became crucial to forge and mobilize an interethnic alliance to face non-indigenous agents.

These mythological transformations entailed changes in indigenous peoples’ social organization. Since axes became critical to produce and multiply abundance (the collective ability to transform natural resources to ensure a group’s survival) in a devastated territory, narratives related to metal axes and tools guided social organization. In the traditional ethnic model of social organization, indigenous captains or chiefs (*caciques*) inherited their legitimacy from their direct links with the “Creator.” In contrast, after the incorporation of axes, the legitimacy of a captain was “directly related to his capacity to produce and accumulate food” through these tools (Echeverri, 1997, p. 99). While earlier accounts of lineage had defined power inherited by ancestors in direct connection with the Creator, the power conferred by axes depended on the ability of a person to produce abundance through metal tools. As a result, ‘orphans’ who did not belong to any lineage could become chiefs through their “capacity to work and produce food to distribute to people” (Echeverri, 1997, p. 98). This means of social climbing became central to the People of the Centre’s social organization after the rubber boom (p. 101). Drawing on these changes in mythological knowledge, members of these indigenous groups have created interethnic connections crucial to overcome community confinement, demographic devastation, and political fragmentation.

For this reason, I propose to analyze the alliance of the People of the Centre as the inter-ethnic production of a regional collective indigenous actor able to face non-indigenous forces. This alliance results from the articulation of indigenous knowledges with the regional scale of the Caquetá-Putumayo, constructed around the common and mythic referent of the Centre. I argue in this thesis that, just like Eurocentric agents have historically constructed positions of power through their articulation with scales, the People of the Centre’s alliance has ensured indigenous people a regional power position to survive external forms of oppression. Thus, the

articulation of power scales with specific power positions in relation to culturally distinct groups is not a practice exclusive to colonizers.

The importance of this alliance is evident in the ways the People of the Centre use it in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Participants in this Plan justify the multiethnic character of their team and communities through their belonging to this alliance. They continuously recall their common origin in the “Centre” or identify themselves as the sons of Coca, Tobacco, and Sweet Manioc – products extracted through the use of axes. Through this self-representation, these peoples have downplayed their ethnic differences, and acknowledged their mutual dependence to overcome historical exclusion. This alliance reveals that, for the People of the Centre, knowledge about their possibilities of coexistence among their identity differences can constitute a source of power in intercultural encounters. The next section describes how the People of the Centre maintained this knowledge in their continuous encounters with otherness throughout their complex integration in the Colombian state.

1.3.3. The Integration of the People of the Centre into the State and the 20th-Century Economic Booms in the Tri-Border Middle Amazon

The Colombo-Peruvian war may be considered as the main landmark between the rubber boom era and a more direct presence of the Colombian State in the tri-border Middle Amazon. This war constitutes a historical reference point even for the children or grandchildren of indigenous people affected by the rubber boom. In a conversation about the origin of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, a Witoto leader (in his 40s) told me: “We settled here after the war with Peru in the 70s.” Shocked by the imprecision, I reacted: “But the war was in the 30s...” He answered: “No, it was not that far, it was like in the 60s or 50s.” I later came to understand that many Witoto people bring this war to their recent memories in order to mark the end of the violence that they experienced in the rubber exploitation period.

I analyze this historical period (1933-1990s) through the continuous attempts of the Colombian State to integrate the Amazon and its inhabitants into the national scale. In this integrative process, the State mobilized universal discourses of progress and civilization articulated to power and knowledge positions of the Colombian National Navy, the Catholic Church, Christian missionaries, and new economic exploiters. These agents reproduced the rubber boom power relations with indigenous people through these universal discourses.

These power relations further devalued indigenous people's knowledges and cultural practices and altered their social structures and territories. In the last years of this period, illegal armed agents – guerrillas and drug dealers – deepened these positions of subjugation once again, leading indigenous people to new forced displacements.

In order to establish sovereignty after the Colombo-Peruvian war, the Colombian State mobilized a set of Navy soldiers, missionaries, and civil authorities who established posts along the Putumayo and Caquetá rivers (Echeverri, 1997, p. 63). These State agents founded several towns in the Amazon and reinforced the Colombian presence in Leticia. Since the State sovereignty depended on the existence of national population, the Colombian Navy relocated in the national territory indigenous groups that had settled in Peru to flee from rubber exploitation (Echeverri, 1997, p. 66). These people were resettled “around the mission schools and the posts of civilian and military authorities” (Echeverri, 1997, p. 63). Threatened by the rubber exploitation regime, indigenous people saw the Colombian missionaries and Navy as sources of protection. Consequently, most indigenous people became Colombians and Christians only after the war (Echeverri, 1997). In short, indigenous people were instrumental to legitimate the Colombian sovereignty in the Middle Amazon.

In a meeting of the ESP team, a Witoto elder born in Pebas, Peru narrates the causes of his family's displacement to Colombia:

It was very hard to go back to our original place [La Chorrera]. When we [my family] knew that Leticia was part of Colombia, my father came to verify... My father said that it was easier to go back to Colombia through the [Amazon] river. To walk to La Chorrera would have been too hard. We arrived in Leticia in 1959. In that year, there were already other *paisanos*²⁹ here. They were Witoto. We had relatives who had come here five or four years prior to us. They told us: ‘Stay here, we're going to remain here’ (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

The presence of the Colombian State in Leticia was the main motivation for the Witoto diaspora, temporarily situated in several Amazonian locations, to move to this city. Several indigenous people felt motivated to move to Leticia due to the feeling of protection that they experienced from the Colombian Navy. Recalling the post-war period, a Bora elder of the ESP knowledgeable council illustrates this move:

²⁹ In Spanish, *paisanos* mean literally: people from the same place. However, in the Colombian Middle Amazon, *paisano* means indigenous person. This is the way an indigenous person refers to another indigenous person.

We [his family] knew that this land was going to be *taken over*³⁰ by Colombia and that *Colombians were not bad people* – they were good people and they *came* to help. But, suddenly, they [Peruvian people] took them [his grandfather and his family] as animals in corrals, brought and forced them to embark on Peruvian ships... they brought them to La Chorrera, by the Igarapará, and from there, to Gozón, in Peru. They brought everyone, everyone. Some elders remained [at the indigenous settlements] and died alone. Other ships went to El Estrecho. My father was on that ship. He was sixteen. He was with his three brothers. While they navigated [the Putumayo River] upstream in the night, they saw the Colombian shore through the window. So, they jumped into the water and swam to the shore, on *terra firma*.³¹ It is very far from El Estrecho to the shore! It takes time to cross!!

When they arrived in El Encanto, at noon, everything was *clean* and there were machete sounds. It was the [Colombian] Navy. They [the soldiers] took them [the brothers] and asked them: ‘Who are you?’ ‘We fled from Peru’ [the brothers answered]. ‘OK. Come here with us’ [the soldiers said]. *The Navy took them, shaved their heads, gave them uniforms and looked after them.* So, we remained on the Colombian shore, in El Encanto. The war did not last long, but we settled and were raised there. We did not have high school. Only did the *priests* provide education until the first year of elementary school (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation and emphasis).

This narrative reflects that indigenous people subjugated by the Peruvian Amazon Company saw Colombian people as ‘good’ but also as foreign actors who came to save the threatened indigenous people and territories. The possibility of liberation from Peruvian oppression was a main motivation for the Witoto and other Amazonian indigenous peoples to go back and settle in the Colombian territory.

Despite these positive meanings of the encounter with the Colombian Navy, this testimony also reflects some characteristics of the Colombian State assimilationist policy to integrate indigenous people into the nation. Shaving the three young indigenous people’s heads and providing them with uniforms can be interpreted as an attempt to subsume the physical traces of indigeneity to the norms of the Colombian Navy. This imposition of a national normative code on indigenous people’s physical appearance is coherent with the presence of ‘priests’ as the only educational actors of the State. In short, early Colombian practices of sovereignty depended on the coordination of military and religious actions oriented to the assimilation of the Amazonian inhabitants to the Colombian *mestizo* culture.

The People of the Centre’s direct contact with the Catholic Church produced transformations in their cultural practices. After the bi-national war, the State reinforced the ecclesiastical predominance of Capuchin missionaries. The latter were charged to “care for

³⁰The original Spanish word is *intervenir*. I translated it as “take over” to convey the idea of a foreign people coming to control the indigenous people’s land.

³¹ Literal translation of *tierra firme* in Spanish.

‘the orphans’ and give them Christian education” (Echeverri, 1987, p. 66). This measure allowed the clergy participate in a power relation in which indigenous people were reduced to war victims. Some elders of the Leticia Witoto ESP refer to this power relation:

In 1956, more or less, the so-called Father Luis said to my father: ‘Bring your son’ – by force. They put me there, in the orphanage. What devilment!! I did not even know how to speak Spanish. I suffered a lot. First year, second year... I met these people there [pointing other elders of the Leticia Witoto ESP]... Then, my thought became a little from here, a little from the white people, in that way, in that way (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

The missionaries’ assimilationist regime soon became mandatory for every single indigenous young person, starting with children. Another elder remembers that “since I was an only child, they [his parents] started speaking about the orphanage. I did not even know what animal the orphanage was” (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation). Evidently, to be integrated into the Colombian nation these indigenous people took part in educational, religious, and political systems that they did not even understand.

Orphanages soon became boarding schools. In the 1970s, most of the indigenous population had received basic education in these schools (Echeverri, 1997, p. 64). Another elders’ narration reveals that their students were caught in indigenous daily spaces:

Missionaries went and if they found you in a dance, they caught you. *All those systems, all that [negative] experience does not come from the rubber period only.* The Navy and the formation, the system applied to education took part in this [situation] since the beginning. We could not achieve knowledge that we were gaining some time before... Their formation [goal, sic] was to change our minds. The [indigenous] culture was diabolical, something useless, that is the confusion we live even among ourselves. There are *paisanos* who do not believe in the culture, the tradition. They only believe in the Western culture.

Their [missionaries’] mission consisted in changing the thought and culture, extinguishing the language, the mother tongue. No young person who entered into the boarding school was allowed to talk [the mother tongue]. It happened everywhere. That’s the moment when the culture started to *weaken*. So, every mother was forced to take her child³² to the school, to the boarding school. To avoid it, several parents moved to the centre [of the forest], to hide their children. In that way, they could maintain tradition (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation and emphasis).

In other words, missionaries established power-knowledge relations with these peoples by weakening indigenous people’s cultures. Even in the present, some inhabitants of the Tikuna-

³² This word is a direct translation of the Spanish word *hijo*, which conveys both boys and girls. My fieldwork data do not allow me to specify whether this forced process of education focused exclusively on boys or girls.

Witoto reserve recall that indigenous languages, religious, and cultural practices were forbidden and those who practiced them were punished. Consequently, indigenous knowledges and practices became part of the private family sphere, where they became invisible and rarely transmitted. Indigenous knowledges were devalued, hybridized, and gradually vanished through contact with Catholic and mestizo Colombian traditions. These forms of indigenous knowledge are part of what people born during the rubber boom and its aftermath revive and reconstruct through the Leticia Witoto ESP.

The People of the Centre also took part in power-knowledge relations with foreign Christian missionaries. Since the 1950s, the tri-border Middle Amazon has been a main destination for religious messianic prophets, missionaries, and religious movements (see Goulard, 2009; Uruburu Gilède, 2012). Although different in their religious doctrines and methods, most of these religious actors used civilizing arguments to justify the evangelization of indigenous people. For Christian missionaries, indigenous people were already included in “the divine plan and would have the same *right* as any other human being to know the word of God and the message of salvation” (Franco, 2012, p. 82, my translation). In the name of this ‘right,’ Christian missionaries established translation and alphabetization projects aimed to expand biblical knowledge among indigenous people.

Indigenous people took part in these relations because they saw alphabetization as a means to improve their economic positions vis-à-vis the economic exploiters (*patrones*) established in the region. With Christian alphabetization, indigenous people learned to read, write and do math operations that would ensure them access to knowledge useful to demand their just wages and work conditions from their *patrones* (Uruburu Gilède, 2012). For these reasons, Christian missionaries attracted some indigenous people interested in achieving more equitable work conditions.

However, negotiations with the missionaries’ biblical knowledge contributed to the devaluation of indigenous knowledges and practices. Sophia Muller, a known missionary who evangelized several indigenous people of the Colombo-Venezuelan Amazon, referred to translating the Bible into indigenous languages as part of her divine mission of “bringing light where there were ‘complete spiritual darkness’ and where sorcery and superstition reigned” (Muller, 1952: 7, 124, quoted in Franco, p. 83). Drawn from claims that Christian knowledge was superior to indigenous beliefs, this and other missionaries prohibited indigenous people’s

dances and rituals and replaced them with Christian activities (Uruburu Gilède, 2012, p. 402). In these ways, Christian missionaries contributed to disempower indigenous people through the devaluation and prohibition of their cultural knowledges and practices.

Some Christian agents directly associated themselves with the Colombian State. Between 1959 and 1962, the Colombian Ministry of Government signed a contract with the U.S. Christian Summer Language Institute to study the Colombian indigenous languages (Franco, 2012, p. 83). This institution's ethno-linguistic studies were mainly oriented to translating the Bible into indigenous languages all over the world. This contract can be seen as a manifestation of the Colombian State's need for external mediators to establish direct relationships with Colombian indigenous peoples. This mediation took place through an agent that expanded evangelization by inserting indigenous languages into Western religious and cultural systems. A Muinane elder of the ESP narrates the consequences of his work with this Institution:

In 1962 or 1961, when the Summer Linguistic [Summer Language Institute] arrived, I liked it. I started working with that Linguistic [sic]. I became a *llanero* [plainsman], I went to the *Llanos* [Colombian eastern plains] to work with them. That was the mistake I made. I thought it was going to be easy to rescue or learn our own language, but it was not. This brought me problems. I could never recover my language. My sons know the language, even hard words, but they cannot speak it (Muinane elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

In several similar cases, Western languages and knowledge predominated in relations between missionaries and indigenous peoples. Christian missionaries were an additional State-related agent in the devaluation of indigenous languages, knowledges, and cultural practices.

After the mid-twentieth century, political violence forced several non-indigenous people of the Andes and eastern plains (*llanos*) to move to the Middle Amazon (Echeverri, 1997; Huérfano Belisamón, 2010). These people shared the 19th-century idea of the Amazon as an empty and uncultivated land to be conquered to produce progress. Consequently, the Middle Amazon became the centre of feather and fur hunters, loggers, miners, smugglers, drug dealers, and a new wave of rubber gatherers, among others.

Indigenous people became instrumental to the exploitive enterprises of these new bosses (*patrones*). Some feather and fur hunters used to catch indigenous tribes and forced them to hunt intensively for long periods of time (Castro Caicedo, 1978, p. 177, cited in Franco, 2012, p. 79). As a result, some indigenous people became the guides for hunting expeditions planned

by the feather and fur *patrones*. Often, these economic exploiters subdued indigenous peoples through military structures and systems of indenture less intense yet similar to those of the rubber boom period. An elder of the Leticia Witoto ESP recalls that, just like the Arana Company of the former period, “merchants brought their own army” (my translation). Other indigenous people saw *patrones* as their protectors, although punishment was not absent from their barrack huts (Franco, 2012, p. 35). Just as in the rubber boom period, a *patrón* provided an indigenous group with merchandise, clothes, and tools in exchange for work. Indigenous people’s fascination for dazzling merchandise influenced their voluntary participation in exploitation relations through exchange (Rodríguez and van ter Hammen, 1993, p. 54). To their disadvantage, indigenous people did not know how much the *patrón*’s gifts would cost (Rodríguez and van ter Hammen, 1993). As a result of these unequal exchanges, “The *patrón* was, in some ways, the owner of his own group of indigenous people and their territory” (p. 48, my translation). Like with the *caucheros*, the People of the Centre established unequal relations based in part on epistemological differences with the *patrones*.

Unequal negotiations with non-indigenous agents led several indigenous peoples of the Colombian Middle Amazon to coexist in problematic ways with multiple legal and illegal economic activities. In the mid-1970s, some indigenous people took part in the construction of air strips and as guides for *patrones* involved in the drug business (Franco, 2012). In the 1970-1990 war between the Colombian Army and drug dealers, indigenous territories and people were affected by fly-bys, air strip bombing, and the presence of armed legal and illegal agents (Franco, 2012, p. 91). For most indigenous people, violence related to the drug production caused anxiety and concern. Throughout the 20th century, relations of force with legal and illegal economic actors directly or indirectly affected indigenous people of the Middle Amazon.

Migration has been an important consequence of indigenous people’s unequal relations with religious, economic, and armed agents. A Bora elder leader of the Leticia Witoto ESP comments the role of economic booms in their displacements:

In the time of mine exploitation, all of them [his tribe] went to the mines in search of money. So many people remained there. It happened the same in the sawmill time. They established there and built their towns besides. When fur was extinguished, there was another displacement (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

The search for better economic opportunities motivated indigenous people's migration or displacement. Furthermore, since high schools were almost nonexistent in the Putumayo-Caquetá, the search for educational opportunities caused further displacement to Leticia. In short, processes oriented to improving economic conditions through working or training caused migrations that affected the People of the Centre's culture, knowledge, and power positions.

Summarizing, this historical period demonstrates how indigenous people participated in new forms of marginalization produced by the interconnected actions of State, religious and economic agents. The State delegated civil processes of education and economic integration to religious and private agents who promoted unquestioned discourses of civilization and progress. Through these discourses, these agents created new forms of domination that devaluated indigenous languages, knowledges, beliefs, rituals, practices, or spaces. Social structures such as the indigenous family, clan, or tribe were influenced by boarding schools, migrations, or the exploitive projects of different economic booms. Far from saving the Amazonian indigenous people from devastation produced by the rubber boom, the Colombian State's actions in this period can be compared to the *rescates* of the colonial period (in which religious and military agents 'rescued' indigenous slaves, converted them to Christianity and left them available to colonial agents). In the described historical period, the Colombian State and its allies replaced one form of domination with another.

1.3.4. The 1990s to the Present: Multi-ethnic Encounters and Direct Negotiations with Universal Discourses on the Local and Community Scales

In the 1990s, several waves of indigenous people affected by the guerrillas and the economic booms were displaced to Leticia. According to the *Sistema Nacional de Atención a la Población Desplazada* (National System on Attention to Displaced Population or SNAIPD), in the Amazonas province, 478 people were displaced between 2005 and 2009. This number represents an intensity of 1.46 displacements per 1,000 inhabitants (SNAIPD, 2010, p. 92).³³

³³ The intensity of forced displacement in the Amazonas province is relatively low compared to provinces such as Antioquia, which reached 15.5 displacements per 1,000 inhabitants in 2001 or Putumayo (in the Amazonian region), with 78 displacements per 1,000 inhabitants in 2002. State authorities registered the highest records of forced displacement in Colombia in 2002 and 2008, with 343,810 and 305,998 cases respectively (SNAIPD, 2010, pp. 87; 91).

As a result, between 1990 and 2008, more families arrived (approximately 22) in the 6th kilometre-community of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve than during the previous 25 years (Huérfano Belisamón, 2010, p. 20). Forced displacement and economic migration increased the intensity of multiethnic encounters in the Leticia area. Simultaneously, the implementation of the new Constitution since 1991 favoured a more direct presence of the Colombian State among indigenous communities of this area, particularly through institutional projects and development and human rights plans.

Most displaced families who established in Leticia in the 1990s belong to the People of the Centre; other displaced people were *mestizo* Peruvians or indigenous families of the Cocama, Yagua, or Tikuna groups (Huérfano Belisamón, 2010, p. 20). Most of these people came from the Caquetá-Putumayo interfluve or its surrounding provinces (Putumayo, Caquetá, Vaupés, or Guaviare), which had been affected since the 1980s by the presence of guerrillas and drug dealers in their territories (Franco, 2012). A Bora elder of the Leticia Witoto ESP describes the arrival of the guerrillas in his hometown (Puerto Arica), on the Putumayo River:

Drug trafficking was common in [Puerto] Arica. There were clandestine air strips and people also came from the interior of the country. We saw those boats full of armed people. We never thought it was the guerrillas because they [guerrilla soldiers] were [dressed as] civilians. We realized that [they were guerrilla soldiers] when they started recruiting the youngsters. My son was 10 or 11 years old. . . . So I said: 'I'm leaving this place, I'll move to Leticia.' I came here [to Leticia] to save his life. Too many [young people] of that time, who lived in [Puerto] Arica went to the [guerrilla] ranks. Nowadays, no one knows where they are (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation).

Likewise, a Witoto elder who used to live in the Caquetá province (Colombian Northwest Amazon) reveals the presence of the guerrillas as the main cause of his displacement to Leticia:

Every single day there were 4, 5, or 6 people killed in the town. I lived with psychosis. I lived that way until I started thinking: *This is not my land*; this is not where I grew up. *This is not the land of my ancestors*. So, I decided to go back to La Chorrera. . . . However, it was impossible. They [the guerrillas] controlled everyone who left the area. . . . So, I told them I was going to visit my family in [Puerto] Leguízamo [on the Putumayo River]. From there, we went to Leticia. Thank God I did not suffer when I arrived because my mother was here [in Leticia] (An ESP elder, Collective meeting with the Leticia Witoto ESP Council of knowledgeable elders, September 20th 2012, my translation and emphasis).

Like this elder, several displaced people of the Amazon have seen Leticia as a safe place given the permanent presence of the Army and Navy after the Colombo-Peruvian war. As a result of

similar situations, in the 1990s the Tikuna-Witoto reserve became the main destination for indigenous people who were displaced from the Upper and Middle Amazon.

The integration of the displaced people into the Tikuna-Witoto reserve has been a complex and problematic process. These communities partially or totally lack infrastructures to satisfy the demands of the growing multiethnic displaced population, and land access has become a source of intercultural conflicts among these groups. Paradoxically, the Tikuna, original inhabitants of the land, achieved State recognition of their right to land only through an alliance with the Witoto in 1986; however, the growing presence of the latter and other Peoples of the Centre threatens the Tikuna's access to their original land (see Chapter Five). Furthermore, in spite of the official, community, and indigenous character of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, several plots of land (between 300 and 2000 square metres) remain as economic enclaves led by settlers who have established cattle farms, touristic, or agricultural projects in the indigenous land (AZCAITA, 2008, p. 28). These private and capitalist land uses have limited indigenous people's cultural practices and land access. In short, forced displacement and economic migration have brought multiple indigenous and mestizo groups to the Leticia area, which has led to conflicts over land and tensions between the original inhabitants and the newcomers.

In the midst of these situations, indigenous people attempt to maintain their cultural practices, beliefs, and identities. With this purpose, these indigenous communities have appropriated some institutional and legal measures available to them through the 1991 Colombian Constitution, which promoted progressive changes in the recognition of indigenous people's rights. After 180 years as an independent Republic, with the 1991 Constitution, Colombia acknowledged for the first time the "ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation" (Article 7). The Constitution acknowledged several economic, social, cultural, and political rights of indigenous peoples such as: the official character of indigenous languages and the establishment of bilingual education in indigenous territories (Article 10); the right of indigenous peoples to direct participation in the government – notably the Senate (Article 171); the collective and inalienable character of property on indigenous reserves; the autonomy of indigenous people's authorities in their territories (Article 246); and the collective, participatory, and cultural character of indigenous territorial entities governed by "indigenous Councils" (Articles 329 and 330). These measures situate the 1991 Constitution

as an important landmark for the political and cultural recognition of Colombian indigenous people.

Rights acknowledged by this Constitution draw on international human rights discourses promoted in the multilateral agreements signed by the Colombian State on this topic (Organization of American States, 1969; Red Cross, 1949; 1998; United Nations, 1966a; 1966b). Since the 1990s, the Colombian State has localized these discourses in the practices and power structures of the Leticia indigenous communities, and have produced complex processes leading to the emergence of new forms of indigenous leadership.

The 1991 Constitution formally recognized indigenous councils and governors as official authorities in Colombian indigenous communities. These forms of leadership were created in the colonial period, formalized through Law 89 of 1890,³⁴ and legally acknowledged as legitimate authorities in the 1970s (Echeverri, 1997). These indigenous authorities were legally recognized as political organizations through Decree 2164 of 1995 (Echeverri, 1997, p. 81; Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011, p. 219). This decree defined the indigenous councils as:

A special entity whose associates are members of an indigenous community and are chosen and recognized by this community. Councils are traditional sociopolitical organizations whose function is to represent the community, exerting authority, and conducting activities in agreement with the laws, uses, customs, and internal rules of every community (Arango y Sánchez, 2006, p. 200, quoted in Uruburu, Herrera and Rodríguez, 2011, p. 219, my translation).

Indigenous councils must subscribe to an agreement with the municipality to administrate the resources transferred by the Colombian State (Article 25, Law 60 of 1993 see Colombia, 1993; 1994). The municipality transfers these resources for the indigenous councils and governors to use for programs that the communities have already defined and approved. As a result, indigenous councils now manage resources directly transferred by the national government. On the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, indigenous governors manage an annual budget of approximately \$63 million Colombian pesos (approximately \$32,000 CAD) to be distributed for education, health, housing, and infrastructure projects in the seven communities inhabited by approximately 3,000 people.³⁵ As a result of these measures, indigenous leaders able to

³⁴ This was one of the only laws that protected indigenous people within the legislative framework of the 1886-1991 Constitution.

³⁵ This reduced amount of money results insufficient to satisfy the needs of these communities.

navigate the State's legal and administrative procedures have become the main community authorities on the Tikuna-Witoto reserve.

In the Leticia area, this change in indigenous governance has produced conflicts between two generations associated with two different forms of indigenous knowledges: one connected to the State legal discourses and another linked to traditional sources of knowledge. Mainly young people in their 30s occupy the positions of indigenous governors and councils members. Their power results from their knowledge of State procedures, a knowledge acquired in the formal State education system. In contrast, community elders embody traditional forms of power related to knowledge passed on orally in community houses (*malokas*) or sacred spaces of discussion (*mambeaderos*). Thus, the implementation of the 1991 Constitution in the Leticia area has led to conflicts between two indigenous forms of power that draw on different knowledge frameworks and embodied in two different generations. As I will reflect on in Chapter Five, one of the Leticia Witoto ESP's main proposals is to recover the elder's power based on traditional knowledge. In the same Chapter, I analyze how this proposal has produced intergenerational and even inter-ethnic frictions between two different epistemologies related to two different sources of power and knowledge: the State procedures and indigenous traditions.

After the implementation of the 1991 Constitution, the State has established contact with the Leticia indigenous people mainly through projects of development and human rights. In the late 1990s, the Presidential Agency *Red de Solidaridad Social* (Social Solidarity Network) led an initiative in this area to eliminate 'poverty' through programs based on shared responsibilities between the State and civil society (Colombia, 1997, Art. 2). In 2004, the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (National Service of Learning or SENA) opened the Amazonas Regional Center of Biodiversity and Tourism, which has led projects on "technical and social *development*... through professional training for *productive* activities that contribute to social and *economic growth*" (SENA, 2011, my translation and emphasis). Between 2008 and 2009, the Presidential Agency *Acción social* (Social Agency) led the *Programa Familias Guardabosques* (Forest Ranger Families Program). Drawing on a national policy on *peace as a right* to be achieved through 'progress' and 'alternative development', this program compelled the People of the Centre to accept subsidies to cultivate alternative products to substitute their traditional coca crops (Colombia, 2012, p. 23; Restrepo Uribe, 2006). Through

an abstract notion of peace constructed on the national scale and built on universal discourses, this program dismissed the cultural specificity of the People of the Centre, who see coca powder as a sacred substance that favours collective discussion and work to produce abundance. Unsurprisingly, the Rainforest Family Program failed on the Tikuna-Witoto reserve. Even in 2012, people were still reluctant to talk about this program on this reserve.

Other development-related projects have failed on the reserve for similar reasons. The SENA and the Local Unity of Technical Assistance on Farming (UMATA) have led projects aimed at productivity through community enterprises including bakeries, truck gardens, handicrafts, poultry, and fish farming. For these purposes, both institutions have distributed ovens, animals, seeds, fertilizers, and other related supplies among the community members (Nieto, 2010, p. 170; Uruburu, Herrera and Rodríguez, 2011). According to one of the institution's employees, these projects have included training programs and monitoring practices aimed at "opening the minds of indigenous people to a business-oriented vision" (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011, p. 172, my translation). Most of these projects have failed. Only the handicraft project succeeded. In the 11th kilometre some indigenous craftswomen who participated in this project had established the bases of an organization in which women had become community influential. However, in less than one year – in 2012 – this organization split in two isolated family businesses with fluctuant profitability.

These projects have failed, among other factors, because they understand indigenous organizations to be community-centered in their work and property distribution (Nieto, 2010, p. 168). These ideas emerge from the 1991 Colombian Constitution that, drawing on the social organization of the Andean indigenous groups, conceives indigenous people as organized in communities (p. 168). In contrast, in the Tikuna-Witoto reserve, family private property predominates as a result of the multiethnic character of its population established there after several ways of economic migration or forced displacement. It can be concluded that the universal and delocalized character of development and human rights discourses proposed by the State have contributed to the failure of projects oriented to productivity and 'peace'.

Contact of indigenous inhabitants of the Leticia area with human rights and development programs has entailed consequences such as dependency on external aid and positions of individualism and disempowerment (see Nieto, 2010). According to an indigenous leader of

the 11th kilometre, integration into a monetary economy, incorporation of urban practices of commerce and work, and the abandonment of vegetable plots have been three main consequences of development programs in their reserve. In a personal interview that I conducted, this community leader asserts that “when the economic aid disappeared, several indigenous people abandoned their *chagras* (vegetable plots) because they were not paid anymore” (my translation). *Chagras* are the space where the People of the Centre’s families produce their food, establish gender distinctions through differentiated tasks, and start passing knowledge (languages, practices, tactics of cultivation) from one generation to another (see Chapters Two and Five). In another interview, a Tikuna woman leader narrates how economic allocations of State development programs have transformed the cultural relevance and practices related to *chagras*:

Money is like dynamite for indigenous people. Money is a big problem among indigenous communities. It can be compared to forced displacement. It has brought bad thoughts and problems... People became lazy through these programs. Indigenous people expected to be paid for working in their own *chagras*. What is the meaning of *chagra*? It is life! This is like paying me for being an indigenous person (my translation).

From these viewpoints, paying indigenous people to practice their culture has incorporated indigenous cultural and economic activities within the power structures of the State and of capitalist consumption. As a result, development programs may have weakened indigenous people’s cultural and economic autonomy.

Differences of knowledge between State development agents, indigenous practices, and land conditions in the Amazonian Trapezoid have been the main causes of failure for several development projects. In her PhD dissertation, Micarelli suggests that Amazonian indigenous people “express the feeling that their life quality has become worse as Development projects proceed, and they see themselves as both physically and spiritually ill” (Abstract, 2003). Other authors suggest that productive projects conducted in this region lack sustainability and clear delimitation of responsibilities among community members (Barbosa Mendoza, 2006). Similarly, in her Master’s dissertation, Nieto (2006) suggests that, after their negative experiences with development projects, indigenous inhabitants of the 11th kilometre community associate the word ‘project’ with negative meanings. The failed implementation of several productive projects in this community (e.g., breeding, processing fish flour, training on marketing strategies, alternative crops, community sewing and other cottage industries)

directly connotes situations such as community rivalry and the increase of personal benefits to the detriment of the collective good. Among members of this community, the failure of these productive projects has influenced shared positions of distrust in relation to new development programs.

In my fieldwork, some leaders explained the causes of these projects' failures. In a personal interview, a political leader of the 11th kilometre refers to the consequences of relations of dependency when development institution's staff promotes techniques, such as monoculture, which differ from the Amazonian conditions of production:

They [technicians] bought graters without having land or manioc. What were they going to grate? Everyone focused on the same product: farina (manioc meal). This land is not productive. You can sow manioc because it is part of our culture, but this land is not apt to sow manioc to everyone [in massive ways]. They do not know this land to produce (my translation).

This leader summarizes the critical role that knowledge differences played in development projects' failure: "Projects fail because everything remains from the viewpoint of the white people, but never from our viewpoint." Similarly, a woman leader of the 11th kilometre community, who participated in training on marketing for productive initiatives, referred in an interview that I conducted to the central differences between development and indigenous knowledge systems: "I learned nothing in the marketing training. I lost all my notebooks and I recorded nothing in my brain." Other indigenous women see State projects as repetitive instructions that teach what they already know. This apathy toward development may illustrate indigenous peoples' reaction to the inferior position that development agents have conferred on their knowledge and cultural practices.

As Escobar argues, development has "powerful effects" on people's life even when it fails (1995, pp. 118-119). These effects are evident in the contemporary lack of interest in indigenous community processes, rivalry between families and ethnic groups and devaluation of indigenous practices and knowledges. A leader who took part in a community project refers to "conflicts among us [community members as] our main problem. Some people used to work together, but then there were some quarrels. Some people continued and other people were stolen by the same *paisanos*" (Leader of the 11th kilometre community, personal communication, September 6 2012, my translation). As a result of these projects and their failures, some community inhabitants have preferred to solve their economic problems through their individual work: they deliberately avoid community work. In this way, the

Western logic of marketing has reinforced individualistic behaviour and rivalry among community members of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve.

This last historical period reflects the social complexities produced by two key elements: increased waves of displaced people into the Leticia area, and a more direct contact with the State through the 1991 Constitution's application of universal human rights and development discourses. Territorial conflicts between displaced and original inhabitants, intergenerational rivalries between different indigenous forms of power and knowledge, and positions of individualism and scepticism created by development projects are key aspects of the current positions of power among communities involved in the Leticia Witoto ESP. This thesis explores how the Leticia Witoto ESP team has attempted to face these problems, by appropriating human rights and development discourses according to cultural indigenous knowledges.

1.4. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have introduced some of the geographical conditions and historical power relations in which the Leticia Witoto ESP team aims to intervene in order to benefit the People of the Centre. I described how State, private, and religious historical social actors have articulated their unquestioned positions of power with universal discourses of civilization, economic progress, human rights, and development. These articulations have been crucial to naturalize violence against indigenous people through scientific or technical regimes such as the rubber industry, Catholic and Christian literacy programs, the production of new indigenous authorities, or development projects oriented around increasing productivity. Differences between these universal discourses and indigenous worldviews and practices have produced positions of marginalization, disempowerment, individualization, and rivalry among the communities of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve

These historical power relations have been bidirectional and are directly connected to knowledge. During the rubber boom period, the *caucheros* established strategic connections between their economic interests and the indigenous people's sacred views on tools and principle of cultural exchange. In the aftermath of the Colombo-Peruvian war, the People of the Centre participated in assimilationist processes led by Catholic and Christian missionaries to cope with the devastation of war and to achieve better positions in relation to economic

exploiters. After the 1990s, the People of the Centre took part in programs oriented around Western notions of human rights and development, which proposed norms of productivity and forms of leadership different from traditional indigenous practices. With the hope of overcoming their historical marginalization, these indigenous people have engaged with power structures that have favoured the dominance of State knowledge frameworks, thereby devaluing indigenous beliefs, practices, subjects, and forms of organization. In short, these historical violent relations of exploitation were initially epistemic unequal relations.

This historical context could be summarized as the production of the Middle Amazon as a transnational region directly connected to global economic forces at the expense of the visibility and influence of local indigenous and community agents. This chapter has explored how scales are arbitrarily produced through articulation between universal discourses and unquestioned positions of power according to specific interests. In this process, some national and regional inhabitants have imposed global forms of domination on indigenous people. These multi-scalar relations have transferred global, national, and regional dynamics to the local and community scales of the Leticia area. This area can exemplify the ways that the local scale is produced and contested through its continuous connection with national, transnational, and global forms of power (Dirlik, 1997).

In this chapter, I have described historical contexts that allow me to situate this dissertation as research about the mutually co-constitutive nature of global and local discourses, agents, and scales through relations of power and knowledge. Framed within this dynamic context, this dissertation analyzes how global forces influence local places and agents. At the same time, the People of the Centre's strategies of collective resistance and negotiation suggest how local agents attempt to become a regional force in order to influence national and global agents and worldviews.

I have argued that the alliance of the People of the Centre has emerged as an interethnic strategy to face national and global agents within multi-scalar relations of power and knowledge. From the rubber boom period, this alliance has influenced the demographic recovery – or at least the persistence – of seven indigenous groups. In spite of the exploitation and assimilation that legal and illegal agents conducted in their territories, these peoples have continued to exist as indigenous groups and have maintained some of their cultural practices. I see this alliance as a privileged collective space site of dialogues about the critical role of

indigenous knowledges in the physical, cultural, and even political existence of indigenous peoples.

These topics coincide, at least partially and formally, with the goals of the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans promoted by the Colombian State: to prevent indigenous people's cultural and physical extinction. This dissertation analyzes how power and knowledge collectively constructed by the alliance of the People of the Centre may contribute to improve the living conditions and facilitate the cultural and political autonomy of indigenous people. I argue that the People of the Centre may produce synergies to re-articulate through their knowledges a State Plan focused on rights recognition to displaced indigenous people.

The People of the Centre who take part in the Leticia Witoto ESP see the State as both an active participant in their historical marginalization and as a crucial institution that offers resources and tools to overcome such marginal positions. For this reason, one main challenge of this analysis is to continuously recognize the position of distrust of the People of the Centre in relation to the State. From these historically constructed positions, indigenous people aim to appropriate human rights and development universal discourses to produce power positions beneficial to their own reality.

Let me conclude this chapter by identifying some of the general questions that this geographic and historical reconstruction has allowed me to introduce: What is the role of indigenous knowledges in these processes of power production? Is there still room for indigenous knowledges to produce power, in spite of violent and the restrictive historical relations described in this chapter, and the influence of Western discourses of human rights and development on the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans? Taking into account the historical negotiations with civilization and progress described in this chapter, what positions and practices of power may indigenous people create through their contemporary negotiation with universal discourses? In the next chapter, I reflect on the accuracy of indigenous knowledges and forms of power to understand how universal discourses of human rights and development may be creatively appropriated to benefit indigenous agents. Throughout this dissertation, I propose to answer these questions from the geographically and historically constructed power positions of the People of the Centre.

CHAPTER TWO CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

“This child will grow for everyone. He will share, he will do everything, he will have the power to do anything and he has everything. This child will offer advice, history, songs, he will offer it to the knowledgeable men. This child knows everything, everything.”
(The origin of indigenous knowledges according to a Witoto woman elder’s narrative, my translation)

This chapter establishes this dissertation’s conceptual framework. The chapter’s goals are two-fold. First, I aim to clarify my position in relation to the dissertation’s main analytical concepts: friction, power, indigenous knowledges, human rights, and development. Second, I situate my dissertation within the interdisciplinary fields of intercultural communication, discursive approaches to human rights, and communication for development and social change. I enter into these fields through concepts and reflections drawn from cultural studies, postcolonial theory, indigenous anti-colonial perspectives, the post-development approach, feminist critiques to development, and subaltern perspectives on human rights. In addition to citing scholars associated with these approaches, I introduce some indigenous people’s concepts, narratives, and reflections collected in my fieldwork or drawn from previous ethnographic works conducted in the Middle Amazon (e.g., Preuss, 1994; Bríñez Pérez, 2002; Echeverri, 1997; Uruburu, Herrera and Rodríguez, 2011). I set in dialogue indigenous and scholarly perspectives in order to understand intercultural relations in globalization from the viewpoint of power and knowledge. This connection is part of my dissertation’s political and epistemological purpose to provide insights into the value of indigenous knowledges in order to understand contemporary global intercultural relations of power.

I start by situating my dissertation in the interdisciplinary fields of intercultural and development communication. I describe this dissertation as research on power-knowledge relations between the culturally distinct groups participating in the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP). I analyze this Plan as a negotiation of power and difference historically situated in the local and global structures of power described in Chapter One. To understand this context, I introduce globalization as a continuous process that entails the connection, production, and re-articulation of differences (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Hall, 1996). I use the notion of friction (Tsing, 2005) to identify the multiple directions or shapes that globalization may take through tracing how global and local forces connect to one another. The concept of friction is also deployed to understand how unequal encounters

between global and local agents, discourses, and epistemologies produce subjects, concepts, and practices that may influence power positions for subaltern agents.

The chapter's second section clarifies my understanding of power as a relational category. I refer to how power circulates and articulates with knowledge through discourse, producing material effects on subjects (Foucault, 1980; 1980a). Power-knowledge relations are also evident in the ways that subaltern subjects produce power positions through resistance, identity production, and empowerment (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Malkki, 1997; Melkote, 2000). This reflection aims to set the groundwork for a macro and micro analysis of the ways that indigenous subaltern subjects produce, experience, resist, recreate, and reproduce power relations through their contact with universal discourses.

The chapter's third section focuses on indigenous knowledges as forms of situated knowledge connected to power (Haraway, 1991; Suchet, 2002). Drawing on decolonizing and anti-colonial indigenous research (Castellano, 2000; Dei, 2000; Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 2000; Everett, 2009; Meyer, 2011; Smith, 1999; 2005), I focus on the political and spiritual nature of indigenous knowledges; its main sources (tradition, direct experience, and exchange); and how it articulates with forms of power materialized in community spaces. I also reflect on the role that indigenous knowledges play in the production of identity and ethnicity through processes of representation, identification, and differentiation (Barth, 1995; Hall and Du Gay, 1996; Jenkins, 1994; Weber, 1995). These reflections lead me to describe indigenous knowledges as complex logical systems created through interrelated epistemological, ontological, and axiological views.

In the People of the Centre's case, these interrelations articulate indigenous cultures and power positions that are mainly based on gender and generation distinctions. Given these articulations, indigenous knowledges are not exempt from connections with unequal power relationships. As with universal discourses, indigenous knowledges may contribute both to empowerment and exclusion within indigenous communities. I conclude this section with some reflections on the potential of indigenous knowledges both as forms of resistance and as offering resources for developing more egalitarian relations between indigenous and Western agents.

The fourth section focuses on human rights and development. I question these discourses' assumed universality. Drawing on Foucauldian, feminist, and postcolonial

reflections, I describe these discourses' particular Western, masculine, and bourgeois origins. Furthermore, I introduce several understandings of these universal discourses in order to situate this dissertation within the subaltern counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights (Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005; Santos and Rodríguez Garavito, 2005; Santos, 1997; 2002a; 2002b), in the post-development approach (Escobar, 1995; 2000; 2001; Cupples, Glynn, and Lariosz, 2007; Crush, 1995), and in the feminist postcolonial critiques to development (Parpart, 1995; Kothari, 2002; Spivak, 1994; 1999; Mohanty, 2003). From these perspectives, I analyze the Leticia Witoto ESP as an intercultural dialogue in which indigenous people have recreated or produced new forms of power and knowledge that may be beneficial or detrimental to their living conditions.

2.1. INTERCULTURAL FRICTIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCE IN GLOBALIZATION

Intercultural communication can be understood as the process in which groups with different cultures, languages, beliefs, or practices establish relations in a given conjuncture. From the human communication perspective – mainly influenced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall – Barnett and Lee (2002) suggest that intercultural communication entails the negotiated exchange, interpretation, and reconstruction of meaning between groups with different idiosyncratic symbolic systems (p. 277). For their part, Servaes and Lie (2008) study the active process of cultural localization of media products (such as TV series) globally diffused. These authors argue that these products are differently encoded by the producer when they are globally diffused in order to make them more multi-culturally interpretable for local cultures (p. 64). Thus, local cultures influence the form of media products diffused on a global scale. From the viewpoint of intercultural and international communication connections, Hsab and Stoiciu (2011) situate otherness (*alterité*) at the core of intercultural communication (p 16). Indeed, Stoiciu characterizes intercultural communication as a multidisciplinary laboratory to understand the encounters with the other in a given context (2011, p. 67). From these viewpoints, intercultural communication focuses on the complexities of identity and symbolic negotiations, the localization of global discourses, and continuous encounters with otherness.

The other key field of communication studies to which this thesis contributes is development communication, conceived by Wilkins as the exploration of power in contexts of social change. Such exploration implies “understanding the global structure within which

agencies construct social problems and interventions, the discourse guiding the normative climate for conceiving and implementing projects, the praxis of intervention, and the consequences of these structures, discourses, and interventions” (Wilkins, 2000, p. 2). For Wilkins, research on communication for social change is situated within contexts of power in order to “recognize both the ability of dominant groups to control hegemonic processes through perpetuating their ideological interests and the potential for marginal communities to resist” (p. 2). For his part, Huesca frames communication for social change as “researching [how] the communicating of and in social movements offers a promising way to document the ‘epistemology of action’ that is central to their formation, mobilization and operation” (2000, p. 78). Huesca proposes to study the changes that social movements produce through their creative and heterogeneous actions. From these viewpoints, communication for development and social change is related to social actions that individuals and groups produce to exert power or resistance in multi-scalar structures of power.

With this dissertation, I propose to contribute to the interdisciplinary field of intercultural communication through an interrogation of difference and power. Elsewhere, I characterize intercultural communication as a social process connected to the construction of the self (the “we”) through proximity, distance, and power exercised in relation to groups perceived as ‘others’ (Herrera, 2013). This dissertation contributes to understand relations between culturally and epistemologically different groups by focusing on power-knowledge relations. With this purpose, I focus on postcolonial, feminist critiques and cultural studies paradigms that have “challenged” the human intercultural communication paradigm (Gudykunst, 2002, p. 4). Although power is central in intercultural encounters, “there is insufficient research on power in intercultural communications” (Gudykunst, 2002, p. 180).

My analysis of frictions between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses may offer three insights on power in intercultural relations. First, this dissertation analyzes how universal discourses of human rights and development localize in specific indigenous Amazonian contexts affected by historical power relations. Second, I propose to chart different forms of knowledge – concepts, narratives, and practices – and the power relations that may emerge from such negotiations. Third, I outline how forms of power-knowledge emerging from these negotiations may challenge (or eventually complement) discourses commonly assumed as universally beneficial for all cultural groups.

Tsing's analysis of the collaborative work between local movements and international agencies in Indonesia may provide insights into intercultural communication complexities:

Collaboration works with the enemy in wartime. These collaborators are *not positioned in equality or sameness*, and their collaboration does not produce a common good. This is a place to start in opening up *other meanings* of working together. Parties who work together may or may not be similar and may or may not have common understandings of the problem and the product. The more *different* they are, the more they must reach for barely overlapping understanding the situation. Their common cause is also a *cultural encounter*, and the objects on which they appear to agree are most successful when they appeal simultaneously to *divergent cultural legacies*. Furthermore, collaboration may or may not have any understanding of each other's agendas. Such collaboration brings *misunderstandings* into the core of alliance. In the process, they make wide-ranging links possible: they are the stuff of global ties. They are also the stuff of emergent politics: they make new objects and *agents* possible (Tsing, 2005, pp. 246-247, my emphasis).

From this viewpoint, intercultural communication can be understood as a continuous unequal encounter across differences. Participants in intercultural encounters produce new meanings or misunderstandings that emerge from dissimilar views shaped by different 'cultural legacies'. Although a common goal unites these legacies, each group takes part in intercultural encounters according to its own views and practices. From these encounters, they produce new understandings that do not necessarily lead to a common agreement. Given their unequal power positions, collaborative projects between different cultural groups "may or may not empower local people": New forms of subaltern or dominant positions may emerge from these collaboration experiences (Tsing, 2005, p. 264).

I liken the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP) to this intercultural collaborative perspective. This Plan brings together indigenous and State agents historically situated in different power positions. These agents share different understandings of human rights recognition and the improvement of material living conditions, which are precisely the topics that connect them. Despite these different understandings and motivations (State agents seek to comply with a Constitutional Order, while indigenous people seek better living conditions for their communities) participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP share a common goal: the cultural and physical continuity of indigenous ethnic groups. Although dissent and differences have persisted among them, participants in the formulation of this Plan have produced new concepts and meanings that may influence both indigenous and State agents and concepts. Similarly, new or re-articulated forms of individual and collective subjectivity – such as the alliance of the People of the Centre, the view of indigenous people as displaced subjects, and new indigenous leaders – have emerged or been recreated through these

processes. New power positions – new forms of leadership, hierarchies, or new forms of marginality for some subjects – may have emerged from this intercultural relation. In short, the Leticia Witoto ESP constitutes an intercultural process of communication and collaboration conducted through the negotiation of differences.

I use the notion of friction to understand intercultural communication processes related to this Plan's formulation. In the contemporary global conjunctures characterized by the increased mobility of subjects and the continuous diffusion of Western ideas, friction is a "reminder of the importance of defining movement, cultural forms, and agency" (Tsing 2005 p. 6). Frictions refer to the multiple practices, tactics, movements, negotiations, cultural arrangements, power positions, ideas, strategies, or concepts that may emerge from encounters across difference. In "dialogues across difference," new knowledges are formed while others are forgotten, shriveled, festered, or fallen away (Tsing 2005 p. 85). Intercultural frictions produce new arrangements of culture and power precisely because they occur amidst unequal contact between culturally distinct groups.

Friction challenges the idea that global forces – such as Western discourses – flow freely and produce homogenization. Friction suggests the need to understand how globalization takes multiple directions through connections across differences. Rather than analyzing how the global South absorbs and transforms global "imperial mandates" of the global North, Tsing suggests the importance of acknowledging how global (universals) and local forces (particulars) come together and produce new forms of globalization (Tsing, 2005, p. 4). Through the concept of friction, globalization can be understood as a continuous process emerging from multiple and peripheral encounters that may produce creative global changes (2005, p. 3). The concept of friction suggests that new and multiple versions of globalization may emerge through unequal connections.

Cultural studies and postcolonial authors also analyze globalization as negotiations of power and difference. For Hall (1998), the global works through the negotiation of spaces, ethnicities, identities, forms of power, and institutions, among others. These negotiations take place through social, institutional, technical, economic, and political forces that enter cultural practices and shape the understandings and configurations of the world (1989: 49, cited in Slack, 1996, p. 124). 'Forces' are inherent to these negotiations because groups impose, lose, give, create, renew, and gain something through interaction with others. These negotiations

put together multiple forces that produce hierarchies or power relations. In the same vein, Gupta and Ferguson suggest that globalization is the continuous “production of difference in a world of culturally, socially, and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces” (1997, p. 43). These authors propose to analyze how difference is continuously produced through a set of relations in a historical process that transforms global spaces (p. 46). They propose “to move beyond naturalized conceptions of spatialized ‘cultures’ and to explore instead the production of difference within common, shared, and connected spaces” (p. 45). From these perspectives, globalization is constructed through several hierarchies or power positions that coexist, negotiate impinge on one another, and continuously produce differences.

Mutual communication between global and local scales is central in these understandings of globalization. Postcolonial, post-development, and counter-hegemonic theories of development and human rights have widely contributed to problematize dichotomies that separate global and local scales. Mohanty (2003) suggests that universal and local scales are co-constitutive. This author recalls that universals can be more accurately understood through “the complexity of relationality” than through the simplicity of separation (Mohanty, 2003, p. 524). Also Dirlik suggests that negotiations of local agents with institutions, technologies, and groups of other localities, cultures, and scales (the regional, national or transnational) make of the local scale “a site upon which the multifaceted contradictions of contemporary society play out” (1996, p. 35). This author suggests that, through trans-local connections, local places become as contradictory and complex as the global space. Similarly, drawing on Latour’s metaphor of railways, Escobar (2000) explains that local places are simultaneously global:

The railroad is local at all points, but is global in that it goes to many places. It is, however, not universal because it does not go everywhere. As in the case of the railways, everything in the world today can be said to be global and local at the same time, only not in the same way (Escobar, 2000, p. 169).

From these perspectives, globalization is not a universal and uprooted construction. Globalization is contextually constructed through the connection of several practices and actors that are at the same time global and local.

As suggested in Chapter One, colonial and post-colonial structures of power and, more recently, programs focused on human rights and development have transferred global, national

and regional complexities to the Leticia area. These complexities are evident in territorial struggles between indigenous and colonizer agents, community fragmentation influenced by development projects, and rivalry produced through different legal frameworks.

This dissertation studies these intercultural and multi-scalar complexities from the viewpoint of frictions. I focus on how frictions that emerge from contact between indigenous people and global concepts of human rights and development influence knowledges and power positions among participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP. I argue that frictions between indigenous people and State agents, procedures, and concepts may influence indigenous people's relations with local, regional, national, or global agents. These frictions may give new directions to global discourses such as human rights and development according to indigenous people's creative appropriations. For this reason, my analysis privileges the viewpoint of indigenous people in order to provide an inclusive viewing of systemic power from below (Mohanty, 2003, p. 511). I propose to analyze the multi-scalar forces: community agents, local associations, regional alliances, national institutions, and transnational discourses that intervene in the assessment phase of the Leticia Witoto ESP. From this subaltern and systemic view, this dissertation attempts to understand "how some universals work out in particular things and places" (Tsing 2005, p. 10). My analysis privileges a focus on the critical role of power in these intercultural relationships.

2.2. POWER: A CONTINUOUSLY CONSTRUCTED RELATION

Certain aspects of Foucault's reflections on power are coherent with this dissertation's intercultural relational approach. In this author's view, power is a productive relation in which something new is produced: "Power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised... it [power] only exists in action... Power is not primarily the maintenance and reproduction of economic relations, but is above all a relation of force" (Foucault, 1980a, pp. 89-90). Foucault sees power as a multi-directional relation existing only through the active participation of several actors, needing specific mechanisms to be exerted, subject to be integrated in other – and larger – power structures, and continuously challenged through resistance (1980c, p. 142). I take up three characteristics of Foucault's reflection on power: its circulatory character, its articulation with knowledge through discourse, and its material effects on subjects.

Taking into account power's circulatory nature, Foucault analyzes the ways in which macro or micro forms of power circulate in several directions within larger or smaller structures. This author focuses on how subaltern agents both incorporate and resist global forms of power in their daily lives (Foucault, 1980a, p. 102). With this purpose, Foucault proposes an "*ascending* analysis of power" that acknowledges power's "infinitesimal mechanisms" without dismissing larger and historical structures (p. 102). Such an analysis can be illustrated through the rubber boom's multi-scalar and racialized structures of exploitation described in Chapter One. These structures were effective to transform and reshape capitalist forces and knowledges into new local positions of power (the foremen or *caucheros*) that exerted domination on indigenous people to the benefit of the international rubber industry.

Macro and micro analyses cannot separate power from its articulations with knowledge. On this topic, Foucault suggests: "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (1977a, p. 27, quoted in Hall, 2001, p. 49). Power evolves and puts into circulation specific apparatuses of knowledge such as statistics, methods of observation, indexes, and other "subtle mechanisms of control" strategic to incorporate power into people's daily life (Foucault, 1980a, p. 102). Escobar (1995) and Parpart (1995) illustrate how Third World people had to adapt themselves to development indexes created according to Western-based categories oriented to the expansion of the U.S. capitalist market. Since the 1980s, multilateral institutions have used these indexes to press African and Latin American countries to reduce public expenditures as a means to favour international investment, produce economic growth, and ensure conditions to receiving foreign aid. Through the uses of development indexes, "structural adjustment policies imposed on African and Latin America debtor countries has systematically limited the exercise of sovereign states to achieve the goals of human development for their citizens" (Levitt, 2011, p. 17). Global inequalities drawn on indexes of economic growth exemplify that "there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 93). To be exerted, power needs to be articulated with knowledge.

Discourse is instrumental to power-knowledge articulations. Power relations, Foucault argues, "cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (1980a, p. 93). Foucault

refers to the ways that specific truths have been historically articulated with discourses of rights and laws in order to legitimize power positions:

The essential function of the discourse and techniques of right has been to efface the domination intrinsic to power in order to present the latter at the level of appearance under two different aspects: on the one hand, as the legitimate rights of sovereignty, and on the other, as the legal obligation to obey it (1980a, p. 95).

Accordingly, discourse is more than purely a 'linguistic' concept. Discourse influences, rules, and restricts topics to talk about and the ways to talk about them (Hall, 2001). Discourse's normative character cannot be reduced to a statement, text, or source. The same discourse "will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within societies" (Hall, 2001, p. 44). In other words, discourses create regimes of power that put together several objects and mechanisms to establish a form of knowledge as a unique truth efficient to govern people's actions (see Peeters and Charier, 1999, p. 17). Knowledge assumed as a truth through discourse orders "procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 131). Consequently, discourses articulate power with knowledge, producing actual effects on social structures, relations, and subjects.

Scientific discourses and methods are instrumental to regimes of power drawn on epistemological differences. By mobilizing unquestioned discourses framed as scientific such as colonial legislation or evolutionist theories, powerful agents have discarded knowledges different to those assumed to be the truth. In colonial relations, for instance, knowledge different from that of colonizer agents have often been considered as non-scientific. The latter have been seen as "disqualified, inadequate, or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 81-2). Therefore, the knowledges of colonized subjects have been silenced or subjugated, in conjunction with the consequent subjugation and invisibility of colonized subjects – e.g., women, indigenous and Third World people.

Spivak's (1994; 1999) analyses of the production of vernacular elites of informants in colonial India may illustrate the institutionalization of violence through unquestioned discourses of power. This author reconstructs how Indian informants of colonizers used masculine visions to consolidate themselves as privileged sources for non-specialist Europeans who wanted to control the Indian civilization. These informants' visions influenced British

authorities' tolerance of violent practices such as the self-immolation of widow women. Drawing on informants' discourses, the British authorities romanticized self-immolation as Indian women's forms of purification and bravery to assume their unavoidable fate (Spivak, 1999, pp. 37-38). Spivak argues that British laws ambiguously coexisted with self-immolation and even praised it: Colonial and Indian elite views of widows' self-immolation excluded the complex and heterogeneous meanings of these acts for Indian women. In contrast, Spivak evokes a marginal feminine literature that depicts the immolated woman as a wretched subject rather than as a resistant hero –British authorities dismissed these women's views because they did not correspond to those of their main masculine vernacular allies (p. 43). Spivak calls this dismissal a form of “epistemic violence”: the dismissal of subaltern subject's knowledges of their own reality in order to reinforce existent inequalities between colonizer and colonized subjects (Spivak, 1994; p. 13; 1999, p. 6). Articulated with other colonial power structures and legal discourses, epistemic violence reproduced deep inequalities instrumental to colonial power relations.

Agents marginalized through epistemic violence hold what Foucault calls “disqualified knowledge” (1980a). This form of knowledge includes popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*), which, far from simple common sense, is “a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 82). The author proposes to see these disqualified knowledges as spaces of criticism, resistance, and creation in power relations. In other words, knowledges discarded through epistemic violence can become sources of resistant transformations for subaltern subjects.

In order to understand these transformative processes within power relations, Foucault proposes to “discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially” produced, constituted, and transformed by the power relations in which they participate (1980a, p. 97). This view of power considers individuals as both the effects and ‘the vehicles of power’: individuals are crucial for power's circulation because they experience, recreate, reproduce, and transfer power (Foucault, 1980a, p. 98). Indeed, Foucault acknowledges a relationship of mutual interdependence between individuals and macro structures of power such as the State:

I don't think that we should consider the 'modern state' as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but, on the contrary, as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns. In a way, we can see the state as a modern matrix of individualization (Foucault, 1982, p. 783).

In short, macro structures of power produce their own subjects according to predefined patterns. Simultaneously, subjects adjust themselves to these patterns in order to achieve accurate integration in such macro structures – including the State.

To illustrate, indigenous people's negotiations with universal discourses may have led to the production of new forms of indigenous community leadership in the ESP team. Exchanges of these leaders with agents and procedures of human rights and development have increased their influence and visibility in their communities. In Chapter Five, I analyze how these leaders have become both the effect and vehicles of State and universal discourses of power. The case of indigenous leadership demonstrates this dissertation's exploration of macro and micro analytical perspectives in order to identify how the encounters between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses have produced subjects and positions of resistance, identity reinforcement, and empowerment. In the next section, I explore how these latter power positions emerge from articulations with knowledge.

Resistance, the Reinforcement of Identity and Empowerment: Producing Power from Subaltern Positions

Gupta and Ferguson (1997) take up Foucault's ideas to problematize power as a transformative strength able to produce subjects, communities, and differences. The authors define resistance as a bidirectional and mobile form of power whose effects may both transform or strengthen existing identities. Gupta and Ferguson see resistance as a transformative experience:

Of experience, Foucault once said: 'An experience is something you come out changed' (1997: 27), and, 'an experience is neither true nor false: it is always fiction, something constructed, which exists only after it has been made, not before; it isn't something that is 'true' but it has been a reality.'

Reading 'resistance' for 'experience' in the quote above helps one to see how resistance may shape the identity of subjects despite its conjunctural character: *it is that which changes subjects*, which defines the way in which *they are subject to someone else* and the manner in which *they come to be tied to their own identities through self-knowledge* (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, p. 19, my emphasis).

In other words, individuals become attached to what they learn about themselves through resistance. Seen as a form of self-knowledge, resistance allows individuals to confirm and reinforce their attachment to their images on themselves or on their own groups.

Groups produce resistance mainly in their relations with other groups that they perceive as opposed. For this reason, resistance connects power with identity as a sense of belonging and difference. In Gupta and Ferguson's words, "to be part of a community is to be positioned as a particular kind of subject, similar to others within the community in some crucial respects and different from those who are excluded from it" (1997, p. 18). To illustrate, in a previous research project that I and a research team conducted in the 11th kilometre community, an indigenous inhabitant asserted: "*We, indigenous people, have the advantage that we know our own knowledges and can also handle what 'white people'*³⁶ know and come here to put forward. We cannot lose indigenous knowledge but must take advantage and mix our knowledge with what is good in white people's knowledges" (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011, p. 182, my translation and emphasis). In this narrative, the emphasis on 'we, indigenous people' allows the interviewee to 'position' himself in his community as a source of power. This indigenous person resists foreign knowledge through his similarity with other indigenous people and his difference from 'white people'. Resistance is represented as the 'indigenous people's advantage' of knowing and using white people's knowledge. This advantage confers power to indigenous subjects in relation to the white people, represented as those who know less, can't appropriate indigenous knowledge, and hold knowledge that can be easily appropriated by indigenous people. Accordingly, the recognition of individual and collective knowledge and abilities becomes a source of resistance. Resistance works through 'positioning' the individual in the community, establishing links of 'similarity' with this community, 'excluding' those perceived as different, and creating narratives that legitimate exercises of power on those seen as different. Resistance produces and transforms identities through knowledge that individuals and groups produce about themselves.

³⁶ In this context, the term "white people" conveys non-indigenous people indistinctively. I use this term throughout the thesis from the viewpoint of several indigenous people who do not make racial distinctions between mestizos, mulattos, or white people.

Spatial relations can become a source of community empowerment in intercultural relations. The particular uses of knowledge concerning the community's abilities, history, or spaces can produce identity differences from which local subjects produce power positions in intercultural relations. Malkki (1997) refers to processes of power production among Rwandan refugees. Despite being situated away from their native soil, Rwandan refugees have produced power related to identity through the imaginary and material relations that they establish with space, even in foreign spaces of transit:

Rather than defining themselves collectively as 'the Hutu refugees,' they tended to seek ways of assimilating and of manipulating multiple identities – identities derived or 'borrowed' from the social context of the township. The town refugees were not *essentially* 'Hutu' or 'refugees' or 'Tanzanians' or 'Burundians' but rather just 'broad persons' (Hebdige 1987: 159). Theirs were creolized, rhizomatic identities – changing and situational rather than essential and moral (Hannerz 1987; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 6, 21, cited in Malkki, 1997, p. 68).

These spatial relationships allowed these refugee subjects to recreate their own identities as cosmopolitan subjects, an identity that allowed them to transcend their problematic identification as Hutu refugees after the Rwandan genocide.

Likewise, the People of the Centre living in the Leticia area have appropriated material and imagined spaces to reinforce their collective identities in territories that differ from their original homeland. In spite of their inter-ethnic differences, they have recreated the alliance of the People of the Centre through narratives that emphasize commonality. Their territorial references to a mythical common origin in the "the Centre" of the world – more than 600 kilometres to the Northwest of Leticia – and to the sacred substances of coca, tobacco, and manioc have contributed to their unity as negotiators participating in the ESP. In short, knowledge on material and imaginary space can constitute sources of community cohesion and power in encounters with culturally distinct groups.

These processes of community resistance and identity reinforcement may produce empowerment. Melkote defines empowerment as "an *intentional*, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, *critical reflection*, caring and group participation" (2000, p. 45) Through this process, marginal people "gain greater access to and control over those resources" (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989, p. 2, cited in Melkote, 2000b, p. 45, my emphasis). Parpart and Veltmeyer (2011) assert that "empowerment denotes knowledge-capacitation – the ability to make decisions and to act for one's self or together with others in one's social group or with which one identifies" (p. 147). Empowerment may be

understood as a form of autonomy based on the development of individual and collective capacities and on the mobilization of knowledge as a resource that, under certain conditions, can be a major force of change (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 147-8). Whereas unequal colonial relations of power have drawn on the imposition of foreign knowledge, empowerment may counter domination through the mobilization of subjugated knowledges. In this regard, Parpart and Veltmeyer propose nuanced analyses of power as a social relation that “reveals the potential power of marginalized peoples and the poor, particularly women” (2011, p. 147). In short, empowerment connects local knowledge and subaltern subjects’ abilities to transform marginality.

Summarizing, this dissertation sees power as a relational force that circulates, can be integrated into larger structures and articulates with knowledge through discourses. Rather than merely linguistic, the latter are forms of regulations that can produce their own subjects – the colonized or colonized for instance – or establish epistemic forms of violence. Under these unequal material and symbolic conditions, subaltern subjects may produce power positions through resistance, the reinforcement of their identities, or empowerment. These three forms of subaltern power are directly connected with local forms of knowledge. The next section explores the centrality of indigenous knowledges in these circulatory power processes.

2.3. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES: A STRATEGIC CONNECTION BETWEEN CULTURE AND POWER

As suggested in the Introduction Chapter, I address indigenous knowledges mainly from an anti-colonial perspective, which sees marginalized groups as subjects of their own experiences and histories (Fanon 1963, Memmi 1969, Foucault 1980, cited in Dei, 2000, p. 117). Anti-colonial perspectives analyze how marginalized subjects experience their own histories and create their own social understandings of their realities according to their local languages, categories, and logical systems. This approach recognizes the power of marginalized agents:

[Anti-colonial perspectives recognize the] discursive agency and the power of resistance [that] reside in and among colonized and marginalized groups. For example, subordinated/colonized populations had a [theoretical and practical] conception of the colonizer that functioned as a platform for engaging in social and political practice and relations. . . . Anti-colonial theorizing rises out of alternative, oppositional paradigms, which are in turn based on indigenous concepts and analytical systems and cultural frames of reference (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000, p. 7).

The anti-colonial perspective focuses on knowledges constructed differently according to specific colonial relationships made up of unequal historical, gendered, and cultural power dynamics. This approach proposes an “epistemology of the colonized” anchored in the indigenous sense of the collective and of common colonial consciousness (Dei, 2000). Anti-colonial perspectives use indigenous concepts, analytical systems, and cultural frames of reference in order to understand how marginalized subjects face and resist colonial relations (Dei, 2000, p. 118).

Indigenous knowledges are a central research category for anti-colonial researchers. Scholars using this perspective conceive of indigenous knowledges as conceptual and practical wisdom which guides people’s daily survival (Dei, 2000; Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 2000). Dei refers to:

The epistemic saliency of cultural traditions, values, belief systems and world views in any Indigenous society that are imparted to the younger generation by community elders. Such knowledge constitutes an ‘Indigenous informed epistemology.’ It is a worldview that shapes the community’s relationships with surrounding environments. It is the product of the direct experience of nature and its relationship with the social world. It is knowledge that is crucial for the survival of society. It is knowledge that is based on cognitive understandings and interpretations of the social, physical and spiritual worlds (Dei, 2000, p. 114).

Thus, indigenous knowledges emerge from the interpretations and relationships that a given group establishes with their local conditions (e.g., territory, history, continuous challenges) according to cumulative experiences influenced by dynamics of power.

A Witoto woman elder’s narrative on the notion of knowledge complements this definition from the viewpoint of the People of the Centre. In a collective talk about the value of indigenous knowledges, this sole woman elder taking part in the Leticia Witoto ESP narrates a myth of the child who personifies the Witoto people’s knowledge:

This child will grow for everyone. He will share, he will do everything, he will have the power to do anything and he has everything. This child will offer advice, history, songs, he will offer it to the knowledgeable men. This child knows everything, everything. His grandmother says he is an earthworm. His name is [blind] earthworm, but he is not [an] earthworm actually... He is her son, he is the blind earthworm’s son. This was the blind earthworm’s story.

The earthworm’s son provided us with wisdom.... Earthworm was engendering a son who was the son of abundance. He left us songs, stories, histories, knowledgeable men, and elders. He gave us all of this. He left us manioc, coca, *mambe* (coca powder), tobacco, he left us our language and medicines. He left all of that for us. His grandfather left it all that for us. He [the grandfather] bestowed all this power to him [the child], to his clan. He gave this for all of us. He spoke in a great manner to the child (my translation).³⁷

³⁷ This is the original fragment spoken by the Elder woman in Spanish:

This narrative connects knowledge with the lower position of the earthworm, a blind animal that fertilizes the soil to cultivate manioc, coca, and tobacco, the manifestations of collective abundance. From the People of the Centre's viewpoint, without coca powder (*mambe*), manioc juice (*caguana*), and liquid tobacco (*ambil*), there is no community gathering, nor knowledge sharing or collective decision-making. Thus, without knowledge, there is no abundance, nor community. This narrative suggests that indigenous knowledges are material and symbolic forms of power necessary to the People of the Centre's survival. For the People of the Centre, indigenous knowledges are inseparable from the production of the material bases of existence associated with abundance.

Furthermore, the metaphor of the earthworm, an animal that occupies a humble position in nature, suggests the connection between knowledge and humility. "Humility is the aim of knowledge," a Bora leader told me in an interview. For the People of the Centre, the humble character of indigenous knowledge is part of its subtle but continuous and effective power. During a traditional festivity among the Leticia Witoto ESP communities, I was impressed by the energy of their dances, songs, and practices of exchange, and asked a former Witoto governor how they could maintain these cultural practices despite their continuous contact with the urban culture of Leticia. He answered: "Our culture never dies. It may remain silent, but we wait for the best moment to awaken it and express it to others. We are just *reactivating* what has existed always" (my translation and emphasis). These words reveal the character of indigenous knowledge as a humble force that has historically persisted but can be tactically expressed to 'reactivate' indigenous people's power positions in intercultural encounters.

"Este niño va a crecer para todos. Él va a repartir, va a hacer todo, quiere decir como un niño va a tener poder para todo y este niño tiene de todo. Este niño va a dar, va a repartir consejo, va a repartir historia, canciones, va a repartir más hombre sabedor. Es este niño. Él sabe de todo de todo. La abuela dice que es lombriz. Su nombre es lombriz, pero no es lombriz. Ese es su hijo, la lombriz ciega que dice, ya quedó historia de la lombriz ciega.

El hijo de lombriz es el que va a dar la sabiduría...

La lombriz realmente estaba engendrando un hijo que era el de la abundancia.

Ya le dejó, canciones, historias, cuentos, hombre sabedor y los abuelos, él le dejó. Ese niño les dejó. Esa historia ya les dejó a todos...

Ella, entonces eso es como quiere decir, dejó yuca, coca, mambe, tabaco, dejó el idioma de ellos. Mano cono, una hojita bien chiquitica y eso es una medicina. Esas cosas ya él le dejó. Y ese abuelo le dejó todo, él le entrego todo ese poder a él. Le llegó su clan, 'onde' [sic] está. Él le entregó. Él le habló así, muy grande."

According to this leader's words, indigenous people maintain their knowledges and tactically express them at specific encounters with other groups. Given their humble character, indigenous knowledges can thus be considered as a form of tactical knowledge that introduces plurality, creativity, and changes in a power system, without subverting it (Certeau and Giard, 1990, pp. 52; 54). Certeau and Giard define tactics as the power or the arts of weak subjects. Tactics are forms of power determined by the relative absence of power: subjects exert tactics out from their own places, without a global vision of their consequences, in the hazardous and changing conditions of time. On tactics, these authors suggest:

Les tactiques sont des procédures qui valent par la pertinence qu'elles donnent au temps – au circonstances que l'instant précis d'une intervention transforme en situation favorable, à la rapidité de mouvements qui changent l'organisation de l'espace, aux relations entre moments successifs d'un « coup », aux croisements possibles de durées et de rythmes hétérogènes, etc. (Certeau and Giard, 1990, pp. 62).

Tactical power depends on subaltern agents to accurately use their knowledge to their benefit in a system defined by other subjects. This notion drawn from Certeau and Giar (1990) allows me to illustrate that indigenous subjects may subvert power structures from inside by transforming them according to their own uses, interests, and backgrounds. My conversation with this indigenous leader led me to identify indigenous knowledges as one form of tactical power that indigenous people use to divert the colonizers' strategies without subverting them. In this respect, Dei suggests that "One cannot underestimate the power of ideas in terms of the role of social forces to generate relevant knowledge for collective resuscitation, spiritual rebirth and cultural renewal" (2000, p. 123). Accordingly, this dissertation identifies how the People of the Centre tactically use their indigenous knowledges to produce power without subverting the ESP, but by appropriating this Plan to renew their communities according to their cultural practices.

2.3.1. Indigenous Knowledges as Situated Knowledge

I see indigenous knowledges as forms of situated knowledge. According to Haraway, situated knowledges are forms of knowledge clearly influenced by the agency of subjects who study and who are studied (1991, p. 198). Haraway proposes situated feminist epistemologies to resist "various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims" (1991, p. 191). These forms of "irresponsible" or "relative" knowledge are scientific, technological, militarized, racist, or masculine discourses that unmark the positions – normally masculine

and white – of those who see, classify, and define reality. In contrast, Haraway proposes a kind of embodied objectivity that acknowledges how knowers learn in our bodies, according to our own visions, and depending on where we are and are not. Knowledge is thus directly connected to mental and physical spaces and particular embodiments (Haraway, 1991, p. 190). Knowledge is always situated, partial, locatable, critical, and can be connected with other webs of knowledge (p. 191). Haraway describes the reasons for which knowledge is situated:

The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity: a scientific knower seeks the subject position not of identity, but of objectivity; that is, partial connection.... There is no way to 'be' simultaneously in all, or wholly in any, of the privileged (subjugated) positions structured by gender, race, nation, and class.... The search for such a 'full' and total position is the search for the fetishized perfect subject of oppositional history, sometimes appearing in feminist theory as the essentialized Third World Woman (Mohanty, 1984, cited in Haraway, 1991, p. 193)

In other words, given their embodied and situated character, all forms of knowledge are limited: they depend on the specific gaze of the knowing self. Naming the specific conditions through which knowledge is produced contributes to a responsible objectivity that acknowledges its own limits. Claims of total vision are made by powerful projects that produce fixed and unquestioned distinctions that support webs of knowledge and power (e.g., First and Third world subjects, colonizer and colonized, civilized and barbaric). Whereas relative knowledge is connected to unmarked positions of power, situated knowledges are connected to the power to see the world from subaltern positions. In this respect, Haraway proposes the following: “‘Subjugated’ standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world” (p. 191).

This dissertation acknowledges the situated, partial, and located character of both indigenous and universal knowledges. This recognition has two purposes. First, the situated character of all knowledges establishes egalitarian conditions of dialogue between epistemologies commonly assumed as universal and others commonly discarded given their local, indigenous, or traditional origin. Second, the situated character of all knowledges challenges the assumed universality of Western, colonial, and powerful discourses. This challenging position can also subvert naturalized classifications – such as underdeveloped, Third World, illiterate, or wild peoples – produced through scientific rhetoric indistinctly

applied to different contexts. In the next three sections, I reflect on the situated character of indigenous knowledges and universal discourses of human rights and development.

Indigenous knowledges respond to specific questions, interests, needs and visions defined by specific contexts. Dei suggests that indigenous knowledge is connected with communalism, which is “a mode of thought, emphasizing the sense of belongingness with a people and the land they share. It [indigenous knowledge] is not individualized and disconnected into a universal abstract. It is grounded in a people, a place and a history” (2000, p. 115). Given this situated character, indigenous knowledges are unique to given cultures, localities, and societies: “they reflect the capabilities, priorities, and value systems of local peoples and communities” (Dei, Hall et al. 2000 p. 19). Local peoples construct these knowledges through their specific interactions with their natural, cultural, and historical contexts.

Also, the People of the Centre’s knowledges are situated in time and space. In an interview that I conducted, a community leader of the Leticia Witoto ESP suggests that one cannot teach anything to just anyone at any particular moment: “There are specific moments, such as the collective meetings of the elders at night to share knowledge” (my translation). The Leticia Witoto ESP team share knowledge especially at the 11th kilometre community house (*maloka*). They use this *maloka* to “tie the [Witoto’s] thoughts to their main sources,” an elder says. In this group’s view, *malokas* constitute both the basis and the origin of community life. According to Witoto traditional narratives, the *maloka* space reflects the Witoto world vision and cultural understanding of power hierarchies within the community (see Picture 2.2).

In the Witoto case, *malokas* have eight sides, the four lateral sides longer than those on the corners. This kind of *maloka* is closed by wooden walls with two doors, one on the east side and another on the west. The larger part of the house follows the sun’s trajectory from sunrise to dawn. In order to respect this spatial disposition, one must enter the *maloka* by the east and leave it by the west. It has four sloping straw rooves supported by four wooden columns. According to several leaders of the Leticia Witoto ESP, the columns represent indigenous people’s political autonomy, education, health, and territory – qualities that correspond to the main concerns of their ESP. In contrast, according to an ESP community

leader, each pillar represents different stages of the Witoto knowledge. One represents the ability of the Witoto to become a tiger (which represents the knowledge of the visible world), the second, the ability to become a boa constrictor (which represents the knowledge of underworld), the third, the ability to become an eagle (which represents the knowledge of upper world), and the fourth represents the ability to combine these three forms of knowledge. In both explanations there is an intrinsic connection between spatiality and the epistemological symbolic basis of the Witoto culture.

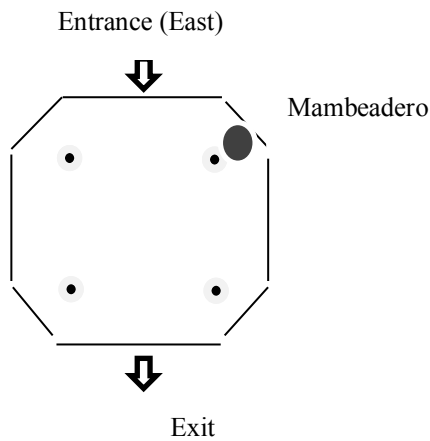


Diagram 2.1. Approximate Plan of a Witoto Maloka



Picture 2.1. A Meeting of the Leticia Witoto ESP Team at The 14th Kilometre Mambeadero



Picture 2.2. The Maloka of the 11th Kilometre Community

For the People of the Centre, knowledge that ensures the group's survival is associated with community hierarchies materialized in space. Traditionally situated in the southeast corner of the *maloka*, the *mambeadero* (see Diagram 2.1 and Picture 2.1) – a space to chew (*mambear*) the powder of coca leaves – is the place where community elder men “teach the principles, norms, and codes of work” (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 62, my translation). *Mambeaderos* are places to circulate “power of communication through the transmission and accumulation of knowledge historically accumulated by the Witoto as a result of adjusting, knowing, and enjoying their habitat” (2002, p. 63 my translation). In most People of the Centre's *malokas*, the *mambeadero* is strictly reserved to male elders. Women, young people, or children can attend the meetings only if they are involved in the discussion or if they are in a healing process conducted by the elders. Young people and women offer meals, tobacco, or coca to the elders as a reward for their healing knowledge (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 64). This spatial differentiation according to the male elders' knowledge reinforces their position as the main community guides.

In contrast, the vegetable plot (*chagra*) is the traditional space of feminine material power and education. *Chagras* are critical to the People of the Centre's cultural and physical survival. In an interview that I conducted, a woman who accompanies the ESP meetings defines *chagra* as “the life's nectar... *chagra* is what keeps us alive.” *Chagras* are important not only because they provide families with food but also because they are spaces where adults share knowledge with children. As mentioned in Chapter One, in *chagras*, indigenous children can learn how to cultivate according to the Amazonian climate and resources. They learn to count, using, and multiplying resources through cultivation. Through contact with their mother and siblings, children learn indigenous language and collective work. Traditionally, *chagras* constitute the first spaces where indigenous people learn practical knowledge related to their own culture.

These two forms of knowledge confirm the situated character of the People of the Centre's indigenous knowledges. The spatialized nature of these knowledges also reflects hierarchical distinctions of gender and generation. Accordingly, indigenous knowledges can legitimate distinctions between elder men, women, and young people. Simultaneously, indigenous knowledges produce distinctions that make women responsible for the first forms

of knowledge in the family sphere. By no means neutral or egalitarian, indigenous knowledges are articulations of power and knowledge that may produce and reinforce distinctions and hierarchies of power between indigenous subjects.

2.3.2. Tradition, Experience, Revelation, and Contact: Indigenous Knowledges' Main Sources

Where do indigenous knowledges come from? An answer to this question may provide insights into the multiple dimensions of indigenous knowledges, and how they are associated with tradition, experience, revelation, and intercultural contacts. Indigenous people renew their knowledges through traditional means of sharing. Through the traditional “process of learning the old, new knowledge is discovered; this is what makes indigenous knowledges dynamic rather than static” (Dei et al., 2000, p. 6). This process takes place through narratives, active engagement of listeners, and openness to diversity. From a Mohawk perspective, indigenous knowledges are transferred, produced, and reconstructed through storytelling, memory and intergenerational transmission (Castellano, 2000). Mohawk people code their knowledges in narrative or metaphorical forms that aim to “teach without being intrusive, because the listener can ignore the oblique instruction or apply it to the degree he or she is ready to accept, without offence” (Castellano, 2000, p. 31). Passing on knowledge narratives cannot be separated from the emotional and relational experience of listening to personal stories (Castellano, 2000). From the Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) perspective, narratives support reflections in which there is nothing specific to learn, but several aspects upon which to reflect (Lambe and Longboat, 2011, p. 78). Indigenous teaching respects each listener’s autonomy and is open to the new forms of knowledge that listeners can construct.

In accordance with these means of knowledge exchange, the Leticia’s People of the Centre use more examples than advice. These peoples’ narratives commonly compare human situations to those of animals or spirits. For instance, talking about the importance of team work to formulate the ESP, knowledgeable elders refer to ants that reinforce each other when searching food together or building nests. These examples offer an image and a framework for the listener to take a step back from the lived situation, to observe it and to draw on the teaching useful to make decisions.

The Amazonian Pirahã and the Maori acknowledge experience as a second main source of indigenous knowledges. For the first of these indigenous groups, processes through which knowledge is acquired are ruled by the “immediacy of experience principle,” according to which “if you haven’t experienced something directly, your stories about it are largely irrelevant” (Everett, 2008, p. 270). As a result, Pirahã language and communicative actions (including rituals) exclusively refer to what people have experienced or witnessed (Everett, 2008, p. 84). Also the Maori consider experience one of the ways we know the world (Meyer, 2011). In this culture, *mana’oi’o* (knowing) is “knowledge that turns to knowing because we have direct experience” (p. 14). Elders are considered wise because they can demonstrate their knowledge through their actions.

The People of the Centre understand knowledge as experiential and practical. From their view, knowledge is practical, useful, and passed on through action and word. In an interview about the concept of knowledge, a Bora elder of the Leticia Witoto ESP team said:

Knowledge is practical, it is to protect yourself, your family and others. You must know your territory, yourself [and] the territory’s forces in order to be able to protect yourself. Suffering is fundamental [to know]. Good and bad are always present; you must be able to identify both [good and bad] and know how to cope with both... Difficulties teach you. Coca, tobacco, and manioc are central because we have sown them with an intention. Coca heals you and helps you identify what is good from what is not (my translation).

This elder’s words introduce ‘suffering’ as a central element in indigenous knowledge production through experience among the People of the Centre. In his view, experiencing hardship is an opportunity to construct knowledge through discipline and effort in order to ensure individual or group survival.

Revelation is a third source of indigenous knowledges. For the Mohawk, knowledge is acquired through “dreams, visions, and intuitions that are understood to be spiritual in origin” (Castellano, 2000). The Pirahã value dreams as a form “immediate experience”: “You see one way awake and another way while asleep, but both ways of seeing are real experiences” (Everett, 2008 p. 131). Dreams are forms of revelation that may guide people’s decision-making in confuse situations.

For the People of the Centre, the sources of knowledge are often spiritual. Johan,³⁸ a Witoto community leader (*promotor comunitario*) of the Leticia Witoto ESP asserts that the

³⁸ For reasons of confidentiality, most names included in this dissertation are pseudonyms. See Chapter 3.

People of the Centre's knowledges have four dimensions connected to four kinds of word. Firstly, their knowledge is connected to a word of fire, aimed to purify. This word is the creator's house which, in practice, entails discipline and experience. Next, there is a sweet word, which is cold and kind. The "Life's mother" represents this word. In practical terms, the sweet word prepares work and "cools down" what is hot – this expression refers to solving conflicts, an action commonly attributed to women in the communities of the People of the Centre. Third, there is advice word, which leads people into a different, dark, and ancient dimension, where good and bad meet each other. In this dimension, subjects learn to discriminate between what is good and bad. The Creator's son represents the word of advice. Finally, there is the word of work, through which the person who knows must demonstrate what she learned. At this point, "the spirit of tobacco is already within the person and a new healer and knowledgeable person is born," Johan suggests.

The importance of the 'word' is the first relevant element in this characterization of indigenous knowledge. As in the Bible, the foundational narratives of the Witoto and other Peoples of the Centre confer a central role to the word prior to any other form of existence. In a dance called *yadiko*, the Witoto repeat: "In the beginning, the word (*naikino*) gave birth to the father" (Preuss, 1994, p. 46, my translation). Drawing on his ethnography with the Witoto, Preuss (1994) asserts that words have their own life and can create life. In collective meetings that I attended during my fieldwork, I also heard the Witoto refer to the word as a "sacred creator." Multidimensionality constitutes the second characteristic of this narrative on indigenous knowledge. From Johan's viewpoint, knowledge includes feminine and masculine forces and several power positions such as those of the creator father, the mother who cools down conflicts, and the son who constructs knowledge through experience. This indigenous knowledge includes purification through discipline; kindness and patient preparation; reflexivity to follow advice; and a clear purpose: the ability to heal others. Thus, for the People of the Centre, knowledge production involves spiritual, material, and practical dimensions and several complementary agents, forces, and roles that ensure the community's wellbeing.

Given the connection between indigenous knowledges and spirituality, the presence of non-indigenous religious agents has affected the production, exchange and practice of indigenous knowledges. In the Middle Amazon, State education systems arrived with "reading the Bible, which forced the elders to stop healing people... All of this has intervened on our

culture,” a Tikuna woman leader asserts in an interview. Consequently, several ancestral practices and knowledges associated with indigenous medicine adapted to Amazonian resources and living conditions were lost. In exchange, “the Catholic Church and contemporary health system have not been able to heal our diseases,” the leader asserts. The direct connection of indigenous knowledge with spirituality has put them at risk in unequal religious exchanges.

Contact constitutes another source of indigenous knowledges. Some authors suggest that indigenous knowledges are part of a “local people’s response to colonial and imperial intrusions” (Dei et al, 2000, p, 19). Indigenous knowledges have both been transformed by and persisted in unequal intercultural contacts. Castellano (2000) suggests that not only have indigenous knowledges been used as sources of power for indigenous groups, but that they have been central dynamics of repression, devaluation, and dismissal in unequal power relations. In colonial relations, indigenous people “have been bombarded with the message that what they know from their culture is of no value” (Castellano 2000, p. 25). In this regard, Castellano asserts:

Intergenerational transmission of ancient knowledge has been disrupted, and the damage has not been limited to the loss of what once was known: the process of knowledge creation – that is, the use of cultural resources to refine knowledge in the laboratory of daily living – has also been disrupted (2000 p. 25).

As a result of unequal power relations and of the punishment of those who use indigenous knowledges – see Chapter One – the contemporary value of their indigenous knowledges is dismissed or only partly acknowledged by many indigenous people.

In order to seek more egalitarian contacts with other groups, indigenous people attempt to regulate intercultural exchanges through their collectively shared principles. Everett’s account of his experience as a missionary among the Amazonian Pirahã describes how cultural principles centrally affect indigenous intercultural contacts. Although they may use objects or ideas ‘gathered’ from outsiders – such as canoes or some Christian principles – the Pirahã continue seeing these objects as external to their culture, and see outsiders as responsible for them (Everett 2008 p. 203). The Pirahã barely incorporate knowledge that “has no epistemological grip on their minds,” especially if this process requires changes in their traditional knowledge (2008 p. 270).

As with the Pirahã, the People of the Centre who formulate the Leticia Witoto ESP engage with human rights and development concepts and agents according to their indigenous cultural principles. Questioning the universality of human rights through indigenous legal knowledges is the first mechanism through which these people started creating the Leticia Witoto ESP. In this regard, a knowledgeable elder of the ESP team asserts: “We must understand this first and then formulate the Plan according to our own law of origin. They [the State] cannot tell us how to act...” (Meeting of the Leticia Witoto ESP team, October 3 2012, my translation). Similarly, they appropriate development initiatives according to the notion of abundance, which refers to the collective capacity to transform nature in ways beneficial to community survival. In this thesis, I argue that the Leticia Witoto ESP team use these indigenous concepts to resist and regulate their exchanges with the State in the formulation of this Plan. Part of this process is evident in the People of the Centre’s use of indigenous knowledges as ethnic markers to strategically produce identity and ethnic links that may facilitate their access to rights through the ESP.

2.3.3. Indigenous Knowledges in the Production of Identity and Ethnicity

From the perspective of the People of the Centre, indigenous knowledges are at the core of identity and ethnicity production. Indigenous knowledge’s spirituality plays a central role in these processes. Traditional narratives refer to the knowledge of the People of the Centre as spiritually profound, connected to their ancestors, and opposed to the white people’s “world of appearances.” Drawing on these distinctions, foundational narratives reinforce the hierarchical position of indigenous people as the white people’s main guides. In the People of the Centre’s founding myths, the humans who emerged from the Centre of the World in La Chorrera are the sons of *Naaïno*,³⁹ a “father who knows everything” and whose knowledge is transmitted to his sons. In contrast with the white people’s father (*Juziñamui*), *Naaïno* comes from the underworld (Preuss, 1994, p. 54). This mythical spatial distinction establishes both differences from white people and commonality between peoples who emerged from the Centre.

³⁹ “*Naaïno* means something existing, but hidden to perception, under the appearance of the non-existing, it may also refer to what is only accepted in thoughts, as a result of illusions, yet not lacking existence” (Preuss, 1994, p. 47, my translation).

These mythic knowledges have taken a central role in the negotiations around identity and ethnicity that the People of the Centre conduct to formulate the ESP. Hall and Du Gay (1998) conceive identity as “a strategic and positional” construction that involves the invention of subjects and groups. This process changes according to specific historical situations and depends on representation, identification, and differentiation:

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation (Gilroy, 1994 cited in Hall and Du Gay, 1996, p. 4).

In the historical periods described in Chapter One and during the assessment phase of their ESP, the Witoto and other peoples of the Centre used their history, language, and cultural referents to produce a form of collective and political identity to negotiate with non-indigenous agents. As in other cases, the cohesion of this multi-ethnic group depends upon its ability to create a coherent narrative – a foundational myth in the case of the People of the Centre.

For Hall and Du Gay, identity is precisely produced in the process of joining cultural fragments, practices, and discourses through narratives and practices:

[Identity is] the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us (see Hall, 1995, quoted in: Hall and Du Gay, 1998, p. 6).

Such connections depend on the logic that creates coherence from isolated elements of the past. As mentioned in Chapter One, the People of the Centre’s alliance results from mythic narratives that emphasize commonality and discard the particularity of each allied group (Echeverri, 1997).

I argue in this thesis that the contact with universal discourses in the formulation of the ESP has motivated the People of the Centre to take up, logically connect, and recreate fragments of past memories that transform their collective identity. Participants in this Plan have reduced their mutual differences to produce a strategic and distinct new collective identity in order to demand rights recognition from the State – see Chapter Five. This process may illustrate that “identity is always ‘identity for’ something or in relation to someone else”

(Bisharat, 1997, p. 205). In this respect, Hall and Du Gay assert that “identities are constructed through, not outside, difference” (1998, p. 5). Since differentiation operates through exclusion of what is not possible to represent (Butler, 1993, cited in Hall and Du Gay, 1998, p. 15), identity representations “can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render ‘outside’ abjected” (Hall and Du Gay, 1998, p. 6). These exclusions create an individual or collective subject as opposed to “other” individuals or groups. Subjects that emerge from this identity process differentiate from other groups through contradictory feelings of hate and desire, projection and idealization, and distance and proximity.

The People of the Centre’s differentiation from the white people and the State in the Leticia Witoto ESP has offered these indigenous people possibilities to create links of identification with other groups who share a “different-sameness” of subordination. In order to reinforce themselves in relation to the State institutions leading the ESP, the Witoto included ten additional groups as full members and beneficiaries of this Plan. Whereas six of these groups (the Bora, Ocaina, Nonuya, Muninane, Andoque, and Miraña) share a common mythical origin in the Centre of the World, four additional groups (the Tikuna, Cocama, Yagua, and Inga) only share the experience of forced displacement.

Whether as displaced peoples or as allegedly original territory inhabitants, these groups have constructed links of identification. Hall and Du Gay characterize identification as an ambiguous relationship with a different other:

Identifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitations, they unsettle the I; they are the sedimentation of the ‘we’ in the constitution of any I, the structuring present of alterity in the very formulation of the I (Buttler 1993, p. 105, quoted in Hall and Du Gay, 1998, p. 16).

Despite their mutual differences, indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP have produced connections of solidarity that give birth to a renewed multi-ethnic agent strategic for overcoming marginalization: the People of the Centre.

Despite their identification links, inter-ethnic conflicts persist among the Peoples of the Centre. Peoples of this alliance maintain their boundaries even in the production of new strategic identities through inter-ethnic negotiations. These boundaries persist because ethnicity is “a form of social interaction that ascribes categories to itself or others to establish distinctions aimed at interaction” (Barth, 1995, p. 210 – 211, my translation). One of Barth’s

original claims is the recognition of ethnicity as “the production, reproduction and transformation of the social boundaries of ethnic groups, [as] a two-way process that takes place across the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Jenkins, 1994, p. 199). Ethnicity is thus produced through the establishment of connections between group members perceived and represented as alike.

In Weber’s view, ethnicity is related to the production of community links oriented to political ends (1995, p. 130). Beyond kinship, ethnic links reinforce themselves through communalization: the belief in a shared past and the possibility of creating a shared future. From Weber’s perspective, ethnic formations depend on the group’s ability to ensure political or economic privileges to its members:

Le fait que la ‘conscience tribale’ soit, en règle générale, conditionnée d’abord par des destins politiques communs et non par l’« origine » (ethnique) peut être très fréquemment la source de la croyance à une appartenance ‘ethnique’ commune... (Weber, 1995, p. 138).

From this viewpoint, ethnic groups work as elite formations oriented toward the future and fuelled by the ethnocentric idea of being a “chosen people” who share some privileges.

These understandings may explain how indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP continuously reaffirm themselves as a multiethnic alliance. As I will analyze in Chapter Five, some groups (notably the Tikuna) legitimate their participation in this Plan by referring to past alliances forged through mythical knowledge and ritual means. This case study may reflect how indigenous knowledges take an active part in ethnic processes that structure interactions, negotiations, and productions of differences between distinct cultural groups (Barth, 1995, p. 210-214).

I use the concepts of identity and ethnicity to understand two levels of intercultural communication in the negotiations between indigenous people and State and universal discourses. On the first level, these groups have adhered to the dominant multi-ethnic formation of the People of the Centre in order to overcome marginality. This dissertation describes some of the complex identity and ethnic transformations, representations, and processes of differentiation and identification between ethnic groups of this alliance. I analyze how groups taking part in this process have both established inter-ethnic connections and maintained specific ethnic differences that lead to new power positions, hierarchies, and rivalries. On the second level of negotiation, I explore how eleven different peoples have

drawn on mythic and historical indigenous knowledges to produce inter-ethnic connections by representing themselves as different collective subjects empowered in relation to the State.

To summarize, this dissertation analyzes how the possibility of accessing State benefits through universal discourses of human rights and development has motivated the Leticia Witoto ESP's participants to use their indigenous knowledges in ways that strategically transform their identities and ethnicities. Drawing on the connection between indigenous knowledges, identity, and ethnicity, I explain how the People of the Centre see human rights and development as external notions to be tactically appropriated according to indigenous cultural principles and knowledges. I explore the possibilities that these appropriation tactics may offer for more inclusive and multicultural understandings and negotiations of human rights and development. The next section problematizes this last point.

2.3.4. How Can Indigenous Knowledges Establish Egalitarian Dialogues with Universal Discourses?

Some authors have analyzed possibilities for more equitable exchanges between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses. In their critical view on indigenous knowledges in development programs, Briggs and Sharp (2004) propose to bring into conversation indigenous and Western knowledges under equal conditions. These authors propose alternative agendas in which Western systems of thought are to be reflected as one system among many. They also argue that assimilationist orientations toward indigenous systems must be discarded, and that indigenous codes must become a central means of expression (2004, p. 668). From a Maori perspective, Meyer (2001) proposes that the academy should include dimensions involved in indigenous knowledges such as physical, mental, and spiritual factors. This inclusion would enrich the academy with alternative narratives and epistemologies more deeply connected to cultural contexts. In Dei's (2000) view, to speak about indigenous knowledges in the academy can facilitate revealing alternative and valid epistemologies to understand the world. These alternative epistemologies may become crucial to resist to the imposition of Eurocentric frameworks. For this reason, valuing indigenous knowledges as accurate contemporary ways of knowing is part of an inclusive project of dialogue and comprehension among multiple forms of knowledge (Dei, 2000). Dei proposes integrating indigenous knowledges in the academy as a "cumulative small act" of resistance

“significant for social change” (2000, p. 128). The author motivates researchers to start by recognizing indigenous knowledges as a counter-hegemonic discourse that is inherently political. Similarly, drawing on their study of the Mexican State’s failure in intercultural universities for indigenous people, Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland (2011) propose relations of “epistemic-reciprocity” – as opposed to epistemic violence – between Western and indigenous knowledges (p. 291). For these purposes, these authors propose to challenge latent colonial relations by decolonizing difference. Rather than a basis of unequal power relations, difference can be valued as a source of pluralism for the recognition of diversity.

Egalitarian dialogues between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses can be possible through the question: “What is the value of indigenous knowledges for Westernized cultures?” (Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011). In this respect, anti-colonial approaches propose the recognition of indigenous knowledges as complete and coherent logics of thought. In Meyer’s (2011) view, indigenous knowledges draw on different logical systems that must be acknowledged in relation to the sociocultural systems that produce them. Whereas colonizer agents have discarded indigenous knowledges, anti-colonial authors propose to understand the interconnection between alternative ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies underlying indigenous logics of thought (Scheurich and Young, 1997, quoted in Dei, 2000 p. 124). Western academics define ontology as “a philosophical discipline that encompasses besides the study of what there is and the study of the general features of what there is also the study of what is involved in settling questions about what there is in general” (Hofweber, 2013). While traditional Western ontologies separate knowledge subjects and objects, indigenous ontologies stress mutual interdependence between the knowers and known entities, including community and nature. In African indigenous ontologies, individuals’ existence is only meaningful in relation to the community that she or he is part of (Dei 2000 p. 124). For the People of the Centre (see Chapter Five), human beings complete their world mainly through their words. The interdependence between humans as knowers and nature as what is known connects indigenous knowledges with culturally-defined indigenous epistemologies and axiologies.

Western authors define epistemology as the “*dispositif*” that allows subjects to identify the scientific character of knowledge (Foucault, 1972-1977, p. 1971, cited in Spivak, 1999, p. 32). As discussed in the introduction, from indigenous perspectives, epistemology refers to

criteria that an indigenous group uses to define knowledge as valid (Meyer, 2011). For the People of the Centre, knowledge is valid when they can practically apply it to their community's survival. Similarly, Mohawk epistemology sees reality as alive, interconnected, and changing (Couture 1991: 61, cited in Castellano, 2000, p. 29). Instead of separations and classifications common in Western knowledge, Mohawk epistemologies emphasize balance within society as a whole and privileges synthesis and relations (Castellano, 2000, p. 30).

These holistic views on knowledges are directly related to indigenous axiological views. From a Western viewpoint, axiology can be understood as the “value-theory primarily concerned with classifying what things are good, and how good they are” (Schroeder, 2012). As quoted above (section 2.3.2), from the viewpoint of the People of the Centre, the purpose of knowledge is to protect individuals, their families, and others through knowledge about the self and the territory's material and spiritual forces. Values constructed through these knowledges guide individuals' actions to produce abundance for community survival. In short, indigenous systems of logic connect ontological views on the interdependence between the knower and the known world in order to produce knowledge useful to strengthen shared values that protect and ensure the indigenous group's survival.

Indigenous subjects express their logic systems through varied and interconnected narratives such as stories, concepts, rituals and dances. Indigenous people convey in these narratives different elements of the same logic in order to reinforce and recreate their common world visions. In order to ensure egalitarian relations with indigenous knowledges, these narratives must be understood as part of a wider and situated logic of thought.

Accordingly, this dissertation acknowledges the logical systems of the People of the Centre through the ethnographic description of their practices related to human rights and development. I describe these people's views on law and abundance in order to identify how they may constitute contemporary valid categories to understand and transform indigenous people's marginality. I understand these categories according to the logics of the People of the Centre that connect ontological, epistemological and axiological views. My analysis explores how these logic systems can challenge, complement, or enrich Western concepts assumed as universals – namely human rights and development. I argue that, just as these particular Western discourses have been articulated to global scales of power, indigenous knowledges can influence broader scales to the benefit of indigenous people. Rather than limited to their

local contexts and communities, indigenous knowledges are rich, collective, and political constructions with the potential to challenge inequalities produced on national or transnational scales. The next section explores some of these potential transformations by demystifying the assumed universal discourses of human rights and development.

2.4. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT: TWO UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES

In previous Chapters, I defined universal discourses as forms of abstract knowledge needing connection with local practices. I described how, in order to become universal, discourses of civilization or progress “claim the power to see and not be seen” (Haraway, 1991). Articulated with scientific and technological mechanisms, universal discourses promise to see the world from above, from un-located places. They reactivate “the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere” and “have put the myth into ordinary practice” (Haraway, 1991, p. 189). Universal discourses have contributed to binary distinctions between civilized and indigenous knowledge, authorizing and naturalizing forms of physical and epistemic violence against indigenous people.

This thesis studies human rights and development as universal discourses. Given their unquestioned universality, the international human rights discourse is described by some critics as a contemporary secular religion (Dembour, 2010). Likewise, economic growth has been commonly framed as a shared horizon that all societies must attain through Western development methods (Escobar, 1995). This section describes how these universal discourses have contributed to produce unequal power relations, resistance, and empowerment among subaltern subjects. I also explore some possibilities of recognition and intercultural exchange that these discourses may provide to marginalized subjects – notably indigenous groups. From mainly critical perspectives, I situate the Western and modern origin of these discourses and some of their articulations with unquestioned power positions. I refer to some perspectives or paradigms to problematize these discourses’ universalistic claims. Through these reflections, I detail my theoretical framework in order to outline the transformative potential of intercultural frictions between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses.

2.4.1. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I see the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans (ESP) as a process that localizes international human rights discourse in 34 Colombian indigenous displaced communities. Legal documents supporting these Plans (Constitutional Court Judgment 025 and Order 004) invoke human rights agreements signed by the Colombian government. These agreements include the UN Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (United Nations, 1966a), the UN Pact of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1966b), International Humanitarian Law (Red Cross, 1949), the American Convention on Human Rights (Organization of American States, 1969), and the International Committee of the Red Cross's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Red Cross, 1998). Furthermore, the ESPs draw on the rights of indigenous peoples acknowledged by the 1991 Colombian Constitution such as identity, participation, and autonomy; equality in relation to other national groups; free cultural expression; and the right to constitute their own indigenous territories with their own authorities (Colombian 1991 Constitution, Articles 7, 70, 10, 246, 286). Drawing on this international and national legislation, the ESP's main legal framework aims to acknowledge the minimal basic rights of displaced populations in general and of displaced indigenous peoples in particular (see Chapter Four). The next section analyzes the Western cultural origins of this human rights framework, as well as its connections with power, perceived universality and potentialities for inclusive practices.

2.4.1.1. Human Rights: A Western Product of Modernity

The rational ideas of enlightenment, the 18th century French Declaration of the Rights of the Man and Citizen, and the U.S. Declaration of Independence were the main Western sources of the modern notion of human rights (Ramos, 1998; Williams, 2010). Ishay (2004) associates each rights category of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a major milestone in Western history (p.4). Civil rights (Articles 3-19) emerged during the enlightenment period; social, political and economic rights (Articles 20-26) emerged during the industrial revolution; and rights associated with communal and national solidarity (Articles 27-28) emerged in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Ishay, 2004, p. 3). Similarly, Fine (2012) situates the origin of civil, political, and social rights in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries respectively. Since this latter century, citizens are considered full citizens if

they possess all three kinds of rights (Fine, 2012, p. 104). Universal aspirations toward human freedoms, therefore, have been transformed along different periods in Western history.

Rationality is another characteristic that connects human rights with modernity and Western cultures. Fine suggests that Kant's

Visionary agenda [on a] republican government to be extended across all political communities, the formation of an international legal authority, and the endorsement of cosmopolitan rights [are the] foundations on which to translate the formal universality implicit in the concept of the rights of man into a concrete universal (Chernilo 2007, in Fine, 2012, p. 105).

This rational human rights agenda has not fulfilled its promises. After the 18th century, slavery continued in the European colonies in America, women failed to achieve equal rights, the right to vote was not fully achieved, children's rights were continuously usurped and sexual preference was not even considered as a right (Ishay, 2004, p. 8). The failure of these human rights views may be due to their lack of cultural legitimacy among non-Western societies and to their relative foreign and exotic character for other cultures (Santos, 2002a, p. 287).

Critics point out that one main characteristic of contemporary human rights understandings is the absence of non-Western cultural understandings of human freedom and dignity. From a critical historical perspective, Ishay argues that "in spite of several attempts of integrating multiple non-European – the Hamubrabi, Hindu, Confucianism, Christian, Islam – perspectives of common good" and customary laws during the writing of the 1948 Declaration, the European Enlightenment concept of universal rights has prevailed over other commonly accepted human rights understandings (Ishay, 2004, p. 7; 219). Also Williams (2010) suggests that the UN Declaration discarded a vast array of forms of freedom present at the moment of its conception such as collective ideas of freedom informed by contemporary Asian and African independence struggles of the period (p. xviii). From a counter-hegemonic perspective on international law, Santos identifies three additional "Western marks in the dominant human rights discourse":

The exclusive recognition of individual rights, with the exception of the collective right to self-determination which, however, was only applied to the peoples subjected to European colonialism and organized in colonial states...; the priority given to civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights...; [and] the recognition of the right to property as the first and, for many years, the sole economic right (2002, p. 271).

Given their mainly Western origin, Santos proposes to understand contemporary human rights as a form of “globalized Western localism”: that is, as a discourse globalized from particular Western centres (2002a, p. 271).

Human rights’ particular – instead of universal – character is also evident in their emergence as a bourgeois masculine discourse. Human rights’ first historical subject of recognition was the European bourgeois man, who bore rights simply by virtue of the fact that he was a man and a property owner. Historically, “this universality provided the framework in which struggles for the rights of women, slaves, servants, wage laborers, the colonized, and the racialized were added to the original conception of the bourgeois man” (cf. Dubois 2000, cited in Fine, 2012, p. 104). In this regard, Brown identifies an important human rights paradox:

Historically, rights emerged in modernity both as a vehicle of emancipation from political disenfranchisement or institutionalized servitude and as a means of privileging an emerging bourgeois class within a discourse of formal egalitarianism and universal citizenship. Thus, they emerged both as a means of protection against arbitrary use and abuse by sovereign and social power and as a mode of securing and naturalizing dominant social powers – class, gender, and so forth. Not only did bourgeois rights discourse mask [inequalities] by depoliticizing the social power of institutions such as private property or the family, it organized mass populations for *exploitation* and *regulation* (1995, p. 99, my emphasis).

As a Western bourgeois formation, human rights discourses have been instrumental in naturalizing unequal conditions of power while promising liberation to disenfranchised subjects. As a result, human rights have historically held the opposed functions of emancipating and dominating, protecting, and regulating marginalized subjects (Brown, 1995; Santos, 1997, p. 13). From these critical perspectives, human rights are understood to be a particular globalized Western discourse able to both consolidate inequalities and to contribute to emancipation for marginalized subjects.

2.4.1.2. Homogeneity, Individualism, and the Centrality of the State: Three Main Claims of Universal Human Rights Discourse

The universality of human rights is evident in its homogenizing claims, its framework that favours the individual, and the centrality that it confers to the State. The historical conditions in which the UN produced the 1948 Declaration (UNDHR) gave birth to an international discourse of human rights whose universality draws on individual and homogeneous conceptions of the human being. The UNDHR establishes universal principles

that constitute the “highest aspiration of the common people” regardless of cultural belonging, race, sex, or other distinctions (Ramos, 1998, p. 90; United Nations, 1948). Drawing on Foucault, feminist postcolonial critics of human rights discourses suggest that universality based on a homogeneous conception of humanity may hide currently existing economic inequalities and cultural differences (Brown, 1995; Grewal, 2005). The idea of a neutral and generic humanity hides economic differences such as those existing between Western and Third World people; both are seen as if they share the same historical and power conditions (Grewal, 2005, p. 182).

Among indigenous people, human rights acknowledge human belonging prior to ethnicity. Drawing on her research on indigenous policies and movements in the Brazilian Amazon, Ramos asserts that, given the recognition of her humanity to the detriment of her cultural specificity, the indigenous person is subsumed under a “generic human, deficient, naïf, whose actions could not be repaired” (1998, p. 110). Through human rights discourses, the indigenous person enters into a Western legal and cultural framework that merely acknowledges nationality or individualism. Consequently, indigenous people seem irremediably in need of guidance as wards of non-indigenous individuals or institutions (p. 110). Thus, Western human rights discourses establish normative, individual, and homogenizing views of indigenous practices and understandings of rights.

Human rights’ homogenizing claims also dismiss the right to cultural differences within global relations of power. Brown’s analysis of the Jewish people’s historical inclusion in European states suggests that minority groups are more concerned with being recognized as different groups with specific needs, than as a homogeneous and generalist citizen (1995, p. 101). Brown refers to the United States’ “contemporary campaigns by feminists, gay activists, indigenous peoples, and people of color for emancipation through and for rather than in spite of their ‘difference’” (1995, p. 102). In this author’s view, State institutions hinder the centrality of difference in these struggles precisely because the State’s masculine, heterosexist and white character becomes more tacit than explicit in the homogenizing claims of human rights discourse (Brown, 1995). Human rights’ homogenizing claims dismiss the differentiated character of human groups and may normalize power relations under standardizing concepts.

This homogenizing tendency is derived from Western conceptions of humanity as the sum of isolated individuals.⁴⁰ The emphasis on individualism in human rights discourse undermines collective forms of belonging such as ethnicity and community. Brown suggests that the uses of “rights discourse in liberal capitalist culture. . . . converts social problems into matters of individualized, dehistoricized injury and entitlement, into matters in which there is no harm if there is no agent and no tangibly violated subject” (1995, p. 124). This virtual disappearance of social agents in the neutral space of rights indicates a major human rights’ irony: “Rights sought by a politically defined group are conferred upon depoliticized individuals; at the moment a particular ‘we’ succeeds in obtaining rights, it loses its ‘we-ness’ and dissolves into individuals” (Brown 1995, p. 98). Human rights universal discourses may lead to the disintegration or weakening of collective struggles led by unions, tribes, social movements, and so forth.

Furthermore, human rights’ individualistic logic may lead to new forms of inequality in which some individuals are included or empowered while others are excluded or disempowered. In this respect, Ramos (2002) conceives human rights as a double-edged sword that may both empower and disempower disenfranchised subjects – notably indigenous people. This author describes how, in the 1980s, Brazilian indigenous people used human rights claims to favour their inclusion and accurate recognition in the 1988 Constitution. These claims became more effective when indigenous people used dances, chants, and other manifestations of their material culture that confirmed the Brazilian majority’s views on indigenous people as exotic subjects anchored in tradition (Ramos 2002, p. 258). Only folkloric representations of indigenous identity as fixed in the past ensured some recognition of the indigenous people’s struggles for rights.

Fraser also analyzes how transnational social movements, including indigenous movements, have challenged one dogma of egalitarianism: the tacit assumption that normal social science discourses – such as human rights – can determine the “who” of justice (2009,

⁴⁰ The individualist character of human rights discourses can be evident in the historical process to formulate the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Once promulgated and written, eight of the 58 UN-member States abstained from signing this Declaration. The USSR, Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Ukraine and Yugoslavia “worried that this document, predominantly ‘individualist’ in its selected category of rights, would challenge the sanctity of domestic jurisdiction guaranteed by the legally binding UN character” (Ishay, 2004, p. 223). Particularly, the Soviet Union opposed the Universal Declaration because of its overemphasis on individuals to the detriment of social and economic collective rights (Ramos, 2002, p. 253).

p. 26). Transnational movements resisting neoliberal globalization suggest that mechanisms to define who is entitled to rights should be handled democratically, rather than left to experts and elites (p. 27). Subaltern movements put on the public agenda multiple marginalities that challenge the production of individual subjects drawn on standardized indexes of human rights and development. In Chapter Four, I analyze how the use of these decontextualized indexes in the Colombian policies on displacement has influenced distinctions between peoples entitled to rights recognition and peoples without access to rights.

Western homogeneous and individual understandings of rights have silenced collective subjects and their alternative forms of knowledge. Some human rights critics suggest that the UN founding documents reiterate the centrality of the sovereign State as the final authority in human rights affairs (Ishay, 2004, p. 215). In the UN human rights discourse, State and inter-State institutions arise as the “only authorized” guarantors and promoters of human rights (Grewal, 2005, p. 124). This State centrality extends to even more recent and apparently culturally inclusive documents such as the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Critics suggest that, in this Declaration, “the individual would exist alone before the State, deprived of all other associations and armed only with the rights that the State confers” (Glenn, 2011, p. 176). Following this logic, individuals must claim rights under the exclusive conditions of the State and international law. From these perspectives, a universal human rights discourse has reduced collective struggles to individual actions, leading to unequal conditions of negotiation for disenfranchised subjects.

Important paradoxes emerge from this reduction of power struggles to individualistic and State institutional conditions. From a radical analysis on human rights and imperialism, Williams asserts that by reinforcing the State and its laws as the only mechanisms of struggle, the postwar discourse of human rights may become “a default ally of state violence” (2010, p. xxii). Under the forms of a ‘moral instrument’ directly connected with the communications industries, human rights discourse has proven to be indispensable to military imperialist interventions such as those of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan (Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 33-34, cited in Williams, 2010, p. xxiv; pp. xxiv; xxxii).⁴¹ From a Foucauldian critical

⁴¹ Williams suggests that international law favours an international division of humanity in which Western nations – led by the United States – are represented as the legitimate benefactors, human rights arbitrators and guarantors. This author suggests “to shift our analytical perspective from one that assumes that imperialism is a

perspective, Grewal asserts that human rights discourse constructs the State as a very ambiguous category: Human rights activists see the State as inefficient but, at the same time as the only way to acknowledge the rights of disenfranchised minorities (2005, p. 146). From a counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights, Santos refers to two contradictions inherent to human rights. First, while civil and political rights entail a kind of struggle against the State as their main potential transgressor, struggles for economic, social and cultural rights situate the State as the main human rights' guarantor. Second, human rights' universalism entails the formation of a global civil society whose members have the same rights although these rights are particularly acknowledged by specific states (Santos, 1997 p. 13). This contradiction emerges because the political model of Western modernity privileges the State as the scale of both social regulation and social emancipation (Santos, 2002b, p. 40; Fraser, 2009). In short, according to human rights discourse, individuals must struggle for freedom in isolation from their collective associations before State institutions that are both the main transgressors and guarantors of human freedoms.

The emphasis on individuals and State mechanisms in human rights discourse favours the production of subjects through discursive mechanisms. Grewal's (2005) discourse analysis of the processes through which foreign women have claimed refuge in North America illustrates the production of women refugees as victims in the 1990s. In these processes, women seeking refuge had to represent themselves according to the proper U.S. human rights-based immigration language that focused on their passivity as victims that the State could potentially save (Grewal, 2005, p. 190, my emphasis). Sikh women, for instance, had to adapt their past histories to neocolonial "British notions of the people of Punjab as masculinist and tough" and on U.S. previous experiences with Sikh people (Grewal, 2005, p. 193). Sikh women had to represent themselves before the U.S. state as passive victims of rough Sikh masculinity. They had to be careful about narratives on their participation in Sikh women's movements because these political links could lead to deportation. Thus, downplaying women's agency would ensure asylum. These processes simplified women's multiple experiences of subjugation to views on refugees pre-defined by U.S. human rights discourses.

problem for international law, to one that grasps their mutually constitutive relationship... the dynamic structure and form of international law 'assumes imperialism'" (Mieville, 2005, quoted in Williams, 2010, p. xx).

By transforming refugee-seekers into victims, American human rights discourse contributed to decontextualizing and depriving “the political consciousness of recognition of the histories, relations, and modalities of power that produce and situate us as human” (Brown, 1995, p. 127).

2.4.1.3. Counter-Hegemonic Movements: The Other Side of Human Rights

In spite of their mainly Western, masculine and bourgeois origin, their homogenizing and individualist conceptions of humankind, and their State-centred claims, human rights are still an important – and sometimes the only – weapon that disenfranchised subjects can use. A vast literature on social movements has shown that human rights’ Western history does not reflect its whole history:

Throughout the world, millions of people and thousands of non-governmental organizations have been struggling for human rights, often at great risk, in defence of oppressed social classes and groups that in many instances have been victimized by authoritarian capitalistic states (Santos, 2002a, p. 71).

Literature on social movements describes how women, LGBTQ populations, indigenous people, refugees, workers, political, linguistic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, among other subjects historically excluded have used and continue to use human rights concepts, procedures, and tribunals as their only resources to struggle for the recognition and protection of their freedoms (Erueti, 2011; Hayday, 2009; Le Bot, 2006; Meyer, 2012; Quijano, 2007; Rutheford, 2009; Smith, 2009).

The subaltern cosmopolitan legal approach studies how social movements, notably indigenous movements, have used human rights in counter-hegemonic ways (Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005; Rodríguez Garavito and Santos, 2005; Santos, 1997; 2002a). This approach provides insights into indigenous people’s contributions to alternative uses, practices, and concepts of human rights. This counter-hegemonic approach illustrates intercultural dialogues on human rights that have influenced national and international legislations and institutions. I situate my reflections on human rights in this subaltern approach.

Subaltern counter-hegemonic or cosmopolitan studies of globalization “aim to empirically document experiences of resistance, assess their potential to subvert hegemonic institutions and ideologies, and learn from their capacity to offer alternatives to the latter”

(Rodríguez Garavito and Santos, 2005, p. 14-15). This perspective can be summarized as an attempt to acknowledge how informal non-legal mechanisms may influence legal and formal institutions (p. 15). The subaltern cosmopolitan perspective acknowledges “new notions of rights that go beyond the liberal ideal of individual autonomy” (p. 16). This approach focuses on alternative forms of legal knowledge – e.g., indigenous laws – that connect culture, land, and traditions. Subaltern cosmopolitan approaches combine the local, national, and regional rights-centered strategies of social movements. These strategies are limited and “admittedly fragile” because they go “against entrenched and powerful interests, ideologies, and institutions” (Santos 2002:465; 2004 in Rodríguez Garavito and Santos, 2005, p. 17). This perspective analyzes resistance forms that subaltern groups produce with the resources available within current unequal power relations. These resistances include political, cultural, and economic claims that may eventually contribute to a more inclusive “global movement for social justice” (p. 20). This approach is coherent with this dissertation’s purpose of seeing globalization from below in order to acknowledge how indigenous knowledges may challenge and enrich contemporary understandings of human dignity and freedom.

The counter-hegemonic perspective challenges universal human rights on the basis of their Western and class origin, homogenizing views, and the centrality that they confer to individuals and the State to the detriment of collective associations. If the predominantly Western character of human rights is a starting point to question its universality, openness to multiple cultural versions of rights may become a main source of a new kind of cultural legitimacy. Intercultural dialogues between local cultures and human rights may contribute to more inclusive and situated views of human rights. With this purpose, Santos proposes an intercultural policy of human rights that acknowledges all cultures as incomplete and needing exchange with others. Such a policy recognizes the ways that each cultural group conceives human dignity, even in terms others than human rights, and recognizes that equality and hierarchy coexist in all cultures (1997, pp. 21-22). Intercultural dialogues on human dignity would be able to compete for the values and maximal demands of cultural groups (p. 21). This dissertation proposes to learn from indigenous grassroots concepts and embryonic struggles that may contribute to inclusive human rights views and mechanisms.

Through this openness to multiple versions of human dignity, human rights may contribute to emancipation through a democracy of high intensity based upon the most

comprehensive notions of human dignity (1997, p. 21). “Cosmopolitan forces” such as class-, identity-, and gender-based movements “focus on models of high-intensity democracy” (Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005). To illustrate, the Zapatista struggles in Chiapas “bring together the aspiration to economic justice and the aspiration to ethnic, racial and gender justice” (Ceceg 1999, cited in Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005, p. 243). These struggles have been able to encompass cultural, political, and economic claims. As with Marxist versions of human rights, this and other indigenous struggles have contributed to comprehensive versions of democracy that surpass liberal versions mostly limited to civil and political rights. High intensity democracy models attempt to surpass limited views of human rights as minimum freedoms to be protected by liberal States.

Subaltern counter-hegemonic perspectives may contribute to a new human rights perspective through the recognition and incorporation of alternative knowledges (Santos, 2002a, p. 272). This proposal attempts to overcome epistemic inequalities that the State and other agents of modernity, including institutions promoting human rights and development, have constructed on behalf of Western and liberal understanding of rights (Santos, 2002a). In order to acknowledge the legal value of alternative indigenous knowledges, this subaltern approach proposes new understandings between Western and historically neglected local knowledges. Authors associated with this perspective establish the need to surpass dichotomies between tradition and modernity in the study of indigenous struggles. Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas see the transnational mobilization of indigenous peoples “as a process of legal innovation with profound implications for national constitutional systems in the international human rights regime” (2005, p. 244). To illustrate, by 2000, indigenous movements’ concepts on justice had influenced at least sixteen constitutions to guarantee fundamental rights to indigenous peoples in Latin America and Canada (Ramos, 2002, p. 259). Similarly, other indigenous movements – such as the Colombian U’wa struggle against oil exploitation – have contributed to redefining collective rights to territory in the Inter-American System of Human Rights (Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005). These indigenous movements propose alternative modern conceptions of rights, different from colonial or hegemonic forms of law, and potentially effective for counter-hegemonic struggles.

The recognition of alternative indigenous visions of rights is part of the plural character of the subaltern counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights. Among the multiple legal

frameworks possible in counter-hegemonic legal pluralism, indigenous laws reveal “important and deep-rooted legal traditions and legal cultures governing the social life of millions of people throughout the world” (Santos, 2002a, p. 246). Indigenous laws – known in Colombia as the law of origin⁴² – articulate forms of indigenous culture with power positions legitimated by symbolism and tradition. Padilla (1996) defines the law of origin as a counter-hegemonic discourse that has allowed indigenous people to survive as culturally distinct peoples (p. 86). The elders leading the Leticia Witoto ESP compare the law of origin to *yetara*, whose etymological Witoto meaning is related to *discipline*. The law that disciplines these indigenous communities is transmitted through the sacred substances of coca, tobacco and manioc. Hence, the law of origin is a form of sacred knowledge symbolically passed on to preserve the common good, repair damages and prevent their repetition.

The acknowledgment of indigenous laws in human rights discourses and practices is possible through the recognition of non-official and community-based legal orders and organizations. This acknowledgment entails de-centring the State as a main human rights agent. Counter-hegemonic perspectives focus on struggles that cross different movements, scales and historical trajectories, and produce transnational connections and networks to achieve global visibility (Rodríguez-Garavito and Arenas, p. 243). These struggles comprise “both state and non-state actions, thus transforming the state into a component of a variety of non-state public spheres” (Santos, 2002a, p. 490). Under these conditions, rather than a homogeneous set of institutions, the State becomes “an unregulated political battle field where” several institutions, transnational agents, and connections converge to claim justice (Santos, 2002a, p. 490). In these conditions, the State becomes simply one of the components within a wider context and multiple scales in which social justice can be attained through legal pluralism.

The counter-hegemonic proposal to de-centre the State emphasizes the importance of group rights and collective subjects. The actions of indigenous movements have influenced contemporary mechanisms to recognize indigenous people’s collective rights. These

⁴² Indigenous laws are also known as aboriginal law (Isaac, 2012), aboriginal self-government (Belanger, 2008), indigenous customary law (Hernández Castillo, 2002), and the law of origin (Padilla, 1996). Among these denominations, I privilege the “law of origin” as a more direct translation of *la ley de origen*, the term most often used by the People of the Centre and by other Colombian indigenous groups.

movements have influenced “international legal instruments” to protect indigenous people’s rights. The international echoes of indigenous movements influenced the formation in 1971 of the UN Sub commission about the declaration of rights of native peoples (Ramos, 2002, p. 254). Three years later, the National Fraternity of Canadian Indians had an official voice in the Conference about discrimination against native peoples in the Americas (Ramos, 2002, p. 255). Influenced by these movements and encounters, indigenous and Inuit peoples demanded in 1977 that the UN classify them as ‘peoples’ rather than as minorities. This demand was a point of departure in the global struggle against marginalization (p. 255). Further, Erueti (2011) documents how indigenous people’s social independent yet interrelated movements in North America, Australasia, Nordic States, Latin American regions, and Asia influenced the 1989 International Labour Organization (ILO) Covenant 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Finally, several indigenous movements from multiple continents participated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).⁴³ The two latter international legal instruments acknowledge indigenous collective rights within national states. These achievements in the recognition of the rights of indigenous people confirm the transnational influence of indigenous movements. The participation of these collective agents in human rights struggles contests the homogenizing claims of the universal human rights discourse. Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas’ analysis of indigenous struggles provides insights into the centrality of difference in contemporary subaltern social movements: “The fact that their [indigenous people’s] claims are identity-based connects these struggles to counter-hegemonic globalization: global social movements are as much about difference as they are about equality” (2005, p. 243). In short, difference is a central and a continuous element of indigenous counter-hegemonic struggles. In this regard, Santos asserts:

The collective rights that ethnic minorities have been demanding have to do with the survival of ethnic groups as such, the preservation of ethnic cultures, the reproduction of the group as a distinct entity, the cultural identity attached to group life and social organization. . . . This is much more

⁴³ The UNDRIP was approved by 144 UN member-states and was adopted as a non-binding declaration by the UN General Assembly on Thursday 13 September 2007. It was passed with 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States) and 11 abstentions (Colombia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine). Colombia was the only Latin American country that refrained from voting. Although the countries that rejected the Declaration have adopted it recently, Colombia had not signed the UNDRIP at the time of the completion of this thesis in 2014. <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/DeclarationontheRightsofIndigenousPeoples.aspx>. Another main declaration on group rights is the UN 1993 Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (see Ingram, 2012).

than expecting non-discrimination and equality before law. It relates to the use of language, schooling and educational and cultural institutions, including religious institutions; frequently, with self-government and political autonomy' (Stavenhagen, 1990, p. 65 see also Stavenhagen, 2002 and America indigena, 1989, cited in Santos, 2002a, p. 245).

The recognition of difference and cultural specificity is central and continuous in indigenous and counter-hegemonic struggles. In these movements, economic and political claims for equality are inseparable from demands for the differential recognition of indigenous groups according to their cultural particularities.

The specific histories of indigenous peoples reinforce the distinctive nature of their struggles. Indigenous people's condition as 'original' nations confers historical precedence to their rights struggles: "The collective rights they [indigenous people] struggle for are not conceived by them as rights to be granted to them, but rather as rights they had always enjoyed before they were taken away from them by conquerors, settlers, missionaries or merchants coming from afar" (Santos, 2002a, p. 245). In other words, rather than attaining rights, indigenous peoples struggle to recover the rights that they enjoyed or attempted to enjoy before contact with colonizer agents. From the perspective of indigenous peoples, justice consists of being recognized according to indigenous peoples' specific differences and histories under the terms and conditions defined by their cultural groups. Indigenous struggles for justice recall the need for practices of recognition in which marginalized groups manifest publicly through expressive means historically excluded and related to their own cultures (Voirol, 2005, pp. 112; 115). The use of their own cultural expression valorizes these groups in relation to agents who have taken part in their marginalization.

In their search for justice, indigenous movements have recalled the need for coordinated forms of political representation, economic redistribution and cultural recognition. Fraser provides complementary insights into coordinated mechanisms of political, economic and cultural justice that may emerge from the analysis of social movements against globalization.

2.4.1.4. Post-socialist Feminist Perspectives: A Complementary View of Global Justice

Fraser suggests that contemporary social movements that contest global issues such as global warming and genetically modified agriculture expand the bounds of justice beyond the scale of the nation-State:

Activists contesting transnational inequities reject the view that justice can only be imagined territorially, as a domestic relation among fellow citizens. . . . Environmentalists and indigenous

peoples are claiming standing as subjects of justice in relation to the extra- and non-territorial powers that impinge on their lives. Insisting that effectivity trumps state-territoriality, they have joined development activists, international feminists, and others in asserting their right to make claims against the structures that harm them, even when the latter cannot be located in the space of places (Fraser, 2009, p. 5; 25).

These movements challenge not only how much equality to permit or what is equal respect, but also what is the proper frame to address contemporary injustices: the State, the transnational, the community, or hybrid scales and institutions. These movements have exposed the lack of institutions where disputes about the subjects of justice can be democratically aired and solved (p. 27). As a result, indigenous struggles have challenged State-centred technical mechanisms of economic redistribution and cultural recognition (Fraser, 2009, p. 27-28).

Indigenous struggles recall that recognition, redistribution and representation must be encompassed in order to avoid new forms of injustice that emerge when marginalized subjects are included as subjects of other forms of injustice (Fraser, 2009). Fraser suggests that transformative struggles against neoliberal globalization are making visible the injustice of meta-political misrepresentation. This form of injustice “arises when states and transnational elites monopolize the activity of frame-setting, denying voice to those who may be harmed in the process, and blocking creation of democratic arenas where the latter’s claims can be vetted and redressed” (p. 26). As a result, subjects are “denied the chance to press first-order justice claims in a given political community” (p. 19). Meta-political misrepresentation remains “even when those excluded from one political community are included as subjects of justice in another” – as long as the effect of the political division is to put some relevant aspects of justice beyond their reach (Fraser, 2009, p. 19-20). To illustrate, in the Leticia Witoto ESP, the cultural and legal dominance of generalist views on indigenous peoples has limited possibilities of recognition and visibility to indigenous elders, women and children (see Chapter Four).

In view of these forms of injustice, Fraser proposes a three-dimensional theory of justice. This theory incorporates the “political dimension of representation alongside the economic dimension of distribution and the cultural dimension of recognition” (2009, p. 15). These three processes are separated, yet inextricably interwoven: misrecognition cannot be reduced to a secondary effect of maldistribution and the latter cannot be reduced to a problem

of representation: “Neither recognition theory nor distribution theory can alone provide an adequate understanding of justice for capitalist society” (p. 16). Fraser proposes to conceptualize struggles and mechanisms for cultural recognition in ways that can be integrated with struggles for economic redistribution and political representation (2000, p. 109). In the contemporary global conjuncture, the emphasis on only one of these dimensions or the dismissal of one of them leads to new forms of injustice: misrepresentation, maldistribution, or misrecognition. Thus, Fraser acknowledges claims and mechanisms to coordinate economic redistribution, political representation, and cultural recognition as one main contribution of subaltern struggles against globalization.

2.4.1.5. Proposals: Intercultural Dialogues between Different Understandings of Human Rights.

These reflections lead me to analyze the Leticia Witoto ESP as an intercultural dialogue between different understandings of human rights. I propose to approach both the Colombian State human rights discourse and the People of the Centre’s law of origin as limited versions of rights that may enrich one another. I argue that differences pre-exist, are recreated, produced, and negotiated in these dialogues. To achieve some agreements, these intercultural dialogues imply considering each culture as a contemporaneous partner even if they have been influenced differently by unbalanced historical relations of power (notably those described in Chapter One). Although these dialogues are mainly guided by the State, they may open possibilities to de-centre the State as the only agent and mechanism for rights recognition. Negotiations to formulate the Leticia Witoto ESP may open possibilities for the People of the Centre to connect with other indigenous groups, or with regional and transnational organizations that may strengthen their struggles. Although embryonic and fragile, these connections may offer indigenous people possibilities for recognition, visibility, and influence on local, regional, and national institutions that may benefit the indigenous quests for power. Furthermore, these dialogues may open opportunities to envision three-dimensional (economic, political, and cultural) views of justice in order to avoid new forms of injustice in the contact between indigenous subjects and global forces (Fraser, 2000; 2009).

Recognizing the unequal character of intercultural dialogues on human rights is one main step toward identifying their transformative potential. As suggested in Chapter One, the

Leticia Witoto ESP has compelled the People of the Centre to consider the State as a rights guarantor although it has historically taken part in their historical exclusion. The Leticia Witoto ESP can be seen as an intercultural dialogue in which indigenous people must use the idioms of Western human rights discourse to imagine, propose, and struggle for autonomy and recognition. Furthermore, the ESP's formulation has been economically supported and conceptually guided by the Indigenous Affairs Division of the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs. In short, the ESPs are an unequal intercultural dialogue about rights involving State and indigenous agents.

Santos interrogates the unequal character of comparable intercultural dialogues on human rights:

What are the possibilities for a cross-cultural dialogue when one of the cultures *in presence* has itself been moulded by massive and long-lasting violations of human rights perpetrated in the name of the other culture? (2002, p. 278).

Taking up this reflection, I raise the following questions to understand the transformative potential of these intercultural dialogues: How can indigenous people speak of indigenous justice under the terms and conditions defined by their interlocutor, the State? What are the conditions of such participation when one of its main participants (the State) has historically dominated the power relations that indigenous people struggle to change?

These questions can be compared to Spivak's question: "Can the subaltern speak?" (1994; 1999). From a feminist postcolonial perspective, this author aims to produce a subaltern discourse able "to question the unquestioned muting of the subaltern woman even within the anti-imperialist Project of subaltern studies" (p. 91). Spivak is not only concerned about the possibilities and conditions of subaltern expression but also about how they can be listened to in unequal conditions of expression. Spivak's question is useful for recognizing how, in spite of their contemporary conditions of marginalization, subaltern agents such as indigenous people may be able to produce forms of subaltern discourse that allow them their own expression, contribute to the specific recognition of their differences, and to their inclusion as equal human subjects. Although unequal and coded in universal discourses of rights, these dialogues may lead indigenous people to express with "their own voices" in order to gain rights recognition in relation to the State (Fraser, 1997).

Unequal conditions of negotiation are not a new or exclusive phenomenon of the Leticia Witoto people. Referring to the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Glenn (2011) asserts that indigenous people have shored up their positions by using the Western linguistic, juridical, and institutional systems through which they have been dominated. For indigenous people, the UNDRIP has opened the possibility of communication “into another language or conceptual scheme” – Western discourses of human rights – which “involves active use of both [indigenous and Western] languages or conceptual schemes” (Glenn, 2011, p. 177). The use of “the other’s language” may be useful for “communicating one’s own concepts” (Glenn, 2011). New forms of knowledge and legislation may emerge from the contact between “different truths... placed in parallel for [the] purpose of mutual interrogation and understanding” (Glenn, 2011, p. 177). In other words, dialogue between indigenous knowledges and national and international law may produce new and inclusive knowledges through friction between different legal cultures.

I argue that, despite their unequal character, dialogues between the State and indigenous agents in the Leticia Witoto ESP may offer possibilities for subaltern subjects to challenge their marginalization. I propose to analyze the Leticia Witoto ESP as an unequal intercultural dialogue on rights that may open possibilities to make visible indigenous views on law. This visibility may influence mutual understanding between indigenous people and the State. More than simply opposing each other as distinct and specific forms of knowledge, indigenous, national, and international legal frameworks can complement each other. Indigenous people’s practices and concepts may challenge and complement dominant views on rights and may provide the State with strategies to coordinate economic, political, and cultural forms of justice. Drawing on the unequal processes of communication of a marginal indigenous Amazonian multi-ethnic group, this dissertation studies culturally situated mechanisms that may contribute to global movements of justice and high intensity democracy.

2.4.2. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES OF DEVELOPMENT

In addition to human rights, the Colombian Constitutional Court initiative of the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans (ESP) is mainly connected with Western modernization and participatory understandings of development. This section explores some complexities of such connection in order to challenge the assumed universality of Western views of development.

The modernization development paradigm is especially evident in Constitutional Court's Judgment 025, which is one of the two legal frameworks of the ESPs. Four aspects of this discourse can be associated with the modernization paradigm of development: the centrality of economy over culture in strategies to solve social problems, the reduced representation of social situations to decontextualized indicators, the victimization of displaced people, and the consequent emphasis on external aid to surpass their marginalization. This section discusses these characteristics of the modernization development paradigm.

On the other hand, participatory development is more evident in the second legal document that supports the ESPs. Order 004 can be seen as a more contextualized and culturally-based recognition of indigenous displaced people. This document refers to the "differential nature of the impact of forced displacement on indigenous people" (Colombia, 2009, p. 12, my translation). The Constitutional Court insists on understanding the specificity of forced displacement within each ethnic group (Colombia, 2009). The Order's connection between development and local cultures, its recognition of specific forms of marginality due to gender or generation, and the insistence on the participation of indigenous authorities to improve this situation allow me to relate this legal document with the participatory development paradigm. I explain these two paradigms by briefly referring to the mainly Western origin and character of the idea of development and by situating this idea within six main development approaches. This explanation allows me to introduce this dissertation's position in relation to the universal discourse of development.

Development: A Western Colonial Idea

I see development as a universal discourse focused on economic growth imposed by Western countries and institutions on several countries throughout the world (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995). Development is related to the expansion of the U.S. and Western Europe capitalism through the construction of global markets, the definition of non-Western countries as producers of raw materials, and the production of new markets throughout the world. Development – like human rights – has become a universal discourse by constructing itself as a regime of power that articulates Western forms of knowledge to the interests of particular unmarked subjects (Escobar, 1995; Wilkins, 2000). As a result, development has spread as a neutral common goal to be achieved by every society.

In spite of numerous critical perspectives on development voiced by State and civil society organizations of the global South, the category of development is used extensively by multiple national, international, and multilateral institutions. As Cowen and Sherton assert, no country is taken seriously if it does not take into account or does not clearly present its goals in terms of development indicators, or if it is not defined in development terms (1995, p. 29). The world continues to be divided along the lines of developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries. Indeed, development indicators in aid effectiveness, economic policy and external debt, agricultural and rural development, poverty, science and technology, and so on, continue to be dominant in the current society (World Bank, 2012). For these reasons, development cannot be dismissed in analyses of intercultural power relations in globalization.

Cowen and Shenton (1995) situate the origin of the concept of development in the colonial ideas that legitimated the expansion of the British Empire in the 19th century. In this historical period, British elites established the basis of a society ruled by a wealthy class legitimated by the morality and rationality of their knowledge (Cowen and Shenton, 1995). These elites were supposed to guide colonized people on their path to progress. The expansion of British knowledge as superior to those of colonized subjects established the need for colonized societies to be exclusively guided by colonizer 'trustees' (Cowen and Shenton, 1995). Neither forms of knowledge associated with emotion, spirituality or experience, nor their knowers (such as local and colonized peoples) were acknowledged in the trustees' rational regime of 'generalized knowledge'. These 19th-century discourses on development authorized colonial elites to consolidate the legitimacy of Western knowledges and agents to the detriment of the colonized people and their knowledges.

Distinctions between guider and guided societies naturalized geographical world distinctions between developed and underdeveloped countries. In the 19th century, precursors to industrial protectionism proposed to classify the world along the lines of industrialized and agrarian nations. While the former nations were prepared to participate in international trade, the latter could not exchange their agricultural products for foreign manufactures (List, 1991 [1885]: 119-309, cited in Cowen and Shenton, 1995, p. 36). Thus, colonial economic discourses established the basis of fixed distinctions such as the First and Third World, industrialized nations and suppliers of raw materials, developed and underdeveloped nations,

and autonomous and dependent nations. Several understandings of development emerging on the global scene throughout the 20th century reproduced and reinforced these colonial views.

2.4.2.1. Modernization: Economic Growth Drawn on Knowledge Transfer

The notion of development associated with modernization became widespread from 1948. The U.S. Marshall Plan that offered financial assistance to reconstruct Europe after the World War II was instrumental to the emergence of development discourse (Escobar, 1995). On behalf of the “common interest of humankind,” this plan created a new geopolitical order in favour of U.S. economic and political expansion (p. 33). The Marshall Plan favoured an international division of labour between the Third World countries as suppliers of raw materials and First World (Western) countries as capitalist owners and industrial producers (see Spivak, 1994, p. 288; 1999 p. 121). According to this division, the U.S. launched programs of technical assistance (in agriculture, industrialization, health, family planning, etc.) to overcome poverty among the primary sector countries.⁴⁴ These programs drew on the commonly accepted idea that “if poor countries were not rescued from their poverty, they would succumb to Communism” (Escobar, 1995, p. 34; see also Levitt, 2011, p. 16). Aid programs emerged based on surpassing poverty through economic growth, industrialization, and the transfer of technology.

Escobar (1995) argues that “the invention of poverty” was crucial for the expansion of development as a global need. In the Marshall Plan, “almost by fiat, two-thirds of the world’s peoples were transformed into poor subjects when the World Bank defined as poor those countries with an annual per capita income below \$100” (Escobar, 1995, p. 23 - 24). Since insufficient income was identified as the main global problem, the World Bank established economic growth as a clear global economic solution. For this reason, the modernization paradigm of development proposes economic growth through a “unilinear evolutionary process” that defines developed and underdeveloped countries through observable quantitative indexes (Servaes, 2008, p. 20).

Modernization development agents defined poverty according to statistical techniques that homogenized different and distant social conditions and cultural differences. These

44 In Latin America, this program was called the “Alliance for Progress.”

scientific views placed development agents in privileged positions to produce the “the poor and underdeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects” (Escobar, 1995, p. 53). First World development agents produced their own subjects and territories (the Third World) in order to ensure “the colonization and domination of the natural and human ecologies and economies” of the global South (Escobar, 1995, p. 53). These discursive techniques were instrumental to the global dissemination of the discourse of poverty as an unquestioned category and development as its unavoidable antidote.

Modernization development discourse worked through transforming people’s self-image. In development programs, scientific categories, systems of monitoring, control, and regulation contributed to a perception among local people that they were “underdeveloped” – a category created by this same development paradigm (Escobar, 1995, p. 10). Development proceeded by producing ‘abnormal’ subjects such as ‘the poor’, the ‘malnourished,’ ‘the illiterate,’ ‘the landless’ which it would then treat or reform (Escobar, 1995, p. 212). Through the overuse of unquestionable “scientific truths” – such as standardized statistical indicators or analytical methods – people participating in development projects started seeing themselves according to these categories.

The modernization paradigm of development promoted dichotomies between Western scientific discourses and local practices, represented as backwardness. Commonly, modernization development agents represented non-Western people’s cultures, traditions, and practices as the main causes of underdevelopment. To illustrate, practitioners on development programs on health in Africa and Latin America blamed the “ignorance and unsanitary habits of local populations” as the main cause of their health problems and the failure of health programs (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2008, p. 21). In short, the modernization development discourse became universal by promising technological and economic growth at the expense of ignoring and devaluing local social organizations and cultures.

Further, modernization development draws on individualistic claims. Rogers conceived modernization “a process of diffusion whereby individuals move from a traditional way of life to a different, more technically developed and more rapidly changing way of life” (Servaes, 2008, p. 20). In this paradigm, the diffusion of messages between individuals leads to the adoption of new behaviours that favour modernization. From a communication viewpoint, apart from the widespread use of mass media as a means of persuasion, modernization

development agents train community leaders as ‘social models’ to promote behaviour changes between individual community members (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2008, p. 23). Thus, community leaders become crucial to legitimate the community’s need for help through knowledge transfer. As with the 19th century idea of colonial societies needing guidance, development agents promoted the transfer of modern technological knowledge and the action of some specific trustees (community leaders) in order to “bring the light” and “awaken” Third World “sick cultures” (Escobar, 1995, p. 26). By depicting non-Western cultures and subjects as lacking agency and the ability to overcome poverty, international agents represented themselves as the natural helpers to surpass Third World people’s “painful fate” (Escobar, 1995). External interventions and solutions were naturalized as essential for the eradication poverty. As a result, in several locations, development through modernization became an aspiration that would remedy the lack of abilities of the Third World (Escobar, 1995, p. 191). By framing external intervention as the only means to solve underdevelopment, the modernization paradigm agents transformed or influenced the extinction of some cultural practices, worldviews, and abilities.

This dissertation analyzes how the modernization paradigm of development is present in the Constitutional Court and State’s discourse and measures related to the ESP. I analyze how this paradigm is present in this Plan’s framework through a particular emphasis on external aid, measurable indexes of economic and material improvement, and standardized economic measures to deal with forced displacement. I also explore some consequences of the relevance of this paradigm for the indigenous communities who take part in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

2.4.2.2. Latin American Critics of the Modernization Paradigm of Development

Modernization development discourse was widely criticized – and sometimes resisted – in global regions experiencing its unequal relations. Since the 1960s, a vast range of Asian, African, and Latin American scholars and political leaders attempted to disconnect development from capitalism in order to avoid exploitation. The Latin American structuralism (LAS) perspective proposed that underdevelopment could be surpassed by subverting the “centre-periphery structure of world trade (the export of raw materials and primary commodities in exchange for manufactured goods)” (Key, 2011, p. 39). LAS scholars proposed a “policy of import substitution industrialization (ISI)” in order to break a

“dependent pattern of consumption and create the conditions of self-reliant economic growth” (Key, 2011, p. 40).

Although in the 1950s and 1960s the ISI model contributed to economic growth and reinforced development at a national scale, underdeveloped countries were still dependent on the import of foreign goods and technologies. Indeed, in the 1970s, not only was the ISI model unable to eradicate relations of dependency, but the importation of manufactured goods necessary to substitute importations increased dependency on Western industrialized countries.

In addition to these failures, critics of the Latin American dependency theory suggest that this paradigm lacks alternatives to modernization economic growth: “Despite the seeming contrast between modernisation and dependency theories, they [dependency scholars] were both concerned with how to achieve economic and technological development” (Gülalp, 1998, p. 957). In dependency theory, development and underdevelopment were “two sides of the same coin” that might be transformed through subverting the position of a country in the “world capitalist system” (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011). Other critics suggest that dependency scholars (such as Cardoso and Faletto) merely inverted the dichotomy of imperial structures of domination (1979, p. xv, quoted in Manzo, 1995, p. 244). The means, goals, and understanding of modern development remain untouched in the dependency paradigm. Development understood as a regime of power based on economic growth as a solution to poverty remained dominant in these critical perspectives.

2.4.2.3. Participatory Paradigm: Economic Growth through Other Means?

The participatory development approach emerged in the 1970s in response to the failure of both the modernization and dependency approaches. A growing number of scholars and activists argued that development could only address the problems of the poor if it engaged the poor as agents of their own development (Cohen and Uphoff 1997, cited in Parpart and Veltmer, 2011, p. 5). This paradigm emphasizes cultural “‘diversity’ and ‘pluralism,’ suggesting that nations and regions cultivate their own, responsive approaches to self-determined development goals” (Huesca, 2003, p. 62). “This approach draws on the ideas of Paulo Freire (1970), feminist writing about empowerment (Antrobus 1995; Kabeer 1994; Moser 1993) and community-based research practice” (Chambers 1987, cited in Parpart and

Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 7). In this process, “development was conceived as socially inclusive, equitable, human in form and scale, sustainable in terms of both the environment and livelihoods and above all, predicated on community popular participation” (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 7).

Parpart and Veltmeyer (2011) recognize three main trends in this paradigm: the claim for the restoration of the State’s role in “regulating economic activity in the public interest” (p. 7); the role of “the local” as a reaction to the corrupt practices of State institutions (Parpart, Rai and Staudt 2002, cited in Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 7); and the increase of the *social* capital of the poor such as their capacity to “network, to cooperate productively and to work together” (Wolcock and Narayan 2000 cited in Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 8). This form of capital draws on community and local people’s participation in dialogues where they can share and construct knowledge.

Dialogue is a key element of participatory development (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008, p. 81). Through culturally situated dialogue, participant groups share and produce knowledge crucial for collective action and social change. This dialogue depends on the culture of the “overall development context” and strives to strengthen cultural identity, trust, commitment, voice, ownership, community engagement, and empowerment (Gumucio and Tufte, 2006, p. xx). Through cultural dialogue, participant groups share and produce knowledge crucial for collective action. This process aims to surpass unequal dialogue of one culture over others. For this purpose, participatory development aims to acknowledge the specificity and value of each culture and language. In the participatory development approach, valuing local knowledge is a way to gain legitimacy for local struggles, to reinforce the creation of local content and to revive traditional, indigenous knowledge (Gumucio Dagron and Tufte, 2006, p. xx).

Collective communication and the visibility of marginalized subjects occupy a central role in this process: “Social change can be sustained if individuals and communities affected own the means, content and methods of communication” (Gumucio and Tufte, 2006, p. xxi). Horizontal communication aims to strengthen “community bonds by amplifying the voices of the people who are poorest” (p. xxi). Consequently, participants’ visibility constitutes a crucial element of the development process. Communication tools are used autonomously by people in order to promote “dialogue among equal voices, and debate and negotiation within communities” (p. xxi). This process entails people’s use of appropriate technology according

to their own needs, practices, and abilities. Technological uses “must be owned or controlled by them” (p. xxi). This process of communication focused on horizontal dialogue and cultural relevance substitutes the focus on persuasion and information proposed by modernization development. As a result, participatory development may give birth to networks where people with similar concerns apply and share what they have learned from development process (Gumucio and Tufte, 2006, p. xxi).

Huesca (2002) suggests that participatory development scholars (such as Díaz Bordenave 1994; Kaplún, 1985; Nair & White, 1994a)

have prescribed totalizing processes of participatory communication where all interlocutors experience freedom and equal access to express feelings and experiences and to arrive at collective agendas for action. Under these circumstances, all people are said to take ownership of communication and to experience empowering outcomes (Huesca, 2002, p. 505).

As a result of these communication processes, participatory development is sometimes associated with “genuine” and “authentic” participation, as opposed to “the manipulative, pseudo participation” of modernization approaches (Huesca, 2002, p. 505). In these processes, participation is considered both as a means and an end to development.

Critics of this paradigm particularly highlight its uncritical emphasis on participation. Wilkins (2000) suggests that the centrality of participation in this this paradigm may constitute a euphemism for development relations of power reformulated according to the ‘less controversial’ idea of ‘social change’. This paradigm’s emphasis on apparently egalitarian communication processes of development may hide already existing local inequalities. According to Huesca, “participatory visions are premised on a somewhat romantic belief that peasants, Indians, and other marginalized persons possess local wisdom and a virtuous cultural ethos that participatory processes are inherently humanizing, liberating, and catalyzing” (Dissanayake, 1985; Vargas, 1995; S.A. White, 1994, cited in Huesca, 2002, p. 505). Power relations seem to magically vanish through participation, voice, and visibility. As a result, “the emphasis of participatory communication by itself is capable of reproducing inegalitarian power structures, especially in regard to gender relations” (Wilkins, 1999, 2000, cited in Huesca, 2002, p. 508). In short, although participation may ensure more inclusive possibilities for several subjects, dynamics of exclusion can be produced and reproduced even in participatory processes.

A second critique of this paradigm focuses on its lack of strategies for challenging power structures. Huesca asserts that “the relationship between participatory communication and dominant power structures is neither transparent nor unproblematic” (2002, p. 508). Since participatory development is not oriented toward an “*a priori* structural goal, such as building progressive institutions or deconstructing dominating discourses,” participatory initiatives can be easily articulated or co-opted by elitist organizations (Escobar, 1999; O’Connor, 1990, cited in Huesca, 2002 p. 508). Therefore, participation as such is insufficient to transform power inequalities already existing on local and community scales.

Parpart and Veltmeyer suggest that participatory development does not identify the discrepancies of power and influence between local initiatives, knowledges, and forms of empowerment on the one hand and State capital and transnational corporations on the other (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 10). Through local initiatives, this approach proposes that dominant groups and classes are willing to surrender their power (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 8). Furthermore, through the promotion of community initiatives for the provision of basic needs, participatory development can allow the State to shirk its responsibilities. As a result, crucial topics of public interest such as health, sanitation, education, access to drinking water, and employment remain neglected by the State or delegated to – and at times privatized by – NGO or community organizations. In the participatory paradigm, communities become responsible for their own development in a logic that is coherent with the neoliberal logic of downsizing the state (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 8).

This dissertation takes up some elements of the participatory development paradigm in order to analyze the Leticia Witoto ESP. I see the formulation of this Plan as a participatory dialogue based on community practices and strategies, connected with local cultures and indigenous knowledges. My analysis questions the centrality of participation in this process. In my fieldwork, I found that the Leticia Witoto ESP team members expect to influence these institutions even if most of them are unaware of the State’s structure, procedures, and language associated with public policy. Furthermore, the ESP’s participatory character may suggest that the Colombian State leaves several historical structural problems in the hands of indigenous people. In the Leticia Witoto case, deep-seated structural problems such as land ownership, basic sanitation, health, and culturally appropriate education are seen to be potentially resolved through community dialogue. I also explore how participatory dialogues

to formulate the ESP may have produced or increased new forms of exclusion of community members situated in marginal positions – notably women, elders, or minority ethnic groups.

These views on the participatory development paradigm lead me to raise complementary questions to my case study. Drawing on Spivak’s interrogation of the conditions under which the subaltern can speak and be heard, I ask: Under what conditions and through which means – languages, codes, rituals, or spaces – do community dialogues on human rights and development take place? How can ‘participatory’ dialogues influence scales and structures of power broader than the community such as the regional or the State? Who speaks on behalf of whom in intercultural dialogues on development? Who is empowered, disempowered or marginalized in these conditions of participation? I explore these questions in Chapters Four and Five.

2.4.2.4. Rights-Based Approaches to Development

Just like other universals interconnect to produce power positions, human rights and development have become deeply interconnected (Tsing, 2005; Grewal, 2005). African scholar Keba M’baye initially proposed the idea of seeing development as a right in 1972. M’baye established that “in the absence of economic development human rights have no future at all” (Santos, 2002a, p. 293). This view established economic development as a requirement to attain political rights. Multilateral institutions of governance have formally recognized the connection between human rights and development since the 1970s. In 1978, in the midst of the global economic crisis that undermined the credibility of the modernization development paradigm, UNESCO associated development with dignity, considering it a synonym of human rights (Grewal, 2005). Similarly, in 1981, The Hague’s International Court of Justice stated that human rights and development needed to work together: While development could be more easily achieved through its recognition as a human right, human rights conferred a more human dimension to development programs (Grewal, 2005, pp. 132-133).

The 1986 UN Declaration of the Right to Development reinforced this relationship. This Declaration defines development as

a comprehensive economic, social, cultural, and political global process which aims at continuously *improving the well-being of a whole population and all its individuals*, on the basis of

their active, free, and meaningful participation in development and their equitable sharing of the benefits that may result (United Nations, 2011, p. 3, my emphasis).

This Declaration made Western development a common goal to be achieved by all peoples regardless of their different understandings on such topics. Indeed, the respect for these differences remains unnamed in this Declaration. As a result, this Declaration subtly imposed development as an “inalienable human right” (United Nations, 2011, p. 5).

In 2000, the UN Declaration on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) reinforced the global acknowledgement of development as a right. Signed by 147 heads of state and government, and adopted by 189 countries, this Declaration states, “we are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone” (UN General Assembly 2000, quoted in Cox, 2009, p. 168). Cox identifies some key aspects in the universalization of the right to development through the MDG. First, the Millennium Declaration appears directly connected with the UN Declaration on Human Rights and with this Declaration’s universal rights standards. Second, the MDG emphasize ‘mitigating deprivation’ of inequalities and mainly targets the plight of children – six of the eight goals directly target this population. “Universally regarded as a good thing,” these topics can hardly be objected to or resisted (Cox, 2009, p. 161). Third, the fact that the MDG were neither technically binding for member states nor overtly challenging to state sovereignty contributed to localizing the right to development within national legislations. Through discursive, technical, and political strategies, the Millennium Declaration contributed to universalize development as an inalienable right.

Instead of challenging modernization development goals as such, debates surrounding the Millennium Declaration have focused on “the methods of defining, quantifying, and monitoring progress” required to accomplish them (Cox, 2009, p. 161; see Colle, 2008). Current analyses of the MDG accomplishments suggest that certain goals – such as reducing children’s and pregnant women’s mortality, obtaining greater representation of women in government, combating tuberculosis, improving maternal health, and protecting forest lands – have the least success as a result of administrative problems in aid to development (Clemens, Kenny and Moss 2007, cited in Cox, 2009, p. 167). Other analyses argue that “Africans must assume responsibility for their own destiny and ‘change’ from their ‘business as usual’ approach and attitude” (Okonofua 2005, p. 9 cited in Cox, 2009, p. 167). In other words,

debates surrounding MDG accomplishments blame ‘less successful individuals or cultures’ for not fully achieving the established goals. In line with the modernization paradigm of development, local cultures and lack of external aid are positioned by the Millennium Declaration as obstacles to development.

Other critics suggest that debates related to the MDG have focused more on administrative mechanisms to provide external aid than on clear measures to eradicate poverty.⁴⁵ In their view, the Millennium Declaration

Does not challenge the notion that extreme deprivation is bad and that people indeed have a right not to suffer, but they take on instead the mechanics and politics of providing poverty relief... (Salord, 2005, 115). The purpose of poverty relief, writes another “should be understood as more than a ‘goal’ and the aim should be its eradication, not its administration” (Alegre 2007, 237 cited in Cox, 2009, p. 169).

Other critiques focus on the MDG’s decontextualized views of social economic rights. According to Cox, these rights “cannot be discussed without reference to past and present relations between the rich and poor, and the histories of exploitation and dependency entrenched at every unit level of analysis” (2009, p. 169).

In summary, whether through the 1986 Declaration or the MDG, multilateral organizations have universalized Western-style economic growth as a common right for all peoples. The right to development has focused on administrative measures for mitigating marginality, often at the expense of acknowledging contextual and structural causes of poverty. Widely localized in several national legislations, the Millennium Declaration may have contributed more to the administration of poverty than to its eradication. Instead of generating new models or more people-centred approaches to development, these rights-based approaches reinforce some modernization development “truths” – for example, the need for external aid, and the role of local cultural attitudes in development failures. In short, the right to development favours monolithic understandings of development, leaving aside alternative and local views of economic improvement. In Chapter Four, I analyze how the ESP legal framework reproduces this discourse by favouring exclusionary practices during the implementation of these Plans among displaced Colombian indigenous populations.

⁴⁵ The MDG focus on indicators and targets to reduce poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat main global diseases, and ensure environmental sustainability (Cox, 2009, p. 162; United Nations, 2000).

2.4.2.5. Post-development

Post-development is a vast and heterogeneous approach that draws on postcolonial studies, critical development studies, and Foucault's work on power-knowledge. Instead of proposing new development paradigms or totally rejecting the idea of development, post-development proposes to understand societies in ways that are not limited to Western and universalized development concepts, plans, means, and indexes. This approach proposes "the investigation of alternative representations and practices in concrete local settings, particularly as they exist in contexts of hybridization, collective action and political mobilization" (Escobar, 1995, p. 19, quoted in Crush, 1995, p. 40). From a post-development perspective, it is crucial to understand how "marginalized people negotiate, engage with, and resist [development] discourses and interact" with the knowledges produced by institutions that promote dominant forms of development (Cupples, Glynn, and Lariosz, 2007, p. 787). Drawing on the agency of participants in development negotiations, post-development focuses on the means, strategies, and concepts through which social groups attempt to overcome exclusion. In this section, I synthesize post-development through three main points: the recognition of development as a discursive form of power; the visibility of alternative agents who attempt to exert counter-hegemonic power in development relations; and the multi-scalar character of development-related negotiations.

Post-development proposes a critical view of development – notably the modernization paradigm – as a discourse of power. Post-development sees the imposition of Western models as an important cause of multiple – and violent – economic, cultural, and political forms of exclusion of non-Western subjects. Not only does post-development challenge development's universality, it also focuses on alternative subjects who negotiate with development discourse. Post-development focuses on the alternative identities, movements, practices, and positions of power that subaltern subjects produce within unequal relations associated with development processes. This approach focuses on local subjects' creative appropriations, connections, and forms of resistance within development relations. Post-development authors recognize that "local groups, far from being passive receivers of transnational conditions, actively shape the process of constructing identities, social relations and economic practices" (Escobar, 2001, p. 155). Post-development focuses on local power forms: "Knowledgeable and engaged citizens

can *challenge* and *redeploy dominant understandings* of development in ways that engender and mobilize empowering new political identities” (Cupples, Glynn, and Lariosz, 2007, p. 787, my emphasis). Thus, on the one hand, post-development focuses on alternative social actors, power positions, and strategies that subaltern subjects produce in development relations. On the other hand, this approach focuses on how these productions will eventually lead to new understandings and practices of development.

Post-development recognizes alternative social agents and their forms of knowledge. In order to overcome unequal power relations, post-development – like the counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights – focuses on the value of local knowledges to establish more fair development relations. This approach considers local knowledge as a “mode of place-based consciousness, a place-specific (even if not place-bound or place-determined) way of endowing the world with meaning” (Escobar, 2001, p. 153). This perspective suggests that local knowledge is connected to places, but not limited to them, nor disconnected from global knowledge.⁴⁶ From particular places, local groups may reinforce, negotiate, and recreate global concepts or forces through mobilizing their situated practices and understandings. New ways of thinking may emerge from connections between place-based forms of knowledge and universal concepts. These connections may “provide elements for thinking beyond development — that is, for a conceptualization of post-development that is more conducive to the creation of new types of languages, understanding and action” (Escobar, 2001, p. 157).

Instead of studying the changes that occur in particular places through development absorption, post-development reflections raise the question: “What new ways of thinking about the world emerge from places as a result of such an encounter?” (p. 157). This question acknowledges the forms of power and knowledge that subjects mobilize or produce through encounters with development discourses. According to this understanding, post-development authors see local agents as producers of knowledge that can be combined with development institutions’ knowledge. These combinations may eventually subvert power inequalities inherent to development relations. In this respect, Escobar questions:

How is local knowledge to be translated into power, and this knowledge-power into concrete projects and programs? How can local knowledge-power constellations build bridges with expert

⁴⁶ This understanding draws on Massey’s (2005) view on places as contextually produced points of global connections, as opposed to an unsituated understanding of space as an abstract category.

forms of knowledge when necessary or expedient, and how can they widen their social space of influence when confronted with detrimental local, regional, national and transnational conditions, as it is most often the case? (2001, p. 158)

In other words, post-development may offer insights into the ways in which subaltern agents produce power by connecting their local knowledges and practices with those of agents situated on broader scales in order to influence broader structures of power.

Accordingly, post-development relations are multi-scalar. Through development negotiations, local agents may create intra- and extra-regional connections and networks that may disrupt the “linear temporalities and spatial fixities of mainstream development thought and practice” (Jessop and Sum 2006, cited in Cupples, Glynn, and Lariosz, 2007, p. 799). This multi-scalar orientation provides insights into the power forms that emerge from place-situated dialogues on development and on the ways these forms of power circulate through networks, associations, and connections on the regional, transnational or global scales.

I situate this dissertation in this post-development perspective. I propose to understand how different comprehensions of the world coexist and may transform one another within power relations influenced by universal development discourses. These multiple knowledges are both influenced by and may influence unequal relations established through universal discourses. From their specific places, indigenous agents connect their culturally-based knowledges and practices to produce alliances and recreate concepts that attempt to influence regional or State scales. Constrained by historical inequalities, these creative processes aim to challenge such inequalities. Post-development offers clues to explore connections between global and local forms of knowledge that local agents conduct to overcome unequal relations.

2.4.2.6. Feminist Critiques of Development: The Recognition of Subaltern Specificity

Postcolonial feminism has contributed to the criticism of modernizing views of development and to the need for situated development approaches able to recognize the specificity of marginalized subjects. Parpart (1995) and Kothari (2002) recall the need for analyses of the differential construction of subjects according to their specific power positions. Issues of gender, race, religion, class, ethnicity, generation, sexuality, tribe, ability, or disability may create specific experiences of power in development relations (Kothari, 2002; Parpart, 1995). Difference is crucial to understanding multiple power-knowledge relations that emerge from contextually defined negotiations with development (Kothari, 2002). In other

words, specificity and difference are key concepts to understand how marginal actors negotiate power with universal discourses.

Feminist critics of development suggest two methodological proposals to acknowledge specificity and difference in development relations. First, they propose the construction of alternative stories of difference, culture, power, and agency that resist unilateral forms of globalization (Mohanty, 2003, p. 524). Accordingly, analyses of power need to recognize how marginal subjects simultaneously inhabit global structures of domination and produce discourses and power mechanisms to resist and decolonize global forms of domination (Mohanty, 2003, p. 516). From Mohanty's viewpoint, marginal subjects can forge alliances with global or transnational scope even when they are situated within specific contexts of marginalization.

The second methodological consequence is the recognition of marginal subjects as historical agents (Spivak, 1994; 1999). In Spivak's view, the 'Third World' subject has been analyzed by Western views aimed at assimilation to Western views. Drawing on Derrida, Spivak proposes to challenge Western visions on subaltern subjects assumed as universally valid to understand all kinds of situations and subjects. Challenging universalizing views leads to questioning ethnocentric visions that reduce non-Western voices or situations to Eurocentric categories. Rather, Spivak proposes research that constructs and uses categories according to the historically conditions and the means of expression of marginalized subjects (1994).

This dissertation takes on board many of the challenges that feminist critiques to development suggest. I propose to acknowledge the specific positions of power in which the Leticia Witoto ESP members take part in their negotiations with human rights and development discourses related to this Plan. Rather than a homogeneous entity, this group continuously produces power positions, hierarchies, exclusions, and rivalries according to ethnic, gender, generational or historical differences. Specificity is a key element to reconstruct alternative stories of resistance (such as networks, or alliances) that, though situated, attempt to influence regional, national or even global structures or understandings of rights and development. This dissertation takes on the challenge of a multi-scalar analysis of the ways that power and knowledge circulate and produce effects within the multiple power structures involved in the studied intercultural relation.

2.5. CONCLUSION

The approaches described in this chapter facilitate three practical insights for my analysis. First of all, I use the Anti-colonial approach to value how alternative indigenous knowledges are both influenced by and may influence historical structures of marginalization. I consider this double view as a necessary strategy to produce research engaged with indigenous processes of emancipation, which is the main purpose of decolonizing perspectives. Second, the feminist critiques studied in this chapter suggest the need to recognize local agents and scales as inherently heterogeneous and connected to power positions. For this reason, I interrogate how indigenous subjects connect their knowledges with universal discourses from distinct positions of power according to their gender, generational, historical, or ethnic differences. I explore several inequalities that may emerge from these differentiated negotiations. With this purpose, this dissertation explores the double emancipatory and exclusionary condition of indigenous knowledges and universal discourses. This double exploration requires considering both universal discourses and indigenous knowledges as articulations of power and culture. This consideration allows me to analyze how power circulates in negotiations between indigenous knowledges and human rights, which are no inherently producers of freedom or domination. Third, as indigenous rights struggles reveal, indigenous knowledges can be innovative practices able to influence State or transnational legislations or systems. From the post-development and counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights, I analyze how indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP attempt to establish connections or exert influence on regional or national scales. I argue that, although embryonic and fragile, their initiatives may open possibilities to more egalitarian and inclusive relationships between indigenous people and State or transnational institutional structures. This exploration is part of the multi-scalar analysis proposed in this dissertation.

These theoretical approaches allow me to see globalization from below, through the specific negotiations of the People of the Centre. Instead of proposing a new model of human rights or development, this dissertation aims to offer insights into the complexities of dialogues between different local and universal knowledges. I attempt to understand intercultural communication through the People of the Centre's specific experiences of power-knowledge negotiation and the production of differences. Intercultural dialogues studied in

this dissertation can identify how these subaltern and heterogeneous agents can produce their own epistemological and expressive means to achieve recognition as subjects entitled to the same rights. Drawing on these approaches, I seek to analyze knowledges (concepts, narratives, practices) through which subaltern agents attempt to assert their claims against marginalization in their own voices in spite of restrictive conditions of expression imposed by the ESP process. These indigenous people's knowledges can provide insights to understand how contemporary universal discourses are produced, renewed, reoriented, and resisted within current unequal encounters that produce globalization.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH AND THE RESEARCHER IN FRICTION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THIS DISSERTATION

“We cannot live other people’s lives, and it is a piece of bad faith to try. We can but listen to what, in words, in images, in actions, they say about their lives” (Geertz, 1986).

This chapter introduces the methodological approaches and power relations that defined the object, questions, and data of this dissertation. The chapter responds to questions such as: What are the positions from which I produced knowledge? What are the conditions that legitimate this dissertation’s data as knowledge? To respond, I draw on decolonizing methodologies to characterize indigenous research as a scholarly intercultural activity politically engaged with indigenous people’s struggles against marginalization (Overing, 2006; Smith, 1999; 2005). I also characterize this dissertation as ethnographic research. Since ethnography implies the necessary recognition of human beings as peers who actively take part in the construction of knowledge, ethnographic research is connected with ethical and political concerns (Banister, 1999; Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982, p. 24). For these reasons, this chapter makes explicit the methods, reflections, and decisions through which I conducted research by respecting the ethical character and political potential of indigenous research from the decolonizing perspective.

Self-reflexivity is the chapter’s common thread. The first section mobilizes decolonizing approaches to acknowledge research as an act of power. I situate myself as an agent who exerts, negotiates, and experiences power relations existent in the fieldwork. The second section connects indigenous research ethics with methodological thoroughness. Instead of a universal understanding of ethics, I introduce this dissertation as a form of situated knowledge respectful of indigenous people’s cultural values (Smith, 1999; 2005). These reflections make explicit the relationships that influenced research activities and the complex process of representing other people’s lives. I describe how relationships emerging in the fieldwork produced frictions between indigenous knowledges and my academic institutional research background. Among these relationships, I discuss the informed consent form as a mechanism that makes concrete institutional power relations in the fieldwork. I illustrate how this form may produce attitudes of empowerment or resistance among research participants. These self-

reflective accounts allow me to introduce the partial, non-generalizable, negotiated, limited and historically specific character of ethnographic knowledge (Clifford, 1988; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Geertz, 1988; Marcus, 1995). The third section explains this dissertation's constructivist approach, case study method, and ethnographic orientation. I refer to the potential of constructivism to understand complex realities from the multiple standpoints of research participants. I also discuss the delimited and representational character of case studies methodology.

In the fourth section, I describe how I came to select this case study in order to clarify how contextual situations influenced research delimitation in this dissertation. I refer to the four case studies set aside in this process – notably the case of a Brazilian Tikuna group of video makers – which provided me with deep insights into indigenous research and decolonizing perspectives. I reflect on this process of delimitation from the viewpoint of a researcher who learns from indigenous people. I characterize this process as a friction that transformed, enriched, delimited, and adjusted my object of study and assigned me multiple roles in the fieldwork. The fifth section specifies how I addressed these frictions through five research techniques. I adapted and transformed these techniques according to the unpredictable conditions of my fieldwork. These intercultural frictions extended to data transcription, codification, classification and translation along the analytical phase. In this phase, described in the sixth section, I maintained the decolonizing perspective of respecting and making visible subjects and narratives traditionally silenced. The chapter as a whole reflects on writing ethnography as a limited and representational activity influenced by the researcher's fieldwork experiences.

I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the contemporary relevance of research with indigenous people. I discuss how situated methodologies, transparency, and continuous reflexivity on knowledge production can contribute to more inclusive relationships between indigenous people and human rights and development agents. These reflections aim to make visible the methodological challenges, strategies, and questions that non-indigenous researchers – as it is my case – face in order to value the contemporary relevance of indigenous knowledges.

3.1. DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES THROUGH INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

The Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith begins her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* by stating: “Research is one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (1999, p. 1). The Witoto and Tikuna people also resist research and being seen as research objects. As I will describe later, instead of research these indigenous people suggest studies that open possibilities of knowledge exchange to benefit their communities. Indigenous people’s rejection of research may be explained as a form of resistance to what Smith describes as the historical connection between imperialism, history, writing, and theory (1999, p. 20). From several indigenous perspectives, the history of research is “so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development” (Smith, 2005, p. 87). Research connected to colonialism has often contributed to confine indigenous peoples to subaltern positions.

Drawing on Western positions that assume the ability to see everything from above, researchers have frequently created or reinforced colonialist views on indigenous people. Clifford refers to ethnographers that, focusing on folklore as the most visible manifestation of culture, have perpetuated exotic views useful to create a ‘colonial other’: the indigenous person (1988, p. 76). Smith recalls how travellers’ stories have reinforced the stereotyped image of the ‘exotic other’: “The ‘cannibal’ chief, ‘red’ Indian, the ‘witch’ doctor and so on have constituted opportunities to represent the other again and according to the Western categories” (Smith, 1999, p. 8). This author refers to how, following these stereotyped and dehumanized views of indigenous people, colonial science has authorized itself to extract indigenous knowledges while silencing their creators:

It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations (Smith, 1999, p. 1).

These exotic, objectified, and instrumental views of indigenous people have led to unequal encounters “between the West and the Other.” In these research encounters, “much more is known about one side of those encounters than is known on the other side” (1999, p. 8). The dominance of unquestioned Euro-centric views of research on indigenous people has reproduced epistemic inequalities that dismiss indigenous views and subjugate indigenous subjects (Santos, 2002a; Spivak, 1994).

3.1.1. Research as an Act of Power

From decolonizing perspectives, research connected to colonial power structures can be seen as a universal discourse. Smith refers to how the globalization of Western culture and knowledge “constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of ‘civilized’ knowledge” (1999, p. 63). In respect to comparable all-embracing and omniscient positions of knowledge, Smith describes research as “a corporate institution” that has made statements about indigenous peoples, “‘authorising views’ of us, ‘describing [us], teaching about [us], settling [us] and ruling over [us].’ It is the corporate institution of research, as well as the epistemological foundations from which it springs, that needs to be decolonized” (Said, 1978, cited in Smith, 2005, p. 88).

In order to counter these unequal epistemological relations, Smith proposes decolonizing research, which means to acknowledge indigenous and local knowledges, languages, and cultures for the social transformation of historical colonial relations between the native and the settler (2005, p. 88). Decolonizing perspectives entail a direct and inseparable engagement between academics, indigenous people, and political movements. From these perspectives, indigenous research becomes “the transformative project that is active in pursuit of social and institutional change, that makes space for indigenous knowledge, and that has a critical view of power relations and inequality” (Bishop, 1998; Brady, 1999; Pihama, 2001; L. T. Smith, 1991, quoted in Smith, 2005, p. 89). Decolonizing research critically studies power inequalities in order to open spaces to indigenous knowledges that may influence more egalitarian relationships.

Also from a decolonizing perspective and drawing on her ethnographic work in the border Venezuelan Amazon, Overing (2006) refers to the need for research that can recognize the dignity, consciousness of power, and rich poetic expression in knowledges others than our own. This author proposes to decentre Western social and political narratives in order to subvert “the inferiorization of the other as a way to construct the great myths of the West” (Overing, 2006, p. 13). Such a proposal attempts to value the contribution of indigenous narratives for Western institutions and practices. Emerging from decolonizing methodologies,

not only is indigenous research politically transformative, it is also a culturally inclusive project.

Researchers working with indigenous people take on new challenges and positions in accordance with the critical, transformative, and inclusive character of decolonizing research. Smith proposes the development of researchers' sensibility and accountability as "storytellers, documenters of culture, and witnesses of the realities of indigenous lives, of their ceremonies, their aspirations, their incarcerations, their deaths" (Pihama, 1994; Steinhauer, 2003; Te Hennepe, 1993; Warrior, 1995, cited in Smith, 2005, p. 90). From these visions, indigenous people's experiences can be represented according to indigenous people's narratives, concepts, meanings and knowledges. From decolonizing perspectives, analytical categories to understand indigenous people's realities may emerge from indigenous voices that are traditionally neglected.

Following the decolonizing perspective, this dissertation analyzes some indigenous people's realities according to terms, narratives, and concepts produced by indigenous people – such as the notion of abundance and law of origin. In addition to my theoretical categories, I use these indigenous concepts and their underlying logics in my analyses as part of the decolonizing goal of making visible indigenous epistemologies and valuing their explanatory power to understand and challenge power relations. Not only does this dissertation study negotiations between indigenous and universal knowledges, it also focuses on research with indigenous people as a form of friction between indigenous and Western-based practices of power and knowledge. This chapter frames this dissertation as the result of friction-laden negotiations between my Western-based academic understandings of research and indigenous people's practices and expectations of research.

In order to raise my consciousness on my own positions in this analysis, I keep in mind these questions:

How do we [researchers] develop an anthropological gaze that avoids the fallacy of the superior position of Western civilization? How do we develop anthropological writing that does not silence the other? How do we decolonize intellectual reflections when translating other peoples' knowledges and ways of thinking? (Overing, 2006, p. 12).

Although this is not an anthropological research project, I draw on these questions to offer a self-reflective and critical account of my position in this dissertation's fieldwork activities, data translation, and analysis and writing processes.

3.1.2. Research as a Process of Negotiation

In order to understand how power is negotiated in research, it is important first to understand how indigenous people understand research. Smith mentions a comment frequently heard from several indigenous communities: “‘We are the most researched people in the world’ The truth of such a comment is unimportant, what does need to be taken seriously is the sense of weight and unspoken cynicism about research that the message conveys” (1999, p. 3). In my fieldwork, I experienced comparable expressions of resistance to research. Once I explained my research plans to a Witoto former governor and referred to my informed consent form, he suggested to me:

We need to change this word research [in this document]. For us here, this word has a very negative meaning. Too many people come, conduct research, and simply leave. For us [indigenous people], books are meaningless. They are inaccessible and incomprehensible. We need concrete things that will remain, something that is left for the community, so that when you return to the Amazon in ten years, you can say: I promoted this, I helped with this.... We need to understand research as something productive, we need you to change the negative meaning that this word carries for indigenous people.... We [indigenous people] say: ‘They [researchers] come here to investigate me, take advantage of me, steal my knowledge and then they brag about it. They obtain their PhD diploma with [our knowledge], then they leave us’⁴⁷ (Witoto former governor, interview, August 30th 2012, my translation).

This comment reflects an understanding of research as, at best, an abstract activity distant from the concrete, oral, and collective indigenous people’s daily life, and, at worst, as a simple theft of knowledge. Although resistance to research may have changed in some contexts (see Smith, 2005, p. 87),⁴⁸ for most indigenous people, researchers have told things already known,

⁴⁷ These are the leader’s original words: “Necesitamos cambiar esa palabra investigación. Aquí tenemos muy mala referencia de esa palabra, porque mucha gente viene, hace la investigación y después simplemente se van. A nosotros los libros no nos dicen nada. Para nosotros eso no es accesible ni entendible. Ahora lo que necesitamos es que queden cosas concretas, algo que le quede a la comunidad, [que] cuando usted vuelva dentro de 10 años al Amazonas, diga: esto lo promoví yo, esto lo ayudé yo... Para nosotros, entender investigación y que sea productivo, y que usted quite la mala referencia que se viene manejando por los indígenas, que dicen: me vienen a investigar, me vienen a aprovechar, me vienen a robar mi conocimiento y con eso se creen. Con eso tienen el título de doctorado y ya, nos dejan a nosotros botados.”

⁴⁸ In respect to indigenous counter-hegemonic research, Smith suggests: “More recently, however, indigenous researchers have been active in seeking ways to disrupt the ‘history of exploitation, suspicion, misunderstanding, and prejudice’ of indigenous peoples in order to develop methodologies and approaches to research that privilege indigenous knowledges, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material, and spiritual conditions (Rigney, 1999, p. 117). This shift in position, from seeing ourselves as passive victims of all research to seeing ourselves as activists engaging in a counterhegemonic struggle over research, is significant. The story of that progression has been told elsewhere in more depth and is not unique to indigenous peoples; women, gay and lesbian communities, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized communities have made similar journeys of critical discovery of the role of research in their lives” (Hill Collins, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Mies, 1983; Moraga & Anzaldaua, 1983; Sedgwick, 1991, cited in Smith, 2005, pp. 88-87).

have suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already have jobs (Smith, 1999, p. 3). According to these confrontational understandings, I developed a reflexive approach to fieldwork and analysis through this question: How can researchers working with indigenous people help transform the understanding of research as an unbalanced, abstract, impractical, ephemeral, and useless activity that only benefits researchers?

As a preliminary answer to this question, I attempted to bring my research goals closer to indigenous community's interests. In my fieldwork, indigenous people's understandings and expectations of research reminded me of the need for socially relevant academic practices. To illustrate, after reading the project's description, the named Witoto governor referred to my thesis as "an opportunity for empowerment that we can use (for our community's benefit)... Let's work on this part of the strategy of traditional knowledge articulated to Western knowledge, to know how we can handle and use it to produce constructive knowledge" (former Witoto governor, interview, August 30, 2012, my translation). This interpretation made possible certain compatibility between my academic research interests and indigenous people's needs. In order to construct respectful relationships in this process of adapting research to indigenous people's expectations, I followed ethical considerations according to the specificity of the cultural groups taking part in the study.

3.2. TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED ETHICS IN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

I conducted research according to five ethical values: respect, reciprocity, responsibility, horizontal relations, and self-reflexivity. I attempted to construct respectful relationships in order to avoid any potential harm for participants in research (Angrosino, 2005, pp. 737, 738). I respected the informants' identities and privacy. To do so, throughout the thesis, I refer to informants by using pseudonyms and avoiding the divulgence of any information that might affect their moral and physical integrity. In order to avoid misinterpretation of informants' speech, I provide the reader with elements of the context in which some narratives were told and the group of people that the quoted person represents. People's narratives are specific to a given topic and cannot be generalized.

Given that this thesis focuses on indigenous people, I attempted to conduct research respecting the cultural practices and beliefs of participant communities (Smith, 2005, p. 97). On this topic, Smith proposes to see respect as a culturally constructed value. Among the Maori, for instance, cultural values concerning respectful research relations take several names (such as *he kanohi kitea*, *manaaki ki te tangata*, *kia tupato*, *kaua e mahaki*, among others) that convey meanings such as meeting people face to face; researchers' reflexivity about their insider/outsider status; avoiding paternalistic or impatient attitudes; and avoiding flaunting researchers' knowledge (Smith, 2005, p. 98). These Maori views illustrate that, instead of a universal principle, respect is a situated cultural value. Accordingly, researchers with indigenous people are called on to respect localized views of ethics according to indigenous people's values.

For this reason, indigenous research ethics challenge Western concepts of human rights that underlie universal ethical codes. By using universal ethical principles, researchers have reinforced power positions where from "the powerful still make decisions for the powerless" (Smith, 2005, p. 97). From these unquestioned positions, "research is often assumed to be beneficial simply because it is framed as research; its benefits are regarded as 'self-evident' because the intentions of the researcher are 'good'" (Smith, 2005, p. 99). In contrast, a decolonizing perspective on the ethics of research with indigenous people may start with questions such as: How does research benefit indigenous people? How does it take into account indigenous understandings of respect?

In my fieldwork, indigenous people reminded me of the need to take these questions into account. Among the People of the Centre, reciprocity and respect are related to the symbolism of sacred substances. I understood this view on respect when I asked a Bora elder to grant me an interview on the concept of indigenous knowledge in a *mambeadero* of the Leticia urban area. I offered him tobacco to acknowledge his kindness to accepting answering my questions. Although the elder was initially eloquent in his answers, he stopped speaking suddenly when I asked him for further explanations. In view of his attitude, other indigenous attendees publicly suggested: "You must bring *mambe* (coca powder) to help the elder clarify his thoughts. That's what people must do to talk with an elder in the *mambeadero*." To some extent, I was reprimanded because I had not respected this rule in order to ask the elder to share his knowledge. Since I was taking part in an indigenous space, I had to respect their rules of

reciprocity. Henceforth, I offered *mambe* to acknowledge indigenous people who shared their knowledge with me in sacred spaces. This offering allowed me to recognize that, for the People of the Centre, participating in interviews is connected to the sacred ritual of sharing knowledge. Rewarding knowledge-exchange through coca powder allowed me to establish more culturally respectful relations in the fieldwork and to value indigenous people's views on sharing knowledge as a sacred activity.

Respect and reciprocity are connected to responsibility. Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) refer to researchers as responsible to research participants (p. 2). According to this principle, instead of institutional and professional regulations and codes of conduct, indigenous research ethics must take into account people's needs (Smith, 1999, p. 96). Researchers must situate power within the indigenous community (Bishop, 2005, quoted in Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008, p. 6). These authors propose that research activities favour situating people at the centre of research, while the researcher can occupy an active position as learner. To do so, research techniques should contribute to community self-determination, autonomy, and empowerment. As I will describe in this chapter's fifth section, I tried to adapt participant observation, interviews, and workshops to people's daily activities. I attempted to conduct research techniques in ways that may strengthen the potential of these indigenous people's struggles against marginalization.

These ethical considerations transform indigenous research into a collective construction of knowledge through horizontal relationships. In this respect, Overing (2006) suggests the need for methodologies able to recognize wisdom and to understand cultural principles and indigenous people and their knowledges as beings and epistemologies connected to the present (p. 15). Methodologies able to recognize people and their creativity to solve problems in their daily life are part of the ethical engagement of indigenous research. Accordingly, I conducted research activities from an egalitarian perspective that acknowledges indigenous people as human beings who live in the present and continuously produce their culture through creative strategies. Similarly, in the analysis phase, I avoided positions that suppose that researcher knows the whole situation from above. Rather, I reflected on how I learned from people's narratives and analysis on their own realities. Prior to the data analysis, I tried to reflect on the context in which I collected data in order to better grasp the meanings represented through fragmentary, changing, and even contradictory people's expressions and fieldwork notes

(Clifford, 1986). Horizontal relations in the fieldwork and analysis phases were possible through a continuously self-reflexive attitude in this dissertation. My reflections introduce the vision of a *mestizo* researcher educated in the Colombian mainstream cultural and educational system. These reflections are not generalizable to the visions of indigenous people conducting research in their communities or to those of foreigners conducting research with indigenous people.

3.2.1. Self-reflexivity: An Ethical and Methodological Commitment to Research

Several ethnographers have provided deep insights into the value and need for thorough self-reflexive accounts. Myerhoff and Ruby define self-reflexivity as the “capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself: subject and object fuse” (1982, p. 2). Drawing on Mead, these authors see reflexivity as

[The human scientist’s ability] to learn how to relate self-knowledge of him-or herself as a multisensory being with a unique personal history as a member of a specific culture at a specific period to ongoing experience and how to *include* as far as possible this disciplined self-awareness in observation on other lives and in other cultures (Mead, 1976: 907 quoted in Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982, p. 20).

Self-reflexivity situates the author in his or her specific social context and produces accounts of the ways that this context influenced his analysis of other people’s cultures. In these authors’ views, a self-reflective attitude in the moments of producing, processing, and circulating knowledge is crucial to a sophisticated understanding of the phenomena studied. In the same vein, Banister associates reflexivity with a double consciousness of the ethnographer’s experience: “(a) the consciousness associated with participation and (b) the consciousness associated with reporting” (1999, p. 14).

The ethnographer’s self-reflexive attitude must extend from fieldwork, in which ethnographers participate and shape the observed situations, to the analysis phase, when ethnographers represent such situations. Self-reflective accounts are strategies through which ethnographers situate themselves in their own contexts, in the cultures that they study, and in their ethnographic texts. These situating strategies respond to the ethnographer’s ethical and methodological engagement to making clear the conditions of knowledge production.

According to these understandings, this dissertation is self-reflexive in three main ways. First, it is a form of situated knowledge influenced by my reflections and positions in the

fieldwork. Second, relations constructed in the fieldwork influenced the data collected. Third, this dissertation is a limited and intentional ethnographic representation.

On the first point, this chapter reveals my “inner dialogues and constant analyses of my experience in the field” as a means to “come to know how I come to know” (Hertz, 1997, cited in Banister, 1999, p. 11). These reflections are thus methodological mechanisms to reveal the scientific character of data analyzed. In the following sections, I identify the multiple negotiations, changing situations, and community positions that shaped my questions and research orientations, and how I prioritized some topics over others. I describe intercultural frictions, tensions, and the multiple roles of researcher that may characterize research with indigenous people or other marginalized groups. More than simply anecdotal or revelatory, these reflections attempt to illustrate how my research activities influenced the research context and, particularly, myself as researcher. These accounts suggest that indigenous research conducted by a non-indigenous agent can be a challenging but fruitful activity that may contribute to rediscovering the connection between research and the recognition of indigenous people’s capabilities to overcome marginality.

On the second point, this chapter recognizes how ethnographic knowledge on a culture depends on social relations with informants. These relationships are influenced by pre-existing power positions. I situate my ethnographic gaze in social relations according to positions of gender, language, social class, and education that have hampered or favoured my negotiations with participants and my access to information (see Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982; Banister, 1999, p. 10). My reflections on these positions attempt to identify how my own socially situated perceptions influence the data analyzed. According to Geertz, “the ethnographic enterprise is imagined to be a clash between seeing things as one would have them and seeing them as they really are” (1988, p. 9).

The changing nature of knowledge produced through ethnography is an important outcome of this approach’s relational character. Taking up Malinowski’s description of the Balinese cockfight, Myerhoff and Ruby assert:

The subject changes by being observed, and we must observe our impact on him or her and the resultant impact on ourselves... We first see the anthropologists looking at the Balinese, and the Balinese looking back at them; then a change occurs as the Balinese alter their attitudes toward the anthropologists, who in turn begin to see the Balinese differently (1982, p. 19).

In other words, relationships between ethnographers and participants transform situations and perceptions that define ethnographic knowledge. This form of knowledge derives from artificial, transient, and contingent relationships that disappear “when the foreigner departs” (1982, p. 20). Self-reflectivity on the researcher’s power positions in the fieldwork clarifies how the ethnographer and his relationships shape ethnographic knowledge.

A third main point of this chapter’s self-reflexive orientation is introduced in the data analysis section. I reflect there on the representational character of ethnography. Rather than a transcription of reality, my research data emerged from my own representations of the ways that indigenous participants in the ESP represent their own realities through their own linguistic expressions. Such reflections correspond to what Geertz calls the ‘author-function’ (1988, p. 8). This function can be explored through questions such as: “Where does this text come from? Who wrote it? When, under what circumstances or being with what design?”(Foucault, 1979, p. 149-50 in Geertz, 1988, pp. 7-8). The ‘author-function’ provides insights into the ways the author becomes manifest in the texts that he or she writes (p. 8). The ‘author-function’ recalls that ethnographers’ views are involved in the process of identifying the means that people confer to their reality. This function matters because ethnographic knowledge depends on the ways that ethnographers interpret participants’ meanings and expression:

We cannot live other people’s lives, and it is a piece of bad faith to try. We can but listen to what, in words, in images, in actions, they say about their lives. . . . Whatever sense we have of how things stand with someone else’s inner life, we gain it through their expressions, not through some magical intrusion into their consciousness (Geertz, 1986, p. 373).

In short, ethnographic knowledge is doubly connected to representation. Ethnographic accounts depend on perceptions and narratives that researchers construct through participants’ words, which are also participants’ representations of reality. Simultaneously, ethnographers construct narratives that represent representations that other subjects make of their own lives. Self-reflectivity clarifies the means and conditions through which ethnographers represent people’s representations on their own realities.

In my fieldwork, I constantly took notes on the negotiations, relations, and changing conditions that influenced the construction of the research object and access to data. Self-reflectivity was crucial to understanding my own position in an unpredictable, changing, and complex fieldwork. This experience helped me develop openness, flexibility, adaptability,

humility, and patience while maintaining my main research questions. These attitudes allowed me to abandon predefined positions of research. From more adaptable and flexible positions, I could follow the communities' pace of life, expectations, and needs instead of expecting indigenous people to adapt to my structured practices of academic research. Through a self-reflective attitude, I tried to maintain an awareness of the limits of my research methods.

In accordance with these ethical and self-reflective orientations, I tried to document interviews, workshops, and group discussions through audio recording and note-taking. However, most research participants, notably the elders, refused the recording of their voices. They feared losing control of the knowledge and information that they shared with me. They argued that indigenous knowledges belong to the here and now. Several people even challenged my skills by asking: "Won't you even memorize anything of what I say?" They saw audio recording as an obstacle to active listening, which is critical to the communication of indigenous knowledges. In order to respect their views and practices, most of time I took notes. I wrote some keywords during interviews, observations, and focus groups and, at the end of the same day, I detailed in my journal the research activities, people's opinions, and my impressions of these daily experiences. Most data analyzed in this dissertation come from my journal notes. Although I tried to be loyal to the observed reality, my own viewpoints and interpretations contributed to the reality that I represented in these journals.

3.2.2. Situated Reflections on Documenting Information and the Informed Consent Form

I conducted research activities only when people had expressed their collective, individual, verbal, or written consent. I used the informed consent form to explain this project's conditions of participation, benefits, duration, and consequences to the indigenous authorities of the communities where I conducted research. Furthermore, I explained to the research participants – in either Spanish or Portuguese – the research procedures and its purposes, possible benefits, and scope, the places and channels through which the results would be disseminated, and the exact conditions of their participation. I conducted research strictly with adults who manifested their voluntary agreement to participate in research through written or oral informed consent. Similarly, I informed these groups on this research project's limits of time and budget. Participants were free to withdraw from research activities at any time without prejudice.

The Consent form influenced both positions of identification and resistance to research. In some cases, the informed consent form led certain people to a clearer understanding of the research. To illustrate, after reading the form, Lerner, a former indigenous governor of the 11th kilometre reserve said: “There’s something very beautiful here: analyzing forms of power such as empowerment, resistance, and the reinforcement of identity that emerge from the ways indigenous knowledges are used in these negotiations” (former Witoto governor, interview, August 30, 2012, my translation my translation). This leader’s appreciation of my research goals motivated him to suggest strategies that would facilitate the community’s authorization necessary to conduct research. In other cases, the informed consent form also made it difficult to establish horizontal and fluid relationships in the fieldwork. For several research participants the consent form was an unknown and intimidating document.⁴⁹ Some participants associated this form with a formal contract. When I asked some research participants to sign the form after explaining it, they raised questions such as: “Why does the University want my signature?” “If they want us to sign, they must provide us with some [material] support” (personal communications in fieldwork, my translation). The fact of signing was more intimidating for research participants than the form itself. Some people who clearly understood the form’s content and its importance accepted taking part in research activities, but remained resistant to signing. In these cases, I documented their oral informed consent.

Since informed consent focuses on the individual “concept of human rights” rather than on principles or values shared and constructed collectively, the consent form is “the contradictory base of the institutionalisation of research” (Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong, 2000, cited in Smith, 2005, p. 113; 99). From Smith’s viewpoint,

A consent form makes the power relations between researchers and researched concrete, and this can present challenges to researchers and researched alike, with some participants wanting to share their stories while others may feel compelled to share. The form itself can be the basis of dialogue and mediation, but the individual person who is participating in the research still must sign it (2005, p. 99).

The examples detailed here suggest that, in my fieldwork, the consent form was a reminder of power relations that persist in the fieldwork – regardless of the best intentions of the researcher.

⁴⁹ The practice of signing the informed consent form is uncommon among Colombian social science researchers. Probably due to their familiarity with this research practice, the signature of informed consent forms was easier in Brazil than in Colombia.

The mistrustful attitude of some indigenous participants toward the consent form may reveal the persistence, among these indigenous communities, of negative experiences of historical unequal written agreements with non-indigenous agents, including researchers. Several indigenous participants associated informed consent with historical colonizer agents that have imposed their written language on communities accustomed to oral agreements. These rejections may suggest that some indigenous people easily associate research with past violent experiences of colonization (Smith, 2005). Accordingly, in my fieldwork, the consent form made concrete power relations not only between researcher and researched subjects, but also between different forms and practices of knowledge associated with historical power relations.

An additional element related to informed consent is the fact that I mostly observed collective activities in my fieldwork, even though the form was signed by individuals. In order to conduct observation in events and spaces such as rituals, festivities, *malokas*, and *mambeaderos* I drew on consent that I had received from the leaders of these activities. Although some of these events were confidential, I drew on the community, leaders, and individual's oral and written authorizations to take part in these meetings. When it was required, the Plan's leaders explained the character of my work to other community members. This mediation allowed me to maintain a respectful position in collective meetings. Thus, the processes of documenting research and obtaining informed consent were part of the intercultural negotiation between institutionalized visions of academic research and indigenous people's cultural practices.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

I conducted research according to a constructivist approach, which sees social reality as an ongoing construction rather than an observable and static fact. Constructivist research focuses on the meaning of social actions and perceives reality as constructed by social actors amid changing contexts (Jacobs and Manzi, 2000, p. 37; Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129). In this approach, the meanings and relations that construct society can be identified from the perspective of participants. This process is possible through deep reflections and co-construction of findings stimulated by the dialogue between the researcher and participants. Through dialogues with several actors sharing different views on the same phenomenon, it is

possible to identify deeper social meanings and relations usually hidden or unconscious in daily life.

In order to thoroughly analyze this plurality of voices, understandings, and actions, I delimited my research through a case study. Case studies have three main characteristics: they are delimited, make possible experiential knowledge, and constitute a representation of reality (Stake, 2005). Although not everything about the case can be understood, the researcher can establish connections between the situation in question and its context in order to attempt a holistic comprehension of phenomena (Stake, 2005). Case studies offer a “vicarious experience” to the reader. The researcher’s narratives facilitate – at least temporarily – the direct contact of the reader with the case in question: “We come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their experience” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). In case studies, knowledge is socially constructed through the researcher’s empirical and theoretical choices.

For this reason, case studies are always a representation of social realities. In this representation process, the researcher decides on the structure of the story, selects phenomena, integrates alternative interpretations, and proposes explanations according to his fieldwork experience. Representations constructed through case studies can be used in two different ways: as a means of comparison or as a reference point to understand other similar situations (Smith, 1987, cited in Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 712). The case studied in this dissertation may become a reference point to understand comparable negotiations between indigenous knowledges and institutional procedures and concepts related to human rights and development. Other indigenous communities, researchers, or agents working with indigenous people may draw on this dissertation to understand their negotiations with global institutions, agents, or concepts.

I approached the case study of the Leticia Witoto ESP through an ethnographic orientation. Clifford and Marcus (1986) refer to ethnography as an artisanal activity tied to the worldly work of writing. From these authors’ viewpoint, ethnographic writing is determined, among other factors, by its rhetoric and expressive means and by its institutional, political, and historical context (1986, p. 6). Consequently, truth constructed through ethnography is “inherently partial – committed and incomplete” (p. 7). Ethnographic narratives are “a truth provoked by ethnography” (Clifford, 1988, p. 77). Accordingly, I understand ethnography as

the production of partial truths through situated observations, questions, reflections, and representations of social realities.

As suggested above, ethnographic work depends on the researcher's negotiations in the fieldwork. Depending on how power, confidence, and respect are constructed in these relationships, "every informant introduces certain truths and holds back others" (Clifford, 1988, p. 68). Although informants' partial viewpoints on reality can be complemented through comparison and contrast with other sources, data collected through ethnography is always incomplete.

Decolonizing perspectives and self-reflective ethnography coincide in affirming that researchers cannot claim to understand the complexity of others' cultures by drawing exclusively on the limited encounters and negotiations conducted in fieldwork (Smith, 1999; Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Knowledge produced through ethnography cannot be generalized. Rather, ethnography produces mobile and temporary knowledge about cultures (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p. 11). An awareness of the limits of ethnography contributes to demystifying the universality of academic knowledge, which is part of the decolonizing project.

Through a self-reflective and self-critical exercise of ethnography from a decolonizing perspective, I attempt to make evident the specific and limited scope of data analyzed and conclusions proposed in this dissertation. This PhD research sees the ethics and thoroughness of ethnography "as a matter of making carefully limited claims" and thoroughly clarifying the "historicist and self-reflexive" character of research activities (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p. 19). The two next sections introduce how I constructed, delimited, and represented my research object, questions, and conclusions through the intercultural and linguistic negotiations that I conducted both in the fieldwork and analysis phases.

3.4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT

I conducted this dissertation in four phases including exploration, fieldwork, analysis, and conclusions. I began the first phase through documentary analysis, open-ended interviews, and observations during a three-week preliminary fieldwork in 2011. In the second fieldwork (which spanned from August to November 2012), I requested indigenous people's approval of my research activities, conducted research techniques, and reformulated several research questions and objects. This section explains the process through which I constructed the

research object, topics, case-studies, techniques, and theoretical concepts according to negotiations in the two first phases of the dissertation's fieldwork. I analyze how this dissertation resulted from productive frictions emerging from multiple encounters across the differences between my position as a researcher and indigenous views, practices, and previous experiences with researchers and development programs.

3.4.1. From Local Cultures to Indigenous Knowledges

Drawing on my previous studies in the Leticia area (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011), I started my PhD studies with a preliminary question: What are the roles of culture and power in the exchanges between culturally distinct groups, whose encounters have increased given the influence of global flows in the cross-border Middle Amazon? I tried to problematize this question by conceptualizing globalization as a complex process created through hierarchical connections among several global flows of media, people, ideas, capital, goods, and so on (Appadurai, 1996; Baudrand, 2002). These flows coexist in uneven ways and create disjunctures and networks among agents of several geographical scales (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Appadurai, 1996; Dirlik, 1996; Escobar, 2001). Accordingly, this dissertation's previous versions focused on the ways that inhabitants of the tri-border Middle Amazon constructed space, identity, and power in their encounters with multiple global flows in this tri-border region (Hall and Du Gay, 1996; Massey, 2005).

With this question in mind, I conducted preliminary fieldwork in 2011. I focused on three case studies previously defined through documentary research: the Magüta Indigenous Museum of Benjamin Constant, Brazil; a set of tri-border commercial radio stations based on Santa Rosa, Peru; and the Witoto community situated at the 11th kilometre of the Leticia-Tarapacá road, Colombia. The three cases illustrated how local Amazonian inhabitants negotiated with ideological, technological, and media global flows. With this exploratory fieldwork, I aimed to identify the feasibility of a four-month stint of fieldwork that I was to conduct one year later.

After the exploratory fieldwork, I concluded that, instead of being primarily intentional or strategic, these groups' negotiations with global flows are defined by broader and historical structures of power. By attending a Tikuna assembly held in the reserve of Filadélfia (Benjamin Constant, Brazil) I recognized how these indigenous people are positioned in their

relationships with State institutions. The main topic of the assembly was the Magüta Indigenous Museum. Since the late 1980s, the Tikuna founded this museum to legitimate their cultural and economic rights to land in relation to local logging companies and national State authorities. The Magüta Museum became a node of a national and international network of institutions that supported the Tikunas' claims (Freire, 1999; Stoco, 2011; Ramos Lopes, 2005). In the assembly, the indigenous leaders referred to agreements conducted in the past between the Museum leaders and the Brazilian government. As a result of poor management of a health project for the Tikuna people, the Museum leaders were forced to repay an amount of roughly 11,000 Brazilian *reals*.⁵⁰ After some years without payment, the Brazilian State National Foundation on Health (FUNASA) tried to take possession of the Museum as collateral for the debt and blocked the Museum leaders' bank accounts. This measure threatened the closing of the Museum in the beginning of 2009 and affected the access of these Tikuna leaders to State resources.⁵¹ These situations influenced the decline of community participation and the loss of credibility of the Tikuna leaders. In the Assembly, the indigenous leaders suggested that differences between the Tikuna and the national institutions' cultural and knowledge systems had contributed to this situation of indebtedness and community disempowerment.

After the assembly, the Magüta Museum leaders were reluctant to speak with me about their problematic relationship with Brazilian State development projects. Although this attitude led me to set aside this case study, the situation of the Tikuna helped me delimit my forthcoming research interests. I focused my subsequent fieldwork observations on how different understandings between indigenous and non-indigenous technologies or agents affected indigenous people's positions of power in their encounters with global discourses and agents. At this point, I started considering an analysis of power-knowledge relations focused on differences between indigenous and non-indigenous epistemologies.

I sought a new case study to respond to these interests. With this purpose, I contacted a Brazilian group of video makers (Tikuna Produções) living in the reserve of Umariçu,

⁵⁰ According to one of the CGTT leaders, in June 2011 the debt had increased to approximately \$18,000 CAD.

⁵¹ Two events prevented FUNASA from taking the Museum's house to pay the debt. At the beginning of 2011, the Attorney General of Tabatinga declared the museum a good of public interest. In the same period of time, the Museum was recognized by the IBRAM network of Brazilian Museums (See Associação Brasileira de Antropologia, 2009).

Tabatinga. In the Tikuna Assembly, four members of Tikuna Produções talked about their nine-year experience with digital shooting and editing of videos. Further conversations with this group's members allowed me to understand that Tikuna Produções promotes community-based communication processes that have activated the production and sharing of indigenous knowledge. This group conceives, makes, screens and sells documentary, historical, and fiction videos. Their videos depict varied aspects on the Tikuna culture such as wars between the former Tikuna clans, coexistence between indigenous and other cultures and religions, and contemporary problems in Umariáçu. According to one of the group's leaders, the main purpose of their videos is to produce messages and create professions – such as artist design, cameramen, cloth designers, editors, and others – that may constitute alternatives to problems of drug and alcohol consumption, delinquency, and suicide among the young inhabitants of Umariáçu.⁵² This leader suggested that prior to shooting videos, he and other video makers interviewed the community elders to document Tikuna stories. Through this process, the video makers may have reinforced intergenerational indigenous knowledge-exchange. The video production project promotes the collective reconstruction of Tikuna histories publicly screened in the community. I initially integrated Tikuna Produções into my study as a case to understand the forms of indigenous power-knowledge that emerged from negotiation with technological and media global flows. Although I set aside this case study after the second stint fieldwork for reasons that I will explain below, exchanges with this group offered me insights into intercultural relationships, linguistic differences and power negotiations that influence knowledge produced through research with indigenous people. The next sections refer to some of the negotiations that I conducted with this group of video makers.

On the Colombian side of the border, my preliminary fieldwork in the Witoto community of the 11th kilometre also revealed the centrality of knowledge differences in negotiations between indigenous people and global flows. As described in Chapter One, in this

⁵² Between 1990 and 1997, 12% of suicides committed by Tikuna people took place in Umariáçu (Erthal, 1998). In her PhD dissertation, Erthal (1998) quotes authors that refer to suicide as a common and historical practice among the Tikuna (Nimuendajú, 1952; Alviano, 1943; Oliveira Filho, 1977; 1988; Garnelo & Paula, 1994). According to some indigenous authorities quoted in an unofficial report, 36 people committed suicide in Umariáçu between 2001 and 2004. This report coincides with narratives of this community's members that refer to the “explosive mixture of cocaine, alcohol, and unemployment as the main causes of the rapid deterioration of life and customs in this indigenous village” (<http://www.webbrasilindigena.org/?p=644>, my translation).

community, development projects have influenced community power relations. Differences between these projects and indigenous people's knowledge, practices, and forms of economic organization contributed to their failure. As a result of these conceptual differences and problematic community relations, only one project on handicrafts had achieved relative success in 2011.

Through the handicraft project, a group of craftswomen took up traditional techniques such as cultivating, collecting, and processing the fiber of the palm *chambira* (*Astrocaryum chambira* [arecaceae]). This fiber is useful for knitting backpacks and hammocks which these women then sold to earn complementary income. Through this artisanal activity, some indigenous craftswomen had increased their influence and visibility in their community. They had become leaders of community projects such as the indigenous committee on safety and the construction of an aqueduct in the reserve. Negotiations with projects oriented toward economic productivity had enabled these craftswomen to take part in the community life, a realm traditionally off limits for Witoto women. The observation of this case allowed me to see that indigenous people's negotiations with universal discourses of development may influence dynamics of community visibility and empowerment. I initially included the craftswomen case in my study to explore the enabling possibilities of indigenous people's negotiations with development discourses.

Further reflections led me to group both cases according to three concepts: indigenous knowledges, power, and development. This conceptualization led me to set aside the case of the Peruvian tri-border radio stations, led by non-indigenous journalists. I continued delimiting my research object through two general research questions: What are the *indigenous knowledges and forms of power* that two indigenous groups of the tri-border Middle Amazon have constructed through the ways they use technologies and institutional programs related to modernization development? How can these indigenous knowledges and forms of power contribute to *facilitate equitable conditions* for indigenous people's participation in *development programs*? These questions initially guided the fieldwork that I conducted one year later.

3.4.2. From Two Case Studies to One Case Study

According to the ethical considerations described above, I started the fieldwork phase by asking for authorization to conduct research. Although I had established agreements with the main leaders of both groups in the preliminary fieldwork, the permission to conduct research was an intense and uncertain negotiation in the 2012 fieldwork. The response of several indigenous leaders in this process led me to directly experience indigenous people's strategies to decolonize research. In contrast with the openness of community leaders in 2011, the new governor of the 11th kilometre community was reluctant to authorize my research activities. It was difficult to me to contact him even once in order to ask for his permission to do research in this community. When I finally met with him after several weeks and introduced my project to him, the governor argued: "Here, people are tired of research projects which have left nothing to the community. People are not interested in research at all." In view of my insistence to conduct research, the governor offered one possibility: "Send a letter to the community council, but I don't think they will accept" (my translation). I did so and waited for the community council's answer for three weeks.

In the meantime, I contacted the Brazilian video makers. I obtained permission from one of the project's leaders who said that no further authorization was necessary. During two weeks, I conducted several interviews. However, some days after starting research with Tikuna Produções, the coordinator of the video maker group – whom I had not been able to contact – told me: "You cannot conduct research here. You'll need an authorization from the indigenous chief (*cacique*)" (my translation). The coordinator asked me to arrive early in the morning at his home in order to go with him to explain the project to the indigenous chief. After several failed visits to the coordinator's house at unusual early hours, I finally visited the *cacique* on my own. I explained the project to him and gave him a letter to request his permission. The *cacique* answered: "Everything that is good for the community is welcome, the only thing I can prevent you from doing is bringing drugs and alcohol here..." (Cacique of Umariacu, personal communication, September 4, 2012, my translation). And he signed his approval. I communicated the *cacique's* decision to the Tikuna Produções' coordinator, who reacted in this way:

You entered our community through us [the video makers]. It was us who will allow you to know our community and culture. Now it is time for you to compensate us. . . . What is your research

for? How will it benefit us? How will you benefit our community? You have had the opportunity to study in Colombia and Canada. We haven't had such a chance. It's time for you to share your knowledge with us. Please help us know all that you know about communication (Tikuna Produções' coordinator, September 4, 2012, my translation).

As a result of this direct confrontation, I agreed with the coordinator to lead workshops on communication strategies that could reinforce their fledgling video-making organization. The training program set out to collectively formulate a project that would contribute to sustaining Tikuna Produções activities through international funding. Through his strategy of confrontation, this leader sought to transform my research activities into opportunities to benefit his organization and community.

I experienced similar negotiations of power in the case of the Colombian 11th kilometre community. I was particularly interested in conducting this case study given my previous experiences in this community in 2008 (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, Rodríguez Caballero, 2011). While I waited for the indigenous governor's authorization, I talked informally with some members of the craftswomen group. I learned that the group had split into two family groups, that the community projects on aqueduct and safety were blocked, and that the women's community visibility had decreased. Although I never learned the actual causes of the division, rivalries between these family groups influenced my research activities. Women leaders of both family groups were reluctant to take part in my interviews. They creatively avoided commitments, evaded questions on the handicraft project, and dismissed arranged appointments. In view of this attitude and taking into account the ethical principle of working with people who voluntarily take part in research, I set aside the craftswomen case study.

As a result, three weeks after my arrival in the Amazon I had neither the authorization, nor a case to study in the 11th kilometre. Power negotiations with community authorities and the pace of life in the Tikuna and Witoto reserves reminded me that indigenous research is a "humble and humbling activity" (Smith, 1999, p. 5). I had to adapt myself to the indigenous people's lives and priorities. Otherwise, my fieldwork would be an experience of stress and frustration. From these preliminary negotiations, research obstacles in the fieldwork taught me that researchers cannot simply expect to adapt local people's lives to our research constraints and goals. The decolonizing perspective requires that researchers respect and adapt ourselves to local groups' interests, needs, procedures, and pace of life.

In order to make this process easier, at the end of the third week of fieldwork, I visited a member of the 11th kilometre indigenous council who had taken part in the study that I conducted in 2008. After a friendly conversation, the leader – whom I will call Leonardo – said he would help me to get approval because I was known by the community already. Some days later, after several phone calls seeking a response either from Leonardo or from the indigenous governor, I was invited to take part in a community meeting in the *maloka* of the 11th kilometre. By cellular phone, the governor advised me: “You’ll present your research project there. It is the community who will decide on your authorization” (my translation). Later, I learned that my request for permission had reactivated some rivalries within the indigenous council. The council members tried to solve their arguments by delegating the decision to the community members. Since the beginning of my fieldwork, I learned that researchers’ presence in indigenous communities may have unexpected effects, even when researchers try to follow ethical principles of research.

Prior to the meeting, I talked with Lerner, the former indigenous governor mentioned in the second section of this chapter. Similar to the current indigenous governor, Lerner argued: “We’ve taken part in too many research projects that left nothing to the community. Let’s call this a study and show people how you’re planning to benefit us” (former Witoto governor, interview, August 30, 2012, my translation). Among other projects, this community leader told me about the Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP) that a group of leaders was starting to lead. Although I knew nothing about the ESP, I saw this Plan as a possibility to conduct research that could be a “beneficial” activity to the community. According to Lerner’s advice, despite its importance for the community, the ESP’s activities were declining. After four months of this Plan’s official beginning, the government had rejected the ESP team’s preliminary work plan and had not provided them with the budget to conduct the assessment activities (see Chapter Five). Lerner suggested to me that my work might contribute to strengthen the community processes associated with the assessment phase of this Plan.

This leader used the ESP to give me advice on the need to transform research practices in order to understand indigenous people’s situations: “You have to put yourself in indigenous people’s shoes. You must do as if you were part of this community, live like indigenous people, suffer with us” (former Witoto governor, interview, August 30, 2012, my translation). I concluded that if I wanted the necessary community’s approval, I had to abandon my

pretension of working as a mere observer or interviewer. This leader's words compelled me to transform the planned activities into a process of accompanying, counselling, and understanding through experience community processes that needed to be strengthened. Just as in the case of the video makers, this indigenous leader led me to the decolonizing principle of decentring my interests and adapting research to indigenous people's needs.

I followed Lerner's advice in the community meeting. I introduced my thesis' general goals and emphasized the reciprocal character of my research activities. I introduced my dissertation as a study to evaluate the development projects conducted by the State in the community in order to propose strategies to ensure more sustainable results through indigenous knowledges and practices. After my presentation, the governor publicly challenged me by referring to the usual practice of researchers who do not share their research results with the community. I responded that I and my research team had shared results with the community through collective meetings in 2008 and had provided community leaders with one of our research report books. Furthermore, I said that I had already planned activities to share the results of my PhD research through focus groups in the end of the fieldwork. After my presentation, the indigenous governor said: "I don't know whether or not you people understood what Álvaro presented, but I want to know whether you agree or not." Attendees, mostly women, apathetically and almost unanimously said: "It's good for us." After three weeks of lobbying, although with scepticism, I was allowed to conduct research in the 11th kilometre.

At the end of this meeting at the *maloka*, an indigenous leader contacted me. He was the Leticia Witoto ESP team's coordinator. He told me: "We'll have a meeting about the Safeguarding Plan on next Saturday evening. Could you come on next Saturday evening to get to know us better and see how you can help us with this process?" I accepted. Before attending the Saturday meeting, I collected information on the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans on the internet. Henceforth, I identified the possible turn of my research toward the human rights domain. My negotiations to conduct research with this indigenous community led me to my fifth and definitive case study, which entailed new changes in my research object.

3.4.3. From Development to Universal Discourses

In the first ESP meeting that I attended, I was impressed by the renewed character of the elders' leadership, which had been dramatically weakened in the 11th kilometre in 2008. I was also impressed by the vitality of new indigenous leaderships embodied by the ESP indigenous professionals and community leaders. In the meeting, the entire ESP team performed a ritual to confirm their individual and collective commitment to the assessment phase of the Leticia Witoto ESP. The ritual consisted of an "*asentamiento de la palabra*," a 'settling of the word' through which the indigenous group aimed to eliminate the obstacles to make real the good intentions of the community. In the ritual the team members accepted *ambil* (paste of tobacco powder with vegetable salt), *mambe* (coca powder), and *caguana* (cassava juice) as symbols of their engagement to the ESP. In the presence of these sacred substances, each team member highlighted the Plan's importance for the community, even if the Plan was never described. The team members referred to personal stories, mythic and religious narratives, and political, historical or economic situations of the community that justified the need to formulate and implement the ESP. They referred to this Plan as a unique opportunity to overcome historical marginalization created by "white people." The ritual was intended to reinforce links between indigenous people before starting negotiations with the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the national authority responsible for the ESPs.

I attended this ritual from a silent position as an observer. In the beginning, the team's coordinator quickly explained me the ritual character of the meeting. He also introduced me to the ESP team: "Tonight we have Álvaro among us. He is..." "...a student in communication," I shyly added. The elders reacted with mistrust because they associated communication with journalism. To calm their reaction, the coordinator clarified: "No one will record anything here... he's here just to accompany us" (ESP team meeting, September 1, 2012, my translation). An elder asked me if I was a lawyer or a human rights expert. My negative answer provoked new resistances among the group of elders.

Despite this understandable initial resistance to my presence, my first encounter with the ESP team illustrated how indigenous groups approach their relationships with human rights and development plans. Through ritual communication, this team appropriated a Plan focused on their basic human rights according to their cultural practices, religious beliefs, and

historical and social context. The connection that these indigenous people made between the Plan and their spiritual practices, sacred symbolic substances, foundational narratives, and forms of leadership motivated me to consider the ESP as a fruitful case to explore my research questions. After gaining a better understanding of the Plan, some days later, I asked the ESP team's coordinator to allow me to take part in the assessment phase activities. Taking into account my recent experiences with indigenous leaders in both reserves, I proposed the coordinator to share my knowledge in communication and community participation with the ESP team. The coordinator accepted and asked me to attend the next professional team meeting.

Some of the indigenous professionals were reluctant or sceptical when I arrived at their meeting for the very first time. I introduced myself, gave them my research consent form, and kept my attitude as an external observer. However, I was impelled to change this attitude once the indigenous leader responsible for health presented a work plan proposal for the assessment phase. At this point, the professional group asked my opinion. I focused on the positive points of the proposal, raised some questions, and suggested some minor changes according to my knowledge about Colombian State procedures and the concepts of economic, social, and cultural human rights.

After listening to me, the professional group was more open to my participation. They agreed on most of my comments and suggestions. Then, they explained to me key elements of the ESP's process and of the team's structure that they had created to formulate the Plan. Furthermore, they clarified the multi-ethnic character of the team and explained me the characteristics of the alliance of the People of the Centre through mythical and geographical narratives. Unexpectedly, the meeting became a collective, rich, and participatory interview in which I could better understand the context and agents involved in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Then, the professional team invited me to have lunch with them. The usefulness and value that indigenous people attributed to my knowledge in their meeting were central to start a close relationship with the professional team.

In accordance with Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008), henceforth, I decentred my role in the fieldwork in order to construct relationships responsive to people's circumstances. From this moment forth, I was allowed and pleased to take part regularly in the ESP's activities. As a result, the ESP became my case study on the Colombian side of the border. I broadened my

research object from an exclusive focus on indigenous people's negotiations with development to a more embracing exploration of their negotiations with universal discourses. This concept was useful to encompass both development and human rights, which are central to the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans. My negotiations with research participants transformed both my research object and its theoretical bases. At that moment of the fieldwork, I experienced Marcus' idea of the mobility and changing character of research objects in ethnography (1995, p. 102).

3.4.4. The Researcher in Friction: Negotiations of Power in the Fieldwork

After obtaining permission from the community authorities, I conducted some exploratory interviews and observations that allowed me to construct closer relationships with research participants. Instead of proposing my own research activities planned previously, I tried to adjust and observe the community's daily life, spaces, and practices. I asked questions only when I considered it necessary and gave my opinion only when they asked me. This attitude conferred me a less invasive position in the communities studied.

The relationships that I constructed in the fieldwork situated me in several positions that changed according to the research participants' varied understandings and expectations of my gender, origin, institutional affiliation, and linguistic abilities. The fact of being a man allowed me the possibility of attending rituals in spaces banned to women such as *mambeaderos*. Furthermore, my fluency in Spanish ensured me a more direct connection with the professional and community leaders than with the elders, who were more fluent in the indigenous languages of the People of the Centre. My PhD level of education at a foreign university and my origin from a main Colombian city (Medellín) led to a perception of me among indigenous people as a wealthy person. This image led to expectations by some indigenous people that my research offered the possibility to attain material aid to improve their living conditions. These perceptions suggest that these indigenous people see research as an unequal exchange that needs to be rewarded through material compensation. However, according to the ethical principles described above and to the limitations of my research, I tried to avoid relationships that would have situated me in a position of superiority to the detriment of indigenous people's autonomy. Comparable unequal relationships were precisely part of what my research aimed to understand and subvert. Drawing on the decolonizing

orientation of this dissertation, I avoided fuelling unequal relationships comparable to the ones I was studying.

My multiple positions in the fieldwork suggest that indigenous people see knowledge exchange through research either as a transaction or as a possibility to involve researchers in solving their community problems. In addition to the position of benefactor, the ESP team members conferred on me roles such as community adviser, mediator, or associate. I took part in several meetings where the whole team or the indigenous professional group asked my opinion or advice about a particular topic. In some cases, my opinion triggered discussions that allowed me to hear the participant's views on some topics. To illustrate, my proposal of performing a dance in the opening event of the assessment phase gave birth to a discussion that revealed divided positions within the group with respect to the meaning of material culture. Those who supported my proposal defended the idea of dancing as a material cultural expression that, connected to indigenous people's collective daily work, expressed the indigeneity of the group and allowed them to transmit a clear message to the Ministry Staff. They argued: "We are people of the dancing."⁵³ In contrast, those who opposed the proposal understood dancing as an additional task merely intended to make visible their culture to non-indigenous agents. They referred to dances as an activity performed to entertain tourists who come to the reserve. My intervention in this community meeting influenced the conditions in which I observed two opposed understandings of material culture within the same group. As with this meeting, my presence in the community facilitated other situations in which indigenous people made evident their heterogeneous positions on other topics. These divergences were central to understanding differences and hierarchies among participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

⁵³ Dances of the People of the Centre are performed by groups of at least twenty people divided into two subgroups of women and men (see Picture 3.1). Dancers sing in unison a lyric that repeats a story or a specific thought conveyed in indigenous languages. Dances vary according each ethnic group. They are a mechanism to pass on knowledge to the community members or to members of other indigenous groups through chants. While they sing, dancers advance a step forward and a step back in circles within the *maloka*. Dances are open both to indigenous and non-indigenous people.



Picture 3.1. The People of the Centre's Dances: "We are people of the dancing" (October 2012)

In other ESP team community meetings, I occupied the role of mediator between official legal discourses and indigenous views and practices. To illustrate, the ESP professional team asked me to read with them and to clarify some points of the contract that they were about to sign with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) in order to conduct the assessment phase of the Plan. Later, the same team asked me to read the Constitutional Court Order 004 with the entire ESP group; this was the Order that forced the State to conduct Ethnic Safeguarding Plans with 34 indigenous peoples, including the Witoto. In these readings, the professional team and I explained to the community leaders and elders the Court's discourse of human rights in terms familiar to indigenous people's everyday life terms and examples. In these activities I joined the professional team to act as cultural translators between universal discourses and indigenous idioms. I embodied the position of the ethnographer as a bridge between two cultures (see Clifford, 1988, p. 88). From this position of research, not only could I study frictions between universal concepts and indigenous knowledges (see Chapter Five) but also take active part in such frictions. This mediating position may have influenced these indigenous people's appropriation of legal concepts related to human rights.

I also acted as a mediator in conflicts between an indigenous group and Colombian State forces. In late September 2012, soldiers of the Colombian National Navy (Armada Nacional de la República de Colombia) pulled up some coca plants from a collective crop in San Miguel, one of the indigenous communities taking part in the Leticia Witoto ESP. According to an elder who represents this community in the ESP team, the local radio referred to the indigenous inhabitants of San Miguel as cultivators of illegal crops. The elder asked the ESP team to rectify the message and defend their cultural right to cultivate coca.⁵⁴ At this request, the ESP coordinator answered referring to me: “We have our own journalist here; he can help us solve this problem” (my translation). I reacted to this public engagement by proposing actions to defend the right of indigenous people to clarify the legality of indigenous agriculture with the regional media. Furthermore, I proposed a meeting with the Navy to clarify the facts. Not only did the team agree, they also invited other regional authorities (including the National Army, the City Attorney General, and the Province’s Ombudsman) to the next ESP team meeting. In addition to resolving the conflict related to the coca plants, the ESP team saw the participation of these authorities in their meeting as an opportunity to make publicly visible the community process of the ESP assessment.

However, the team failed in this endeavour because the Navy was absent from the meeting. Only two representatives of the Colombian National Army were present. The coordinator presented the situation to them. The latter argued that they were not concerned with the Navy’s actions of pulling the coca plants. The Army staff took advantage of the meeting to confirm their institutional mission to protect indigenous people in everything they do legally. Then, the coordinator asked me to deal with the Army on further actions to ensure the protection of the ESP team and its beneficiaries’ practices and territories. I agreed with the military staff to produce a press release to clarify indigenous people’s right to cultivate coca according to their traditional cultural practices. Furthermore, the Army staff asked me to represent them in the press release as the only regional institution attending the event to support this indigenous group. To some extent, the Army used this meeting to increase its

⁵⁴ In the meeting, a former indigenous governor of the 11th kilometre argued that, in 2011, in view of the persecution of the Colombian State to coca crops, a commission of the United Nations present in the region acknowledged the rights of the Witoto communities to cultivate coca for family consumption in accordance with their cultural traditions.

legitimacy through the indigenous media release. In this situation, my adaptation to the indigenous people's expectations of my expertise in communication implicated me in their search for visibility and legitimacy in relation to State institutions.

This meeting may illustrate the vast and ambiguous character of my research position in the fieldwork as a mediator between indigenous and State institutions. From this position, I experienced the frustration of being ignored by absent institutions concerned with the conflict – some of them, such as the Attorney General and the Ombudsman, directly related to the protection of human rights in Leticia. Similarly, I took on the challenge to negotiate with a State institution (the Army) that attempted to gain legitimacy through its support of the indigenous struggle. From my bridge position in the midst of conflicts between two cultures, I experienced some power relations existent in the fieldwork. Drawing on this situation, I can argue that research with indigenous people is not only an act of power but may also situate researchers in positions where they can experience the unbalanced power relations that indigenous people cope with in their daily lives. These experiences may provide researchers with insights into the unequal power relations that indigenous people continuously face, resist, and aim to challenge.

After some months of observation and after constructing significant ties, some members of the ESP team – notably the indigenous professionals and community leaders – started considering me as a member of their community. In the end of the fieldwork, some team members humorously called me the “Nutibara elder,” referring to the extinct main indigenous group of Antioquia, my home region. I valued this nickname as a sign of their acceptance of my presence in their meetings. Often, some ESP leaders publicly spoke about me as a friend or as a key supporter of the ESP community processes. In other words, through my actions and relationships I could, to some extent, demonstrate some benefits of research and of contact with researchers to the ESP team. Although I knew that the ethnographer will never be part of the community (Clifford, 1988), the decolonizing attitude of gradually constructing horizontal interpersonal relationships offered important insights into my research questions. After my fieldwork, I have kept in contact by phone and internet with some of the ESP team members. Although I have supported them in the revision of some documents related to the Plan, the scope of this relationship is limited. I am still exploring research or cooperation strategies to

compensate the rich experience of learning from these indigenous people, especially because some of them see friendship as “a connection lasting a lifetime.”

On the other side of the border, I also experienced complex research relations with the Brazilian indigenous video makers. Among the Tikuna of Umariáçu (Brazil), in the beginning, some group’s members called me *senhor* (Mister) or professor, which connoted a superior position probably derived from my leading position in workshops. Although the video group staff attended the first workshops regularly, relationships were distant. These attitudes were influenced, among others, by the fact that most of workshop attendees were fluent only in the Tikuna language. Although one of the video makers interpreted the workshops, cultural and linguistic differences between me and attendees affected the productivity and dynamism of workshops. Probably due to culturally defined gender roles, during research activities, women remained together and silent or sharing information only between themselves. At the end of the fieldwork, I had only developed egalitarian relationships with some male leaders of the video maker group and some men of the community. However, linguistic, cultural, gender, and probably nationality differences led to distant relationships that impeded an insightful analysis of the video makers’ case.

Although I could observe the shooting, promotion, and diffusion of one of their films in Leticia, information collected through participation in these activities was insufficient to continue with Tikuna Produções as a case study. Furthermore, the richness and complexity of the ESP case and my deeper understanding of the Colombian context contrasted with the fragmented information that I was able to gather for the Brazilian case. I also had little knowledge on indigenous people’s situation in Brazil. Finally, although both cases reflected negotiations with development processes, the ESP process is mostly related to negotiations with human rights. This limited information and access in Brazil as well as a lack of common elements between both cases led me to discard the Tikuna Produções case study.

The research relationships and subject positions described here meant that I experienced research as a constant friction between my own culture and practices and relations already existing in the fieldwork. According to research participants’ understandings of my presence in their communities, I occupied multiple and even unexpected positions and tasks. Through negotiations between my research interests and their expectations of my research, I occupied positions such as trainer, adviser, mediator, observer, and moderator in some community

discussions. This broader understanding allowed me to redefine my research questions. In this respect, ethnographers suggest that “it is highly desirable for the participant observer to perform multiple roles during the course of a project, and gain at least a comfortable degree of rapport, even intimacy, with the people, situations, and settings of research” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 13). From these multiple roles, I experienced frictions that allow me to characterize indigenous research as an act of power and a human activity shaped, defined and influenced by power relations already existent in indigenous communities.

3.5. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Prior to conducting the in-depth fieldwork, I had proposed four research techniques: documentary analysis; observation; focus groups; and three kinds of interviews: exploratory, in depth, and life-history interviews. With this array of techniques, I aimed to explore the diversity, complexity, and changing conditions of negotiations between indigenous and universal knowledges. However my first negotiations to conduct research activities in the 11th kilometre allowed me to conclude that these indigenous people were overburdened with several State institutional projects. To illustrate, one of my preliminary interviews with an indigenous leader was interrupted because he needed to invite the community to take part at the same time in a program on productive agriculture and in a meeting on recovering indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants. Most community members were apathetic to this continuous and intense presence of institutional projects on their reserve. Several attendees – mostly women – argued that these activities prevented them from performing their daily chores at their own homes and *chagras*.

In view of this reluctance to assume additional community work, I undertook research techniques that could be easily integrated into people’s daily activities. I mainly focused on observation and documentary analysis. Furthermore, I conducted open and in-depth interviews to clarify or achieve insights into some topics. I also conducted workshops both with the ESP team and the video makers group. I introduced workshops as a participatory technique that could strengthen the ESP team and the video makers’ activities. Lastly, I led a community discussion with the goal of discussing the fieldwork preliminary results.

3.5.1. Documentary Analysis

During the fieldwork phase, I analyzed Master's dissertations, ethnographic and official documents, and research reports available at the university libraries of the region – the National University of Colombia, the Amazonas State University at Tabatinga, and the Federal University of the Amazon at Benjamin Constant, the latter two in Brazil. Given the large quantity of information collected in these institutions, documentary research in other regional archives was unnecessary. Furthermore, I had access to several formal and unpublished documents produced or collected by the ESP team members and the Tikuna video makers. I analyzed drafts of the ESP activities and budget plans, posters, records, written narratives, drawings, film scripts, and other documents about development projects implemented in the region. I carried out several levels of content analysis according to the documents' relevance to my research questions. I used this documentary data to enrich interviews and to complement my fieldwork notes.

Along the exploratory and analysis phases, I carried out content analysis of documents and ethnographic works related to the legal framework, monitoring, and implementation of the ESPs in general and to the context of the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan in particular. The documents offered insights into the historical and spatial relationships that have defined power positions from which the People of the Centre participate in the ESP. I conducted documentary analysis of Judgment 025 and Order 004, the main legal documents that support the ESPs (see Chapter Four). Furthermore, I analyzed some State reports on the processes of implementation of the ESPs and some reports from institutions that monitor the creation and implementation of these Plans. I analyzed such documents in order to identify the power inequalities that the Court and the State may create through the ESPs. Similarly, I identified the potential emancipatory character of these Plans. With these purposes, I used categories such as power and knowledge, epistemic inequalities, the production of subjects through power, low-intensity democracy models, and the right to development. I explored how the Court particularly mobilizes human rights and development discourses in this legal framework, influencing exclusionary, contradictory, or emancipatory positions for indigenous people. This documentary analysis was helpful for understanding the Colombian State and Constitutional Court as two main institutions that participate in localizing universal discourses

of human rights and development among Colombian displaced indigenous communities (see Chapter Four). I analyzed how these documents reflect intercultural unequal power relations in the ESPs conducted on the national territory in general and in the Leticia area in particular.

3.5.2. Observation

I constructed this dissertation's qualitative data through naturalistic and participant observation. Naturalistic observation refers to observing people's daily living spaces, accompanied by some interviews or dialogues to achieve direct knowledge about a given phenomenon (Angrosino, 2005, p. 729-30). Naturalistic observation is a research technique that helps establish a kind of multisensory dialogue between the observable setting of the territory, people's interactions, and the researcher's situation. Due to ethical principles, I conducted "reactive observations" in which "people being studied are aware of being observed and amenable to interacting with the researcher only in response to elements in the research design" (Angrosino, 2005, p. 732). I conducted naturalistic observations of the ESP team meetings in several community spaces. I also observed some open public meetings addressed to the indigenous population of the Leticia area. I conducted naturalistic observations in collective meetings where my direct participation would have affected the normal course of structured activities.

In other cases, when I was authorized, I conducted participant observation. This research technique entails a more direct engagement of the researcher with the phenomena observed. Myerhoff and Ruby (1982) consider participant observation as "the primary method for doing ethnography." According to these authors, participant observation "is the most involved, nonstandardized, personal version of qualitative methods" (p. 26). Given its direct connection with ethnography, participant observation is a relational research technique in which the "observer alters the system studied and is reciprocally altered by it" (Turner, 1986, p. 89). Participant observation influences the reality observed because observers transform what they observe and participants influence the observer's perceptions of the situations studied.

Human relations are one key component of participant observation:

The character of field relations heavily influences the researcher's ability to collect accurate, truthful information. The relationship between the participant as observer, people in the field setting, and the larger context of human interaction is one of the key components of this methodology (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 16).

Making evident the ways that these relations were established and maintained is part of methodological thoroughness in participant observation. Therefore, self-reflexivity is necessary to clarify the observers' influence on reality:

Since participant observation causes the researcher to become the primary instrument of data generation, his own behavior, his basic assumptions, the interactional settings where research is conducted, etc., all now become data to be analyzed and reported upon (Honigman 1976 : 259 in Myerhoff and Ruby p. 26)

Researchers need to continuously reflect upon their own experiences of observation and to make evident these reflections in order to maintain methodological thoroughness. In my fieldwork, I maintained such an attitude through my continuous written reflections on my journals. In the analysis phase, these reflections allowed me to reconstruct the contexts in which meanings and data were produced.

The meanings that people confer to their reality occupy a central role in participant observation. Participant observation aims to describe the world of everyday life as it is "viewed from the standpoint of insiders. . . . The methodology of participant observation seeks to uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 6). Participant observation is connected to this research project's purpose of studying indigenous knowledges according to the meanings that indigenous people attribute to their intercultural negotiations in the ESP.

As I mentioned above, in some cases, my participation created or transformed the meetings that I observed. I took active part in collective readings and in some collective discussions. Sometimes, the ESP professional team asked me to present to the entire ESP group or to the participant communities my suggestions on activities and processes to reinforce the assessment phase. During other meetings, the professional team asked me to support them in the writing of documents about topics unfamiliar to them. Although I tried to favour their collective creation and active production of content, my participation in these processes may have influenced some of the content of these documents. As a result of my participation in community meetings and in drafting documents, I may have influenced actions, relationships, discussions, views, and decisions related to the ESP. Conscious of the influence of my presence in indigenous people's activities, I tried to be careful of the words that I pronounced and the actions that I suggested.

3.5.3. Workshops

I see workshops as a research technique that creates a temporary community of exchange in which subjects produce and construct knowledge, practices, and narratives. Through horizontal dialogues motivated by participatory activities in workshops, social groups share narratives from which researchers can explore elements of the social reality analyzed. In this way, workshops constitute both a process for the observation of social relations and an opportunity for intellectual reflection (García Chacón et al. 2002; Riaño Alcalá, 2000). Workshops are a flexible technique that can articulate the interests of the groups in question and the researcher.

I conducted two workshops with the Leticia Witoto ESP team. Among their functions, the ESP community leaders had to conduct workshops to collect information for the Plan's assessment phase. Indeed, the indigenous professionals were supposed to train the community leaders in the technique of conducting workshops. However, none of these professionals had previously conducted research workshops. This inclusion of workshops in their work plan reflects that indigenous people adjust themselves to non-indigenous methodologies that they do not necessarily know. For this reason, when they learned about my previous experiences with workshops in Umariacu⁵⁵ and in other Colombian Andean communities, the professional team asked me to help them train the indigenous community leaders.

As a result, I conducted the "Problem-Tree" and "Participatory Cartography" workshops with the ESP team (see pictures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4). While the former focuses on multiple community issues in general, the latter focuses on territorial topics (García Chacón et al., 2002). Instead of a theoretical explanation of these methodologies, I preferred to offer the direct experience of this workshop to the ESP professional and community promoter team. At the same time, this experience produced data to answer some of my research questions.

⁵⁵ Since I discarded this case study, I do not provide further details on workshops conducted with the video makers.



Pictures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4: The Tree-Problem Workshop and Discussion with the Professional and Community Promoter ESP Committees

The “Problem-Tree” and “Participatory Cartography” consist of asking people to make drawings about abstract topics uncommonly represented. These workshops use graphic codes to facilitate the expression of what people are unable to or do not wish to communicate through verbal means (Mitchell, 2006). This translation from abstract ideas into concrete codes provokes the emergence of unexpected topics normally hidden from public discussions. According to the ESP professional and promoter team suggestions, I asked people to focus their “Problem-Tree” on the ESP main topics: territory, political autonomy, health, and education. In the tree roots, people drew what they consider to be the causes of their problems, in the trunk they introduced the concrete manifestations of these problems and in the branches they presented their own proposals to solve these problems. In the cartography exercise, people drew the main negative effects, limits, conflicts, and meaningful places associated with forced displacement. Then, I asked the participants to explain their drawings. Subsequently, I animated a discussion on these topics. Finally, I concluded the workshops by discussing with

the participants the main common elements between the ideas that emerged through each workshop.

I documented these activities through audio recording and photographs. Participatory cartography facilitated dialogues that made evident territorial conflicts and differences in land access between the indigenous groups taking part in the ESP – notably the Witoto and Tikuna groups (see Chapter Five). Similarly, the tree-problem workshop allowed me to collect deep insights into the People of the Centre's struggles for rights recognition according to their cultural specificities (see Chapter Five). Thus, workshops made possible dialogues on sensitive community topics that I had not been able to identify through interviews or observation.

My participation in these workshops transformed my position in the fieldwork again. From my position as trainer, I influenced the professional and promoter team's skills to analyze and propose actions on the situation of basic human rights among indigenous people in the Leticia area. I became a vehicle of power-knowledge relations through which the discourse of human rights shapes its own subjects. As with other research activities described in this Chapter, workshops led me to influence, take part, and experience frictions with the universal discourses that I was studying. Although they are related to power relations established through human rights discourses, these activities may contribute to community dialogue, self-recognition, and collective construction of proposals for improving their current situations.

3.5.4. Interviews

Interviews favour the construction of knowledge through empathetic human relationships (Fontana and Frey, 2005). As with participant observation, the production of knowledge through interviews depends on relations of trust and reciprocity between the interviewer and interviewee. These participants' social context and positions of power influenced relationships constructed through interviews (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 696). Depending on the levels of trust of my relationships with research participants, I conducted multiple open-ended and at least twenty in-depth interviews related to both case studies. Additionally, I conducted structured interviews with State employees of the Colombian and Brazilian governments based either in Leticia or Tabatinga.

I conducted open-ended interviews during the exploratory phases of both stints of fieldwork. These interviews were spontaneous conversations intended to establish research relationships and to identify contextual actors, historical facts, power relations, and new questions related to the case studies (Gaitán Moya and Piñuel Raigada, 1998, p. 94). I conducted these interviews in people's everyday individual and community spaces and routines. Walking together to meetings, *mambeaderos*, *malokas*, and people's houses, or kitchens were the main moments and spaces of these interviews. As with the observations, I adapted my research plans to people's activities.

Once I had established close relationships through observations or open-ended interviews, I asked certain people to grant me an in-depth interview. For this reason, I conducted in-depth interviews only two or three months after starting fieldwork in order to identify personal and contextually situated narratives about the research questions. In-depth interviews require "minimizing status differences" between interviewers and interviewees (Fontana and Frei, 2005). With this purpose, I started in-depth interviews by establishing common links with interviewees, by referring to my former experiences in the fieldwork, or by talking about people whom I knew in the region. Some of these interviews were fruitful talks about deep, intimate, or even spiritual topics. Given the complexity of some subjects and depending on people's availability, I conducted some of these interviews in several sessions. In the ESP case, I conducted in-depth interviews with the team's coordinator, an indigenous community promoter, an indigenous woman leader, an indigenous woman elder and two indigenous professionals.

Prior to fieldwork, I had proposed to conduct life-history interviews. I had proposed this research technique as a strategy to recognize the ways people shape knowledge about themselves according to relations of gender, sexuality, "race, class, hierarchy, status, and age" (Seidman, 1991, cited in Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 712). Despite the importance of these axes of difference in this dissertation, I soon realized that life-history interviews require establishing even more intimate relationships in order to conduct interviews across several sessions (Chase, 2005). These relationships were impossible in the limited time and conditions of my fieldwork. Instead, I explored axes of power defined by ethnic belonging, gender, generational, and historical differences through naturalistic and participant observation and open-ended interviews.

3.5.5. Focus Groups

My attempts to adapt my research activities to people's daily routines and spaces made of my fieldwork an informal and continuously changing experience. In these conditions, it was difficult to conduct structured focus groups as originally planned in my thesis proposal, where I had proposed four focus groups during the fieldwork phase and two more at the beginning of the analytical phase. The latter focus groups were part of the ethical qualitative research practice of discussing the research results with its participants prior to presenting them publicly. It was very difficult to conduct two effective focus groups at the end of my fieldwork phase. In the Umariacu community, I presented my research results to the only two people who attended the focus group. For the Witoto case study, I conducted an unstructured community discussion after a general meeting of the ESP team. This cannot be considered a focus group in strict terms because it included at least 24 participants. In the discussion, I introduced my research preliminary results, focusing on topics potentially useful for strengthening the ESP team such as: the need for improving unequal gender relations in the team, the importance of resolving rivalries within the group, and the relevance of the rights of indigenous people for community empowerment.

The topic of gender took precedence in the discussion. Older women resisted acknowledging gender inequalities, while young women suggested more inclusive practices to recognize the specificity of their conditions of participation in the ESP (see Chapter Five). For their part, the professional team was divided between those who supported the young women's claims and those who were indifferent to the topic. The long duration of people's interventions in the meeting precluded the possibility of discussing the other two topics. These indigenous people's custom of listening carefully while each group member utters long speeches contrasts with the supposed interactional dynamic of focus groups. Although I asked the participants to talk about my research activities, this topic was untouched. They simply valued my presence in the ESP assessment phase activities. Several members of the team valued my ability to explain them complex concepts and procedures coded in the State legislative terms. Some community promoters suggested that we needed to maintain our close relationship. Similarly, the chief elder thanked me for the clarity that my explanations conferred to the Plan. He acknowledged my work's commitment and transparency. Other indigenous professionals

referred to my proposals as practical and accurate. Despite our close relationship of collaboration, at the end of fieldwork, the main topics of my research project (e.g., indigenous knowledges, frictions, human rights and development) were still a foreign matter for the ESP team. This attitude results from my emphasis on my role in advising and accompanying the ESP team's activities. From these positions, I indirectly enquired my research topic.

This focus group was crucial to conclude my fieldwork activities with the ESP team in reciprocal and respectful ways. The discussion allowed me to clarify some of the goals, limits, and more valued topics of my research work. Some indigenous people understood more clearly what I was observing and attempting to identify throughout my fieldwork. This meeting was a unique opportunity to publicly present the convergence of the ESP team activities and my research with the purpose of identifying and proposing more egalitarian positions for indigenous subjects.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

After completing the exploratory and fieldwork phases, I attempted to address the large volume of data collected in the fieldwork. At this point, I tried to create a coherent account drawing on the different fragments and versions of the observations registered in my journals. I began the analysis by revising and commenting on my own journals. Next, I wrote a synthesis of the thesis including the new research orientations, questions, and categories that emerged from fieldwork. Subsequently, I tried to establish relationships between these data and the analytical categories of my preliminary theoretical framework. I complemented this framework through a more encompassing focus on universal discourses.

The analysis phase included a process of data codification, classification, translation into English, and reconstruction of meanings through writing. I codified and classified data through Atlas Ti qualitative analysis software. I proposed 91 codes that refer to research topics or subtopics related to the main analysis concepts. I classified these codes in 14 families corresponding to a major analytical category drawn from the conceptual framework or emerging from fieldwork (e.g., language and territory). These families are: development; frictions or negotiations; geographical context; historical context; human rights; identity and language; territory; indigenous knowledges; methodology; power; present context;

Safeguarding Plan; scales; and universal discourses. The following Atlas Ti diagram illustrates the codes included in the category of “frictions and negotiations”:

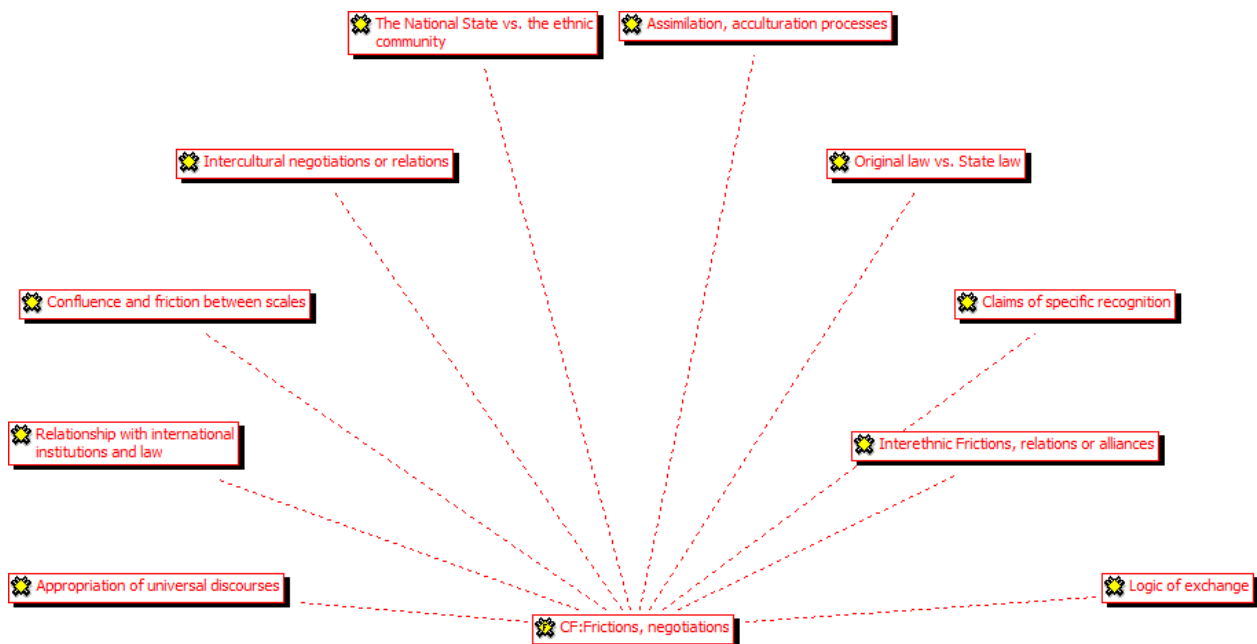


Diagram 3.1. Codes of the Analytic Family Frictions and Negotiations in Atlas Ti

I grouped the remaining concepts in similar ways. Then, with the aid of Atlas Ti, I constructed a research report for each conceptual family. These reports were the preliminary bases of several sections of the analysis, context, and methodology chapters. Then, I attempted to reconstruct the meanings of data and proposed a common thread to connect notes collected in the fieldwork. To do so, I identified hierarchies or relationships between the data classified. Then, I compared and connected these fragments according to their similarity or to their relationship with the analytical concepts.

I gained deeper understanding of the topics studied through triangulation, which consists in setting in dialogue different viewpoints of research participants, documentary findings, and theoretical frameworks. Triangulation aims to “clarify meanings by identifying different meanings” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). This analytical technique has the ethical and analytic purpose of comparing and verifying information prior to releasing it. Triangulation contributes to the decolonizing purpose of “centring indigenous concerns and world views” in order to “understand theory and research from our own [indigenous] perspectives and for our own purposes” (Smith, 1999, p. 29). From the decolonizing perspective, triangulation favoured a

writing process open to exchange between theory and indigenous views. My analysis privileged the valorization of indigenous concepts that may enrich academic concepts and research practices.

These descriptions of how I classified, connected, and conferred meaning to the fieldworks data are part of my self-reflective attitude in this ethnographic dissertation. For Clifford, “with varying degrees of explicitness, ethnographies are fictions both of another cultural reality and of their own mode of production” (p. 81). For this author, ethnography is an act of fiction (but not of falsehood): “Lived fictions are central to successful ethnographic research, then we may expect to find them reflected in the texts that organize, narrate, and generally account for the truths learned in the fieldwork” (Clifford, 1988, p. 80). The fictional part of ethnography consists of ethnographers’ active participation in establishing relations that reconstruct the reality analyzed. In this dissertation, I established relations between several fragmentary notes concerning the reality observed according to relationships and positions that I established and occupied in fieldwork.

Also, linguistic and intercultural translation took an important place in this process of constructing ethnographic narratives. This dissertation is related to six languages: It is written in English in a mostly French-speaking environment; I conducted research activities in Spanish and Portuguese; and several research participants were used to speaking Tikuna and Witoto languages. These latter indigenous languages shape the grammar, syntax, concepts, and structures of several of the indigenous people’s narratives analyzed in this dissertation. For this reason, in addition to linguistic translation, my ethnographic data emerge from translation between different logical systems of knowledge. I reconstructed the written meaning of indigenous concepts coded in the redundant, contextually defined, emotive, and digressional character of oral language (see Ong, 1982). I transformed them into the rational, concise, formalized, and continuous character of written academic English – which is not even my mother tongue.

Translation from one cultural idiom or language into another is integral to the ethnographic method. Intercultural translation reveals and puts together several and different social fractures and differences between the ethnographer’s and the studied culture (Marcus, 1995, p. 100). Translation can be seen as an intercultural friction that “carries cultural genealogies from an original language even as it takes on new genealogies of thought and

action from the new language. Concepts are transformed in translation” (Tsing, 2005, p. 224). In this dissertation, several verbal and non-verbal emotional expressions, nuances, tonalities, linguistic turns, storytelling strategies, and repetitions were undoubtedly lost, adapted, transformed, or even misread through intercultural translation. In some cases, I transformed metaphorical expressions into more direct written language in order to convey the original meaning of the stories. In order to gain transparency in this translation process, I quoted both the translation and transcription of the original narrative of people when these narratives revealed specific forms of storytelling that influenced the meaning. Drawing on ethical principles of respect, I attempted to translate indigenous knowledges in ways faithful to their authors and understandable for readers. Through these practices of analysis, translation and writing, I aimed to answer Overing’s question noted above on the need for an “anthropological writing that does not silence the other” (2006, p. 12).

3.7. CONCLUSION: WHY CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA?

Indigenous people have associated research with unequal power relations that they have experienced in the past. Indigenous resistance to research results from unequal historical contact with non-indigenous cultures that have led to indigenous people’s marginalization, exclusion, exploitation, extinction, and assimilation. In spite of the physical and symbolic violence that these differences have entailed for them, several indigenous groups want to keep their cultures, beliefs, and practices alive. Not only is this their right, but their cultures and knowledges represent a main source of the cultural diversity that enriches humankind. This diversity is what makes us grow as humans beings through exchange across differences.

As with other encounters with difference, research with indigenous people challenges research procedures and researchers’ positions that are often taken for granted. As my multiple positions as researcher – as benefactor, trainer, mediator, counsellor – suggest, indigenous research situates researchers in the midst of power relations that have historically influenced indigenous people’s lives. In indigenous research, it is not only the researcher who wields power; rather, researchers participate in power relations already existing in the contexts studied.

As with other forms of power, research is a negotiated construction that depends on human relationships. Research negotiations described in this chapter reflect that indigenous research tests the researchers' openness and adaptability, situating them in unexpected and humbling positions in the fieldwork. According to these relations and negotiations, ethnography is a form of situated knowledge that depends on transient conditions influenced by positions of power and social axes of difference – generation, gender, ethnic belonging, language, historical experiences, and so on. My failed attempts to conduct four case studies reveal that more than simply collecting data, it is the process of negotiating access to people's lives that enriches ethnographic knowledge. In particular, the Tikuna Produções case reminded me of the importance of research relations that are connected culturally, linguistically, and pragmatically to indigenous communities' needs, authorities and expectations. These failed negotiations led me to broaden my own theoretical, methodological, and ethical views on research and to imagine creative angles of questioning adapted to the complex and changing realities of indigenous people. My fieldwork negotiations, including those in which I failed to gain deeper insights, influenced the knowledge that I produced in this dissertation.

Self-reflexivity was a core means of facing these challenging situations in my fieldwork. In this chapter, I introduced some of my inner dialogues as part of my decolonizing engagement with transparency in the production of knowledge. Self-reflexivity puts researchers in horizontal positions both in relation to research participants and readers. These methodological and ethical commitments situate the researcher as another social agent who produces knowledge with participants in contingent and non-generalizable conditions. By detailing their reflections in the fieldwork, researchers can situate their positions to understand and represent indigenous people's accounts about their experiences of marginalization.

In spite of the difficulties that it entails, indigenous research is both worthy and necessary. From my own experience, indigenous people of the tri-border Middle Amazon taught me how to conduct research by leaving behind my previously structured research plans. They helped me transform my research experience into a horizontal dialogue to understand and think with them more inclusive possibilities to improve their lives. My dialogues with indigenous people in the fieldwork remind me of the "collaborative nature of the ethnographic experience" (Banister, 1999, p. 14). Knowledge analyzed in this dissertation emerges from collaborative work in which indigenous people narrate, understand, analyze, and make

proposals concerning their own realities. These dialogues became, at times, insightful sources to figure out how to enrich Western views on human rights and development through indigenous localized views on law and producing collective abundance.

Despite their serious commitment in dialogues on human rights and development, the indigenous people that I exchanged with always shared a joke, a gift, or a teaching to humanize these exchanges. Often, my scholarly knowledge was useless for coping with situations that indigenous people solved through culturally situated concepts and practices. This observation opened my theoretical knowledge to the richness of their practical and situated knowledges. I learned with them that knowledge is to be practiced, power is to be shared and exerted for the benefit of all, others are to be respected, and life is to live simply and in connection with nature.

Decolonizing perspectives, awareness of the limits of ethnography and indigenous people's claims taught me that academic research cannot be separated from common people's reality. It is precisely marginalized people's needs, creativity, struggles, and abilities to solve problem that enrich academic work and lend it a responsive meaning. The challenges of research with indigenous people can lead researchers to rediscover ourselves and to rethink the meaning, potentialities, and power of research. Through indigenous research, researchers can challenge research as an activity that shores up the power of those who are already powerful. Of course, researchers cannot change the world through simply conducting research with indigenous people, but they wield the power of representation through writing. In Smith's view, "representation is important because it gives the impression of the 'truth'" (1999, p. 35). Although limited, researchers' writing wields the power to make visible some groups and their abilities and concepts in order to understand and transform their own realities. Researchers have the power to produce balanced, nuanced, and situated descriptions of groups unknown for the majority, and to make visible their agency and strategies to overcome marginalization.

Just as the reflections in this chapter may illustrate, responsive and self-reflective attitudes in fieldwork can make of indigenous research a powerful activity with the potential to bridge differentiated understandings and views on universal discourses. This is what I attempted to do in this methodological chapter and in this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ETHNIC SAFEGUARDING PLANS: LOCALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

“We [indigenous displaced women] must take care of our family by accepting activities that differ from our cultures, such as working as maids or even worse, selling our bodies...” (Words of a displaced indigenous woman, introduced by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. Colombia, 2009, p. 16, my translation).

This chapter analyzes some of the complexities of the close connection between the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans (ESPs) and universal discourses of human rights and development. As suggested in Chapter Two, the Constitutional Court supports these Plans based on international humanitarian law and on international human rights agreements signed by Colombia (OAS, 1969; Red Cross, 1949; 1998; United Nations, 1966a; 1966b). Furthermore, the ESP legal framework follows multiple constitutional principles and a vast array of Constitutional Court regulations and laws that aim to protect displaced people by regulating how the State addresses these populations in Colombia. This chapter analyzes the ESPs as processes that localize universal discourses of human rights and development in the specific contexts of Colombian displaced indigenous communities. Like other processes that localize these discourses, the ESP influence, at the same time, possibilities of marginalization and emancipation for subaltern subjects – indigenous peoples in this case.

Instead of a critical legal analysis, which is beyond this dissertation’s goals, I use some analytical categories explained in Chapter Two: the production of subjects through discourses of power and knowledge; the implementation of low intensity democracy models through human rights; the right to development; and the modernization and participatory paradigms of development. Through these categories, I analyze how universal discourses of human rights and development influence unequal power relations for indigenous people in the ESP. With these purposes, I analyze two main documents that comprise the ESP’s legal framework and some institutional documents that monitor their implementation. I conduct a content analysis of the Constitutional Court’s Judgment 025 and Order 004 (Colombia 2004a; 2009). I also analyze three independent institutional reports that provide some insights into the process of implementation of these Plans. These latter documents were produced by the Observatory of Global Justice of the University of Los Andes (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010), the Organization of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples – OPIAC (Cabria Medina et al., 2011), and an

alliance between a Colombian State commission and an NGO – The Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento, CODHES⁵⁶ (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012). My analysis also explores some contradictions and possibilities for indigenous peoples to overcome marginalization through the ESP.

The chapter describes how human rights and development discourses are present both in the legal discourses that support the ESP and in their implementation processes. I argue that these universal discourses influence inequalities in the relationship between indigenous peoples and the State in these Plans. I discuss first how international discourses of human rights mobilized through the ESP may favour unequal power relations derived from “low intensity democracy” models (Santos, 1997; 2002a). I explore how the ESP may reproduce these models through legal discourses and implementation processes that lack coordination between cultural recognition, political representation, and economic redistribution for displaced indigenous people (Fraser, 2000; 2009). Then, I analyze some means and consequences of the production of indigenous displaced subjects through State discursive and statistical methods of human rights improvement (Brown, 1995; Grewal, 2005). This production of subjects may lead to decontextualized views of indigenous people’s forced displacement, deepening their marginal positions. Furthermore, I illustrate how the lack of precision in the Constitutional Court’s human rights discourses leads this Court, the State, and the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders to reproduce gender inequalities on the national and community scales.

I also analyze how Judgment 025 and Order 004 are respectively related to modernization and participatory development paradigms. I analyze how Judgment 025 addresses displacement through discourses related to the modernization paradigm of development focused on measurable indexes, economic productivity, administrative changes, and external aid. Furthermore, this Judgment articulates development as a right, which has influenced irregularities in the implementation of the ESP. Drawing on ethnographic data, I illustrate some obstacles in the Leticia Witoto ESP team’s struggles for land access – obstacles

⁵⁶ CODHES stands for Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement in English. CODHES “is a non-profit organisation established in 1992 by academics in human rights and international humanitarian law who sought peaceful alternatives for Colombia, with an emphasis on the individuals and communities directly affected by the armed conflict” (Peace Direct, 2014)

related to the participatory development paradigm. Despite these unequal relations, I also explore how the ESP may favour relations of visibility and knowledge exchange between State and indigenous agents.

This reflection aims to contribute to the macro analysis of intercultural power relations proposed in Chapter Two. I conduct content analysis of the mentioned legal documents and introduce some examples of my fieldwork in order to illustrate tensions produced in the process of localization of human rights and development discourses. While this chapter offers a general understanding of the ESP as a negotiation involving unequal power relations conducted with multiple indigenous communities across Colombia, Chapter Five focuses on specific frictions and power relations in the Leticia Witoto ESP. In this chapter, my analysis introduces the legal conditions, cultural differences, and institutional structures that displaced indigenous people must face to struggle for their rights at the national scale through the ESPs. I argue that, despite their participatory character, the studied legal framework provides few or any clues for indigenous people to propose initiatives according to their own knowledges. Indeed, this legal framework articulates development with rights in ways that reinforce epistemic inequalities between the State and indigenous groups, affecting their possibilities of recognition and inclusion according to their local epistemologies.

4.1. UNIVERSAL DISCOURSES IN THE ETHNIC SAFEGUARDING PLANS

The Constitutional Court's Judgment 025 of 2004 and Order 004 of 2009 constitute the main legal framework of the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans. While Judgment 025 established a general summary of the gravity of forced displacement in Colombia, Order 004 emphasized the differential focus necessary to accurately address the needs of indigenous peoples threatened by forced displacement.⁵⁷ Three additional Constitutional Orders complement this legal framework: Order 008 of 2009, which proposes a different protection of indigenous traditional collective territories; Order 092 of 2008 that refers to the urgent need to address the specific effects of displacement among indigenous women; and Order 382 of 2010 that increased from 34 to 36 the initial number of indigenous peoples considered at risk by displacement. Among these legal documents, only Order 004 specifically details the need for

⁵⁷ According to official data, in 2006 alone, forced displacement affected 5,847 Colombian indigenous people (CECOIN, 2006, quoted in Colombia, 2009, p. 13).

and conditions to formulate and implement the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans. For this reason, I analyze this legal framework mainly through Judgment 025 and Order 004.

4.1.1. Human Rights Discourses in the ESP's Main Legal Framework

Judgment 025 presents forced displacement in Colombia as a human rights problem that the State can solve by improving procedures to recognize the rights of displaced people. In this Judgment, human rights discourse prevails as the only analytical framework, leaving aside historical, socioeconomic, political, or other structural views of forced displacement. This Judgment responded to 108 writs of protection⁵⁸ filed by 1,150 displaced families, mainly composed of women headed households, minors, elders, and indigenous people (Colombia, 2004a, p. 1). Judgment 025 concludes that the State's response to the problem of forced displacement has not resulted in the effective enjoyment of the constitutional rights of displaced populations. Rather, the State's inadequate response to this problem has aggravated the situation of forced displacement (Colombia, 2004a, p. 60). In view of this situation, Judgment 025 describes internal displacement in Colombia as

a problem of humanity that must be addressed jointly by all Colombian people, starting with the State. [Forced displacement is a] true state of social emergency, a national tragedy that affects the fate of countless Colombians and marks the country's future for decades.... [It is] a serious danger to Colombian society and politics, [and] an *unconstitutional state of affairs* that contradicts the rational order implicit in constitutionalism [and] the Constitutional values, principles, and rights (Colombia, 2004b, p. 34, my translation and emphasis).

In other words, Judgment 025 analyzes the social problem of forced displacement through the rational logics underlying Colombian constitutional human rights discourse.

Further, the Court interprets the violation of displaced people's rights through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement (Red Cross, 1998). Drawing on this agreement, the Court defines seventeen rights violated by forced displacement: the right to life in conditions of dignity; the rights of children, women headed households, the disabled, elders, and other people who are especially protected; the

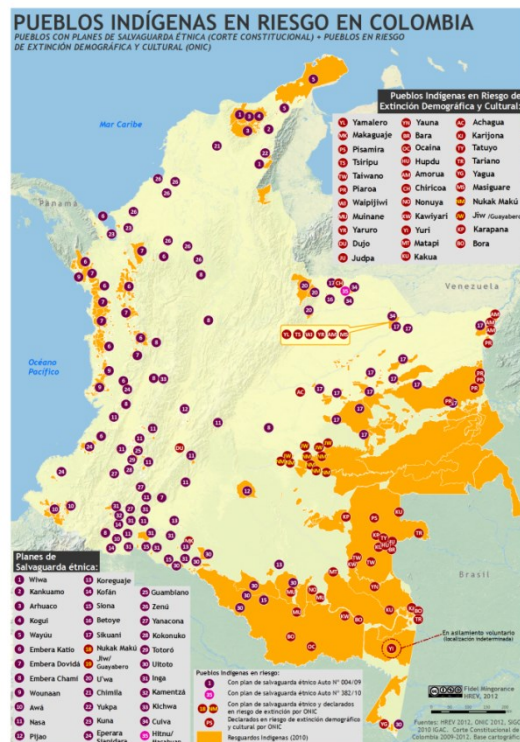
⁵⁸ Since 1991, the writs of protection have become a main mechanism for Colombian citizens to demand protection from the State. In this respect, the Constitutional Article 86 says: "Every person has the right to file a writ of protection before a judge, at any time or place, through a preferential and summary proceeding, for himself/herself or by whomever acts in his/her name for the immediate protection of his/her fundamental Constitutional rights when that person fears the latter may be violated by the action or omission of any public authority. The protection will consist of all order issued by a judge enjoining others to act or refrain from acting. The order, which must be complied with immediately, may be challenged before a superior court judge, and in any case the latter may send it to the Constitutional Court for possible revision" (Colombia, 1991b).

right of people to choose their place of residence; the rights to free development of personality, free speech, and free association; the violation of economic, social, and cultural rights of displaced people; the right to family unity and protection; the right to health in connection with the right to life; the right to personal integrity; the right to personal safety; the right to free circulation within the national territory and to stay in the place chosen to live (p. 38); the right to work and to choose a profession freely; the right to a minimum of alimentation; the right to education, notably of displaced minors whose education is interrupted; the right to dignified housing; the right to peace (which draws on international humanitarian law protecting civil populations from armed attacks and the effects of war); the right to juridical personality (since the loss of official documents affects the register for access to humanitarian aid for displaced people); and the right to equality, aimed at protecting displaced people from discrimination (Colombia, 2004, pp. 38-42). Drawing on the Red Cross international human rights discourse, Judgment 025 acknowledged internal displacement in Colombia as a national and invisible humanitarian emergency needing urgent and accurate attention from the State (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 27).⁵⁹

In order to face this humanitarian emergency, Judgment 025 orders the State to undertake mainly administrative measures. These measures can be summarized as follows: to communicate to State authorities the need to design and implement an action plan to overcome the cited ‘unconstitutional state of affairs’; to adopt a specific program to correct the lack of institutional capacities; to communicate and demand the urgent accomplishment of these measures by the State institutions involved; to simplify the mechanisms for attending to displaced populations; to ask the State authorities responsible for displaced people to make publicly known the Charter of Displaced People’s Basic Rights; to conduct programs of humanitarian aid, housing, and socioeconomic reestablishment for displaced populations through relevant institutions; and to simplify the access of the displaced to these programs (Colombia, 2004, pp. 88-90). It can be argued that Judgment 025 emphasizes the State’s administrative and technical procedures for recognizing and making visible human rights as the main means to address forced displacement.

⁵⁹ Drawing from Judgment 025 and from their own research, the UN and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights share this view of the Constitutional Court on internal displacement in Colombia (Cabria Medina et al., 2011).

In spite of these regulations, the Colombian State's inadequate attention to displaced indigenous people motivated the Constitutional Court to issue Order 004 of 2009. This Order contributed to make visible the different and specific effects of the internal armed conflict on indigenous peoples. The Court asserts that these effects are invisible to the Colombian society and State and may destroy the country's ethnic and cultural diversity (Colombia, 2009, p. 13). Order 004 established the ESPs as mechanisms to address this situation. These Plans must be formulated with 34 indigenous peoples⁶⁰ – including the Witoto (see Map No. 4.1).



Map 4.1. Indigenous Peoples with an Ethnic Safeguarding Plan According to Order 004 (in violet) vs. Indigenous Peoples at Risk of Extinction (in red). Source: geoactivismo.org (2012)

Order 004 directly invokes international humanitarian law. It refers to the violation of the fundamental right of indigenous people to “not to be involved in armed conflict... [and] to respect their particularity, vulnerability and fragility” (Colombia, 2009, p. 12, my translation).

⁶⁰ These peoples are: the Wiwa, Kankuamo, Arhuaco, Kogui, Wayúu, Embera-Katío, Embera-Dobidá, Embera-Chamí, Wounaan, Awá, Nasa, Pijao, Koreguaje, Kofán, Siona, Betoy, Sikuani, Nukak-Makú, Guayabero, U’wa, Chimila, Yukpa, Kuna, Eperara-Siapidaara, Guambiano, Zenú, Yanacona, Kokonuko, Totoró, *Huitoto*, Inga, Kamentzá, Kichwa, Kuiva (Colombia, 2009, p. 33, my emphasis). In Map 4.1, yellow areas represent the indigenous reserves acknowledged by the State until 2010. In the map’s southern extreme, Number 30 corresponds to the Witoto People – the case study of this dissertation.

This right is directly related to Article 3 of the Geneva Convention No. 4 that prohibits any kind of violence against “persons taking no active part in the hostilities” (Red Cross, 1949, p. 2). In view of the worsening of dangerous and pre-existing situations for indigenous peoples and the spread of these risks to new peoples, the Court recognizes a “serious breach of the Colombian State’s duties to prevent forced displacement and protect civil populations” (Colombia, 2009, pp. 12, 13, my translation). Furthermore, Order 004 invokes international law to recall the seventeen human rights of indigenous people mentioned in Judgment 025. The Court invokes these rights in order to force the State to provide indigenous displaced people with immediate attention.

The main contribution of Order 004 to address this phenomenon is the recognition of how indigenous people’s specific rights are threatened by displacement. The Order refers to the “different character of the impact of forced displacement on indigenous people”:

[Forced displacement of indigenous people] mixes together the individual and collective facets of the effects of displacement. It [displacement] has destructive impacts both on the individual rights of the affected ethnic group’s members and on every ethnic group’s rights to autonomy, identity, and territory. Individual and collective aspects of displacement influence and interact with one another. Furthermore, every ethnic group has its own *patterns* of forced displacement and *its own specific situation*, which must be recognized to the full extent of their gravity for the State to give an appropriate response (Colombia, 2009, p. 13, my translation and emphasis).

In this way, the Court recognizes the individual and collective character of the rights of indigenous peoples and insists on the need to understand and address forced displacement according to each ethnic group’s singularities. These characteristics suggest that Order 004 may remind State agents of the need for recognizing cultural specificity in human rights plans (Santos, 2002a; Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005). It can be argued thus that while Judgment 025 localizes international discourses of the displaced people’s human rights on the national scale, Order 004 localizes these discourses in indigenous communities.

In accordance with these localizing and specifying logics, the Court refers to three main effects of forced displacement on indigenous people: loss of territorial access, forced contact with different cultures, and differential effects of displacement on indigenous women and children. In respect to the first point, the Court establishes:

The loss of territorial control and of effective access to territoriality destroys the fundamental principles of life and coexistence that underlie the [indigenous people’s] processes of identity construction, internal systems of autonomy, control and government, circuits of production, and dynamics of enculturation (Colombia, 2009, p. 13-14, my translation).

Drawing on reports produced by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Court refers to the relationship between indigenous groups and their territory as crucial to their cultural structures and to their ethnic and material survival:

Displacement generates acculturation because it entails a culture shock that includes a rupture with their cultural environment. Indigenous displaced people live in a state of total disorientation given the cultural and linguistic shock that they experience and given their abrupt insertion into urban alien environments of misery (Colombia, 2009, p. 14, my translation).

In short, Order 004 emphasizes territory as a crucial right, the loss of which represents a direct threat to the cultural survival of indigenous groups (p. 25-26).

Since most displaced indigenous people move to urban areas, they are forced to face different cultures in conditions of extreme poverty and vulnerability. The Constitutional Court denounces how, in urban contexts, cultural factors such as indigenous people's illiteracy, lack of fluency in Spanish, and identity differences with the mainstream Colombian culture in places where they migrate have deepened their marginalization. Similarly, Order 004 refers to increasing health problems among indigenous people due to the rupture of their traditional forms of medicine (Colombia, 2009, p. 14). Furthermore, culturally inappropriate emergency humanitarian aid has led to changes in traditional diet for displaced indigenous people, producing situations of hunger (p. 15). The Court mentions how these effects of forced displacement have affected indigenous communities' social structures, family and solidarity links, cultural referents and practices, and physical possibilities to survive.

Importantly, to illustrate the effects of displacement on indigenous people, the Court quotes an indigenous displaced woman's testimony collected by the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia or ONIC). The testimony reflects indigenous women's conflictual contact with urban culture:

We [indigenous displaced women] must take care of our families by accepting activities that differ from our cultures, such as working as maids or even worse, selling our bodies. . . . We, indigenous women, fight to be recognized as displaced, fight for access to health and education that is not appropriate to us, prepare food alien to our culture and bodies, fight to prevent our families' disintegration and our children from losing our culture (Colombia, 2009, p. 16, my translation).

By including displaced indigenous women's narratives in this Order, the Court attempts to make visible indigenous people's experiences of exclusion under their own terms and conditions. This inclusive practice may contribute not only to visibility but also to culturally sensitive recognition of marginalized subjects (Voirol, 2005).

This strategy of cultural recognition may contribute to denouncing and addressing the extreme conditions of women and children as the most affected people among indigenous displaced populations. According to the Order, gender differences play a role in the specific effects of forced displacement on indigenous peoples. In this respect, the Court quotes Order 092 of 2008:

[There is an] additional factor of discrimination that displaced women of indigenous and African descent⁶¹ suffer due to their ethnic backgrounds. In practice, this factor aggravates discrimination, risks and inequities due to gender and displacement conditions. In other words, gender risks present in armed conflict and gender aspects of internal displacement increase, exacerbate, and deepen in the case of women who belong to these ethnic groups. This situation results from the exclusion and marginalization of [minority] ethnic groups⁶² in the country, from discriminatory and racist dominant socioeconomic structures, and from the disintegration of indigenous people's social, community, and cultural networks of support as a result of displacement. Consequently, Colombian displaced women of indigenous and African descent suffer from a triple process of discrimination because they are women, have been displaced and belong to ethnic [minority] groups (Colombia, 2009, p. 15, my translation).

The recognition of this triple condition of discrimination reveals the Court's attention to the multiple power relations that affect displaced indigenous women particularly.⁶³

The Court also refers to the effects of forced displacement among indigenous children. Drawing on Order 251 of 2008, the Court refers to the differential and intensified impact of forced displacement that increases poverty existing already among indigenous families and communities. These circumstances put children at risk to labour exploitation, human trafficking and begging. In these conditions, children are at high risk of hunger, malnutrition and preventable diseases (Colombia, 2009, p. 15). Through these specific discourses, the Court alerts the State to the urgency of the ESP's formulation and implementation.

The Court's emphasis on displaced indigenous women and children in Order 004 attempts to favour their accurate recognition in the Colombian legislative framework according to their specific conditions. In addition to the named indigenous organizations, the Court draws on reports and data from institutions that work for the rights of women and children to illustrate the effects of displacement among these populations (e.g., Fundacion Dos Mundos, the UN Committee for the Rights of the Children, and the UN High Commissioner

⁶¹ I refer to African descent to translate the word *Afrodescendientes*, used by the Constitutional Court to refer to Afro-Colombians.

⁶² In the Colombian context, ethnic, *etnia* or *étnico* conveys an indigenous or cultural minority group.

⁶³ Furthermore, the Order refers to the specific risks of indigenous women's insertion in the cities such as: being victims of sexual violence, falling into networks of illicit commerce, forced begging or exploitation, and suffering from discrimination (Colombia, 2009, p. 14).

for the Refugees). By referring to the institutional discourses of these organizations, the Court permits expressive forms historically excluded in order to confer visibility to the specific experience of forced displacement among indigenous women and children. This process of visibility represents indigenous women and children in ways that attempt to recognize subaltern subjects according to their own cultural terms and experiences (Fraser, 2009; Voirol, 2005).

Furthermore, the Constitutional Court discourse on the ESP connects indigenous, national, and international human rights discourses, understandings and institutional forces in order to compel the State to address the tragedy of indigenous displacement. Order 004 establishes that the ESP's formulation and implementation must be coordinated with the Colombian State authorities on human rights: the National Inspector General, Ombudsman and Treasury Inspector (Colombia, 2009, p. 33). The Court also communicated this Order to the main Colombian indigenous organizations (ONIC and AICO) and to international human rights institutions including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Similarly, the Court requested that Norway's Council for Refugees monitor the regulation of this Order (p. 33). Thus, the ESPs can be seen as an initiative to protect indigenous peoples from forced displacement through inter-institutional efforts localized on community, local, national, and international scales.

In spite of these progressive characteristics, the very idea of the ESPs, their formulation, and implementation may also contribute to unequal power positions for indigenous peoples. As the next sections suggest, the connection of these Plans with unquestioned universal versions of human rights and development may reproduce "low intensity democracy" models and produce fixed subjects according to the category of indigenous displaced people.

4.1.1.1. 'Low Intensity Democracy' Models in the ESP

Judgment 025 emphasizes the right of displaced people to "minimum vital" needs – that is, the rights to humanitarian aid, economic reestablishment, relocation, housing, health care, and education (Colombia, 2004a, p. 23). In this Judgment, minimum rights are the responsibility of the State and a national priority protected by international legal agreements. For this reason, the State cannot dismiss these minimum rights of displaced people (pp. 75;

76). Judgment 025 also establishes the State authorities' minimum duties regarding the right of the displaced to return and re-establish themselves in their lands. These duties include: *not to coerce or force* people to return to their original place of residence; *not to prevent* displaced people from returning to their original place of residence or re-establishing themselves in other places; to accurately *inform* displaced people about safety conditions in the case of a return to their original place of residence; to ensure safety and socioeconomic *assistance* for return or reestablishment; to *avoid return or resettlement* when any of these actions expose the displaced to risk; and to *provide the support* and necessary resources to protect the return and economic autonomy of displaced populations (pp. 79; 80). The passivity of the State in relation to displacement is noteworthy in this discourse of minimum rights: the State's role seems reduced to 'not to coerce or force', 'not to prevent', 'inform', 'assist', 'avoid return', or 'provide support to return'. These roles situate the State as an observer whose main actions would be to mitigate – instead of preventing or eradicating – a human rights tragedy.

Furthermore, Order 185 of 2004, which regulates Judgment 025, reinforces the State's minimum rights discourse in addressing indigenous people's forced displacement. Order 185 emphasizes the need to design and implement a policy to protect displaced people. Among other regulations, this policy should propose actions to ensure that displaced people enjoy minimum rights, notably their right to life and security (Colombia, 2004b). This Order suggests concrete actions for the State to prevent forced displacement in zones at high risk and to warn communities about displacement risks. Similarly, this Order defines measures for the State's attention to displaced populations; includes a focus on prevention; and creates programs to protect subjects of special Constitutional protection – namely women, children, elders, indigenous, and disabled people (Colombia, 2004b, p. 3). Thus, although Judgment 025 initially acknowledges the importance of these subjects' economic, cultural, and social rights (e.g., housing, health and education), subsequent Orders that regulate this Judgment (such as Order 185) focus exclusively on political and civil rights such as life and security.

This reduction of the State's duties and active roles regarding social problems can be seen as a form of "low intensity democracy" which focuses on the State's sole recognition of basic, civil, and political rights (Santos, 1997). In "low intensity democracy" models, the State leaves aside comprehensive – cultural, economic, and political – aspirations of humanity and notions of human dignity (Santos, 1997, p. 21). Within this model, the State acknowledges a

minimum number of rights while private agents address a broader set of rights or situations. This orientation is perfectly coherent with neoliberal views that reduce the State's duties.

Judgment 025's emphasis on minimum rights affects the State's ability to recognize more comprehensive rights of displaced people. Although this Judgment exhorts the State to fully recognize economic, social, and cultural rights, its mechanisms to identify and address the facts that violate these rights are not exhaustive. Indeed, Orders that regulate actions related to this Judgment exclusively emphasize political and civil rights. This lack of correspondence between discursive mechanisms and implementation measures affects the impact of Judgment 025 on structural causes of displacement such as economic redistribution and access to land, which are not even mentioned in this Judgment.

The decontextualized character of the Constitutional Court's view on forced displacement contrasts with studies that document displacement as a structural phenomenon that has existed in Colombia since the 1940s (see for instance Guzmán Campos, Fals-Borda and Umaña Luna, 2005; Ortiz, 1990; Pécaut, 1976; 1999; Sánchez, 2004; Sánchez and Meertens, 1983;). Mosquera Rosero-Labbé documents a direct connection between contemporary forced displacement in Colombia and the 1945-1965 historical period known as *La Violencia* (the Violence). This author suggests that at least 393,348 plots were abandoned by peasants and started belonging to new owners during *La Violencia* (Oquist, 1978, cited in Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2005, p. 80). As a result of forced displacements from the rural areas to the cities, Colombian urban population increased from 38.9 % in 1951 to 52.2% in 1964 (Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2005). In short, the contemporary concentration of Colombian population in urban areas and the relative low occupation of fertile rural zones are highly influenced by historical waves of forced displacement. In contrast, Judgment 025 refers to forced displacement as a rights problem starting in the 1980s (Colombia, 2004, p. 34). Similarly, this Judgment leaves aside causes of forced displacement such as economic inequalities, land access, concentration of wealth, or disputes over land distribution.

Several authors have documented the economic and political causes associated to the accumulation of power through the access of land. According to Ruiz,

Forced displacement is not due solely to the presence of armed agents. Instead, forced displacement is linked to land tenure and to the interests of grand landowners. According to some researchers, violence is a means that facilitates the expropriation of land to undertake exploitative livestock and, to a lesser proportion, industrial production, commerce, and construction of infrastructure

megaprojects. There is thus a relationship between forced displacement, violence, and land appropriation as a result of violence exerted on rural population (Molano, 2000; Codhes, 2003; Reyes, 1995; Ruiz, 2008, cited in Ruiz, 2011, p. 143, my translation).

Similarly, in an interview conducted by Peace Brigades International (2010), a member of the ONIC points out the construction of megaprojects of infrastructure (highways, dams, mines, and so on) as a main cause of forced displacement among indigenous communities. These projects have attracted legal and illegal military and economic forces to the indigenous reserves, forcing their inhabitants to displacement or territorial confinement (PBI, 2010). In contrast with these complex views of displacement, Judgment 025 emphasizes the State's administrative and technical procedures of humanitarian emergency as the main mechanisms to address this situation. This view of the Court reduces the intensity of State actions to effectively address indigenous people's land protection and redistribution, which is the main cause of their forced displacement.

In contrast with Judgment 025, Order 004 refers – at least summarily – to the centrality of territorial conflicts in indigenous displacement:

Non-indigenous agents' interest in indigenous land is related to several factors: their [indigenous lands'] natural resources, their strategic military value, their economic value, and their distance from urban centers. Agents interested in indigenous lands may be armed or non-armed actors, legal or illegal, and they are often closely related. Internal conflicts are violently solved, to the detriment of indigenous people, which implies grave violations to human rights and international humanitarian law because indigenous people are involved in a conflict alien to them (Colombia, 2009, p. 12, my translation)

In spite of this detailed explanation, this document is unclear on measures for territorial redistribution among indigenous communities. As a result, despite the importance of territorial conflicts as the main cause of forced displacement, Order 004 postpones decisions on this topic to later discussions conducted by the national government.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ In accordance with Judgment 025 and Orders 004 and 008, the Colombian State approved Law 1448 in November 2011. This law, publicly disseminated as the Law of Victims, establishes mechanisms for the State to integrally address, assist, and restore victims of the internal armed conflict. For the very first time in the Colombian legislation, this law acknowledged the existence of an internal armed conflict and of massive processes of forced displacement and land dispossession and abandonment (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013., p. 123). The Law of Victims established the right of displaced people to land restitution, defined land restoration as a priority of the conflict victims' integral reparation, proposed progressive means to re-establish the victims' ways of life, regulated the stability and sustainability of their return, established property titles as a means of restitution, and referred to participatory mechanisms to prevent forced displacement and support the reintegration of displaced communities. This law also established the national Constitution as the main framework to acknowledge victims of displacement and dispossession. In particular, this law conferred priority to the most vulnerable victims such as subjects with a specific tie to the land and especially protected by

Furthermore, Order 004 establishes that the ESP should contain elements to protect traditional territories from the effects of war or from violent land dispossession (Colombia, 2009, p. 35). However, at least in the short term, the ESPs cannot effectively influence accurate measures that reduce territorial conflicts. Given the number and diversity of indigenous groups taking part in the ESP, these Plans may only produce results for territorial policies in the long term. To illustrate, three years after issuing Order 004, only four indigenous groups started to implement their ESP in 2012. For several indigenous groups, threats of displacement and disadvantaged positions to defend their territories have persisted throughout the formulation and implementation of the ESP. These threats increase these groups' risk of disappearance. In short, the ESPs are insufficient for the effective and immediate protection of indigenous lands threatened by the current armed conflict.

Accordingly, Order 004 may constitute a kind of 'soft law' that coexists with the lack of explicit policies on exploitation, ownership, and land redistribution for indigenous people (Ramos, 2002, p. 266; Stavenhagen, 2011, p. 152). It can be argued that this Order focuses on cultural recognition and on civil and political rights at the expense of economic rights. Order 004 exemplifies how the discourse of human rights coexists with models that defer economic transformations critical to overcome structural forms of marginalization. In view of these characteristics, the ESP may contribute to models that lack coordination between three dimensions of social justice: cultural recognition, political representation, and economic redistribution (see Fraser, 2000; 2009). Although these Plans' legal documents acknowledge the voices of indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, their lack of specific measures to redistribute land and resources among indigenous peoples creates disjunctures between these three dimensions of social justice. In the contemporary global conjuncture, in which transnational forces and ideas continuously supersede the State's control, an exclusive focus on cultural recognition or political representation may favour neoliberal forces that affect

the law (p. 126). Although non explicit, this last reference may include displaced indigenous people and their reserves. In spite of these advancements, several reports (such as the UNPD 2011 National Report on Human Development) still suggest the need for accurate norms, strategies, institutional coordination and budget to specifically favour indigenous peoples affected by the internal conflict. The 2011 UNDPD report reiterates the need for a particular focus on indigenous peoples according to their own institutions and specific problems (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013, pp. 174-175). Given its recent promulgation and complex processes of implementation, the effects of the Law of Victims among indigenous people are still matters of research.

indigenous people's integrity. The lack of balance between cultural, economic, and political topics may lead to incomplete versions of justice, deepening existing inequalities or producing new ones.

4.1.1.2. The Production of Displaced Subjects through Human Rights Discourses

In Chapter Two, I explained how human rights discourses produce their own agents, which contributes to depoliticizing or dismissing the agency of marginal subjects (Brown, 1995; Grewal, 2005). Similarly, I discussed the relationship of mutual interdependence between individuals and power structures such as the State (Foucault, 1982). In this Chapter, I analyze how ESP's legal framework produces new categories of subjects according to the discursive logics of the Colombian State.

Law 387 of 1997 constitutes the State's main legal mechanism that produces discourses on displaced subjects. This law defines the displaced as:

[subjects] forced to migrate within the national territory, leaving their place of residence or daily economic activities due to violations or direct threats to their physical integrity, safety, or personal freedoms as a result of one (or several) of these situations: internal armed conflict, internal disturbances and tensions, generalized violence, massive violations of human rights, infractions of international humanitarian law, and other circumstances emanating from these situations, which currently alter or have the potential to alter the public order (Colombia, 1997, p. 2 my translation).

This law defines displaced people as subjects who have experienced human rights violations. In accordance with this law, displaced people can be identified only within an international and national human rights framework.

This view on displaced subjects played a central role in the 2006 "Integral Plan to Support Indigenous Communities at High Risk of Vulnerability and Risk of Disappearing" (Colombia, 2009). As I explain below, this Integral Plan highly influenced Order 004. This Integral Plan resulted "*from research aimed to structure a program on food security*" (Colombia, 2009, p. 18, my translation, original emphasis). Drawing on statistical data and on food security variables, this Plan classified 1,121 indigenous communities into five levels according to their vulnerability or risk (p. 18). The Integral Plan identified 165 communities at risk. These communities belong to 34 ethnic groups and number approximately 35,000 people distributed in 14 provinces and 24 municipalities (p. 19). This Integral Plan identified seven areas of immediate action to displaced indigenous communities: food security, habitat and environmental improvement, training on community organization skills, basic sanitation and

quality of drinking water, improvement of school infrastructure and resources, appropriate health care for indigenous people, and legalizing and enlarging reserves. In short, the Integral Plan categorized indigenous ‘vulnerable’ populations according to their indexes of unsatisfied material needs.

Several factors reveal certain influences of the 2006 Integral Plan on the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans. Order 004 takes from the Integral Plan central topics such as habitat and environmental improvement, organization, health, and territorial issues. Similarly, the initial number of ESP beneficiary peoples (34)⁶⁵ corresponds to the number of groups identified in the Integral Plan. Indeed, fourteen of the peoples included in the ESP were also acknowledged in the Integral Plan. In other words, the Integral Plan’s standardized indicators on material needs may have influenced the inclusion or exclusion of some indigenous group as an ESP beneficiary.

This process of defining the ESP’s beneficiaries has entailed complex consequences for indigenous peoples. The *Organización de los pueblos indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana* (Organization of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples or OPIAC) suggests that “not all peoples included in Order 004 require urgent safeguarding plans. There are other peoples in far more serious situations that will not have access to special attention – notably those located on the border of Venezuela and Brazil” (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 22 my translation). According to the OPIAC, the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans focus only on indigenous people who became visible to the Court through the Integral Plan and other State programs (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 22). Several Amazonian indigenous peoples at risk of forced displacement (e.g., the Muinane, one of the Peoples of the Centre) have remained excluded from the ESPs ordered by the Constitutional Court (Cabria Medina et al., 2011). The Global Justice Program report also confirms that several indigenous peoples at risk of displacement were excluded from the ESPs. In view of this exclusion, the report suggests that “the obligation of the State to protect indigenous peoples cannot only be restricted to the 34 peoples listed by the Court” (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, pp. 14-15). By defining their beneficiary population through State methods distant from indigenous communities’ contexts, the ESP excluded several indigenous

⁶⁵ The Constitutional Court’s Order 382 increased the number of ESP beneficiary peoples from 34 to 36 in of 2010.

groups actually threatened by forced displacement. Influenced by recommendations of indigenous organizations (including the OPIAC) and monitoring institutions, the Colombian government later extended the Ethnic Safeguarding Plans to more than 73 Colombian indigenous groups (Colombia, 2012, p. 8). These organizations and institutions have started challenging the assumption that “normal science” drawn from unquestioned statistical methods can determine who is included or excluded as a subject entitled to rights recognition (see Fraser, 2009).

These challenges focus precisely on how the State’s lack of knowledge on indigenous peoples has caused its inaccurate attention to displaced indigenous groups (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 22). The OPIAC refers to a “statistical genocide” of indigenous Amazonian peoples, given the lack of demographical information on several of these peoples (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 9). According to the Colombian Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), geographical isolation hindered gathering information on this population during the national population census of 2005 (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 9). By assuming statistically incomplete methods as the accurate mechanisms to define the ESP beneficiaries, the Court and the State may have reinforced the exclusion of several Amazonian indigenous groups seriously threatened by forced displacement. In this way, unquestioned methods used to produce subjects of rights can produce or intensify marginalization among disenfranchised subjects. As the next section discusses, universal discourses of development may have also influenced these decontextualized views on indigenous displacement.

4.1.2. Universal Discourses of Development in the ESP: from Modernization to Participatory Approaches

In Chapter Two, I suggested that the ESPs are mainly related to the modernization and participatory development paradigms. Judgment 025 analyzes forced displacement through development processes such as economic stability, indexes of material improvement, and humanitarian aid. Order 004 critically revises this orientation and proposes more participatory and culturally sensitive processes to address the specificity of displacement among indigenous groups. Despite these culturally progressive characteristics, the ESP’s legal discourses and implementation processes are problematically articulated with universal discourses of development.

4.1.2.1. The Modernization Paradigm of Development in the ESP's Legal Framework

Judgment 025 establishes humanitarian aid, socioeconomic stability, and geographical resettlement as the main elements of the national policy on forced displacement. Since this Judgment understands forced displacement as a “situation of emergency,” humanitarian aid arises as the main strategy to address this phenomenon. Judgment 025 takes up the main demands of displaced populations and emphasizes the need for humanitarian aid to promote economic stability, housing, relocation, productivity, and education (Colombia, 2004b, p. 17). In this respect, the Court denounces the State’s inadequate humanitarian attention to the displaced. The Court asserts that “61% of displaced people did not receive any government help between January 2000 and June 2001” (Colombia, 2004a, p. 50, my translation). Between 1998 and 2002, only 30.5% of families and 24.12% of individuals legally registered as displaced received humanitarian aid (Colombia, 2004a, p. 50). Furthermore, Judgment 025 uses development and poverty indexes to justify the urgent need for humanitarian aid among displaced people. To illustrate, Judgment 025 refers to the situation of displaced people through indexes of unsatisfied basic needs (92%), extreme poverty (80%), inadequate housing (63.5%), and access to basic public services (49%). This judgment also refers to topics common to the modernization paradigm of development such as health and nutrition needs, minimum food standards, problems of underweight, attention deficit disorders, predispositions to diseases, and an increase in morbidity (Colombia, 2004b, p. 45).

Although humanitarian aid and these measurable indexes are important for the State’s attention to forced displacement, this quantitative development discourse reduces the complexity and heterogeneous character of displaced populations. This reiterated use of the need for emergency aid in Judgment 025 illustrates exercises of power produced through development discourses. In this respect, Escobar suggests that development has become effective through hegemonic forms of representation that construct “the poor and underdeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects, based on the privilege of the representers.” (1995, p. 53). Representations based on modernization development discourses homogenize the complexity and diversity of Third World peoples through statistic means and scientific discourses. As a result, “a squatter in Mexico City, a Nepalese peasant, a Tuareg nomad become equivalent to each other as poor and underdeveloped” (Escobar, 1995, p. 54).

Thus, modernization development produces signifiers such as the “poor,” “illiterate,” or “displaced” in the ESP case. Articulated through scientific means, these signifiers seem “impossible to sunder” (Escobar, 1995, p. 54).

In the ESP legal framework, these development discursive strategies influence relations of power between displaced subjects and the State. Judgment 025’s emphasis on humanitarian aid reduces the State’s role to conjunctural and measurable actions in situations of emergency. Rather than enabling communities to identify and propose solutions to their own problems, this Judgment reduced displaced communities to the sum of vulnerable individuals who passively receive external assistance to overcome their material needs. This legal framework mobilizes development discourses in ways that naturalize external aid as the only means to eradicate marginalization among displaced people, dismissing the latter’s agency. These unequal relations constrain the possibilities of displaced indigenous people to propose means to overcome marginality according to their situated knowledges and epistemologies.

These development discourses are also evident in the emphasis of Judgment 025 on socioeconomic stability as the main means to address the displaced populations. The Court refers to the need to train displaced people to undertake economically productive projects (Colombia, 2004a, p. 19). The Judgment compels the State to define the concrete and reasonable possibilities of people affected by displacement to take part in collective productive projects and to generate the income necessary for their autonomous economic subsistence (Colombia, 2004a, p. 25).

Accordingly, Judgment 025 can be seen as a legal mechanism that normalizes State economic-centred views for addressing forced displacement. In this respect, Judgment 025 establishes that

authorities are obliged – by the means that they estimate necessary – to correct visible social inequities, to facilitate *inclusion and participation* of weak, marginal and vulnerable sectors of society into the *economic and social life of the nation*, and to *stimulate the progressive improvement of the material living conditions* among the lowest sectors of society (Colombia, 2004, p. 68, my translation and emphasis).

Given the lack of specificity on these means of “improvement,” dominant State and Colombian *mestizo* views on development become implicitly the main mechanisms to stimulate material progress. Indeed, according to this Judgment, all displaced groups are seen as equally able to integrate into the “economic and social life of the nation” regardless of their

cultural differences. In other words, through Judgment 025, the Court spreads State dominant understandings of “material progressive improvement” as an unavoidable process for all groups.

These arguments can be compared to the discourse of the right to development that naturalizes Western and State views as the only existing or valid means to produce material improvement. International discourses see the right to development as a universal “inalienable human right” used to struggle against poverty (Cox, 2009; United Nations, 2000; 2011, pp. 3, 5). Among indigenous people, the right to development may create new impediments to community autonomy. These impediments can increase in the marginal positions of displaced indigenous peoples. Although international and national legislations have established mechanisms to ensure that indigenous people express their own goals and means of economic improvement (e.g., the right to self-determination or the right to informed consent), modernization views of development dominate in dialogues between indigenous and State development agents. Critics suggest that in processes that seek to obtain informed consent on development programs, indigenous people have little or no control over the conditions of dialogue (Burguer, 2011). The absence of formal spaces for dialogue between States and indigenous peoples – free from coercion and manipulation, and oriented toward understanding the impact of development in indigenous territories – constitutes a main obstacle to indigenous peoples to exert their right to free consent or agreement (Burger, 2011, p. 49).

In the case of displaced indigenous people, their positions of dispossession affect their ability to resist the Colombian State’s standardized views of “progressive material improvement.” In these conditions, the dominance of State visions of development according to mainstream (Western and *mestizo* Colombian) cultures leaves little room for the rights of peoples to conceive or propose material improvement differently.

For instance, as I discuss in Chapter Five, the People of the Center conceive development through the notion of abundance. Rather than as an individual process aimed at surpassing scarcity through economic growth, the People of the Centre see abundance as a continuous construction of abilities oriented toward sharing the benefits of collective work. Other alternative views on material improvement in the Latin American context include for instance the Andean notion of *buen vivir* (good living) or peasant’s practices of collective solidarity (see Gudynas and Acosta, 2011; Hidalgo Flor, 2011; Larrea, 2010). Articulations

between human rights and development in Judgment 025 may dismiss these alternative visions of material improvement. As a result, the discourse of the right to standardized views of development undermines the autonomy of groups unwilling to take part in “progressive improvement of material conditions” defined by the State, or the rights of groups aspiring to propose their own goals and cultural practices of material improvement.

Consequently, spreading the State’s views on “progressive material improvement” may influence forms of epistemic violence among indigenous peoples (Spivak, 1994). Indigenous economic knowledges and practices can be easily rejected, devalued, or assimilated in unequal relations mainly guided by hegemonic State views of development. With few possibilities to transform their situations according to their own cultural practices, displaced indigenous groups can barely resist State standard views on productivity. In short, Judgment 025 naturalizes State models on productivity and progressive material improvement as a legal duty, which may contribute to epistemic inequalities in between the State and displaced indigenous groups.

The articulation between human rights and development can be evident in the ESP’s processes of implementation. In some cases, the Colombian government has delegated consultations with indigenous participants in the ESP to State economic institutions such as the National Agency of Hydrocarbons – ANH (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 31; 40). The ANH is responsible for evaluating territories to increase Colombian competitiveness in the international oil and mineral market in order to attract external investment (Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos, 2014). This articulation between a human rights plan and a national development agent may threaten indigenous people’s territorial integrity. ESP consultation processes led by this Agency may benefit the State’s interests of producing economic growth by attracting international investment through the exploitation of mineral resources in indigenous lands. Thus, instead of reducing conflicts over indigenous lands – acknowledged as main causes of displacement – the articulation between human rights and development may deepen its causes. In view of these situations, institutions that monitor the ESP’s implementation suggest to substitute the action of the ANH by national government employees and institutions more directly connected with the rights of indigenous peoples. This suggestion aims to achieve more clear and equitable processes of consultation and negotiation with indigenous communities (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 30). Indeed, the lack of clarity

concerning the processes of prior consultation with displaced indigenous communities constitutes one main problem in the ESP legal framework.

Apart from establishing the right to development, other modernization development practices are present in Order 004 of 2009. Among other measures, this Order refers to the need to harmonize the ESP's formulation and implementation with other Plans related to the national public policy on displaced indigenous people (Colombia, 2009, p. 29). One of this policy's documents (the Integral Plan to Support Indigenous Communities at High Risk of Vulnerability and Risk of Disappearing) establishes that plans focused on displaced populations must be included in Development Plans⁶⁶ of each province and municipality involved (Colombia, 2008, p. 19).

This interpretation may have influenced the Ministry of Internal Affairs' practice of dividing the same displaced indigenous group into different ESP chapters according to its multiple locations (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 15). In the Witoto case, for instance, the State currently conducts nine different chapters according to the localization of this group's members in nine different municipalities of four provinces.⁶⁷ Each community independently forms its own ESP chapter. In view of these situations, the Global Justice Observatory suggests searching for alternatives and solutions to coordinate actions between the municipalities, provinces and nations, notably for indigenous peoples who live in more than one province or municipality (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010). In these cases, indigenous people's unity should be a priority because the fragmentation of the ESP into sub-plans "is completely contrary to the purpose of the Plan, which is supposed to fortify the unity and integrity of the indigenous groups as such" (p. 14). These means of formulating and

⁶⁶ The Colombian National Planning Department (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, DNP) defines a Development Plan as the document that guides the actions of different institutional actors of a given territory (province or city) for the duration of a government term. The DNP states: "Development Plans must reflect the commitments made to the public by current governors prior to being elected. Furthermore, these Plans must ensure the continuity of strategic programs and projects started by previous governors or mayors, must include community initiatives, and must utilize the policies, programs, initiatives, and instruments of national and regional governmental institutions.... Each Development Plan must include its own evaluation indicators and monitoring strategies" (Colombia, 2007, pp. 6; 23, my translation).

⁶⁷ The Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan has nine chapters situated in the Putumayo province (approximately 3,671 people), La Chorrera (approximately 2,425 people), Araracuara (approximately 1,200 people), Leticia (approximately 2,300 people), the Amazonian Trapezoid (approximately 120 people), Villavicencio (approximately 80 people), Florencia (approximately 800 people), Solano (approximately 496 people), and San Rafael, where there are approximately 22 Witoto communities (Colombia, 2012, pp. 150-154). This dissertation focuses on the Leticia Chapter of the Witoto ESP.

implementing the ESPs may influence indigenous peoples' fragmentation, intensifying their vulnerability to the conflict.

Furthermore, the State establishes that each ESP Chapter must be "articulated and implemented within integral unified Plans of Attention to Displaced People (PIU)" conducted by each municipality independently (SNAIPD, 2011, quoted in Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 36). This structure creates divisions between different communities of an indigenous group. By privileging the non-indigenous geographical or governmental divisions over indigenous unity, the implementation of the ESP through territorial Development Plans may lead to the fragmentation of indigenous peoples. In this regard, one of the monitoring reports asserts:

Although it is important to involve the territorial entities in the formulation of the Plans and especially in their implementation, coordination between institutes must be adapted to indigenous peoples and not the inverse. The loss of unity and fractioning of their organizations constitutes one main risk to the integrity of indigenous peoples (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 35, my translation).

This process duplicates the work of indigenous group members located in several places and increases their risk of extinction.

Summarizing, the articulation between development and human rights in the ESP is evident in the described views of displaced people as aid-recipients, in epistemological inequalities present during the implementation processes, in the State's division of the ESP in Chapters, and in the subordination of these Plans to State development institutions. Disempowerment and fragmentation that may emerge from this articulation suggest that, rather than being equally beneficial to everyone, human rights and development discourses may influence new inequalities in their processes of localization.

4.1.2.2. Participatory Development in the ESP's Legal Framework

In Chapter Two, I described how participatory development focuses on horizontal dialogues for social change that involve local cultures and knowledges (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008; Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2006). These dialogues may produce social transformations relevant to local contexts through the open and egalitarian participation of local subjects. This form of development supposes that these local agents are in conditions to coordinate their actions with regional, national, and transnational institutions or agents (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011).

Order 004 can be seen as a participatory version of Judgment 025 and other legal documents that regulate the attention to displaced indigenous people. This Constitutional Order establishes that, among their “minimal conditions of implementation,” the ESP should “be consulted with the authorities of each ethnic beneficiary group ... to allow participation in effective and respectful ways with ethno-cultural diversity” (p. 27, my translation). Similarly, the ESP should contain proposals to ensure specific attention to people already displaced (Colombia, 2009, p. 27). These Plans must foresee mechanisms to defend community leadership and to strengthen the cultural and social integrity of their beneficiary ethnic groups (Colombia, 2009). Further, the Constitutional Court establishes that each of these Plans must establish measures to guarantee its future continuity and mechanisms of inter-institutional coordination between the ESP’s leaders and the local, regional, and national authorities (p. 35). In short, the ESPs foster the participation of local leaders by recognizing local indigenous cultures and providing sustained protection to indigenous groups.

Furthermore, Order 004 directly criticizes the Colombian State’s economic-centred views on indigenous people’s displacement. This Order criticizes the previously named 2006 “Integral Plan to Support Indigenous Communities at High Risk of Vulnerability and Risk of Disappearing” because it mainly uses food security indexes to analyze the situation of displaced indigenous groups (Colombia, 2009, p. 22). The Court also criticized that this Plan did not take into account the armed conflict and its impact on the forced displacement and confinement of indigenous people. Consequently, “several of the groups most severely affected by the armed conflict and forced displacement were not included in this [Integral] Plan” (2009, p. 22). After analyzing the situation of indigenous displacement in Colombia, the Court concludes that the State has shirked its constitutional obligations with serious repercussions: the State has merely produced “political documents without implementing clear practical changes” (Colombia, 2009, p. 26, my translation). Thus, not only does Order 004 propose participatory mechanisms and conditions to formulate and implement the ESPs, but it also criticizes the focus of the national policy on displacement on measurable and decontextualized indexes.

In spite of these participatory proposals and critical views associated with Order 004, the ESP's implementation may also reveal inaccurate measures to achieve an effective specific attention to indigenous displacement. Critics of the ESP implementation suggest that the

current approach to the specific prevention and attention of indigenous people's displacement contains "rhetorical allusions to the differentiated approach with no practical implications" (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 15, my translation). To illustrate, although the Constitutional Court states that the ordinary juridical system must work together with the indigenous juridical system on land access, neither the Court nor the State is clear about the necessary mechanisms to achieve such a collaboration (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 42). Similarly, in spite of the Court's recommendations, humanitarian aid does not take into account the cultural specificities of indigenous displaced people (p. 43). Other critiques refer to the ESP's "lack of clarity about how to improve, prevent and take care [of displacement] with an approach specifically focused on indigenous people" (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 44). As a result, "no differential approach exists in the current public policies of prevention and attention to forced displacement in Colombia" (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010, p. 41, my translation). It can be argued that, in the Constitutional Court's discourse on the ESPs, participation appears a means and an end in itself (Huesca, 2002), with little or no reflections and actions on how to specifically recognize the conditions of displaced indigenous people.

The ways that Order 004 addresses displaced indigenous women and children illustrate the limits of the Court's and State's approach to differentiated recognition of displaced indigenous populations. Although this Order positions indigenous women and children as the paradigmatic victims of indigenous forced displacement, it fails to offer practical steps and measures to address the needs of these specific populations (Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010). Accordingly, it can be argued that the Constitutional Court's discourse on human rights addresses women and children's forced displacement using undifferentiated views about displaced subjects.

Fraser's concept of meta-political representation is useful for analyzing the Court's misrepresentation of displaced indigenous children and women in Order 004. As suggested in Chapter Two, meta-political representation is a form of injustice that arises when State or transnational agents monopolize the representation of marginalized subjects. Restrictive political representation monopolized by the State can deny these subjects the right to be heard, thus impacting their capacity to struggle (Fraser, 2009, p. 19). Meta-political representation denies the rights of subjects to have rights: through exclusionary processes of misrepresentation, "subjects excluded from one political community are included as subjects

of justice in another” (Fraser, 2009, p. 19).

In the Leticia Witoto ESP, meta-political representation has situated displaced indigenous women and children in a legally uncertain situation both at national and community levels. This state of limbo has led some community members to justify the ESP’s unequal attention to women’s needs. In one community meeting, a Leticia Witoto ESP team leader argued that this Plan was not particularly concerned with women’s needs given the pre-existence of a Constitutional Order focused on women (Order 092 of 2008). According to this leader, the Court could order the State to formulate and implement additional Plans in the future to protect displaced indigenous women, making it unnecessary or redundant to do so within the context of the ESP. Indeed, through Order 092 of 2008, the Constitutional Court compelled the State to promote thirteen programs exclusively focused on displaced women. Later, the Court Order 237 of 2008 ratified these programs as conditions for evaluating the fulfilment of public policies on women affected by forced displacement and the armed conflict. Among these programs, there is one on income generation, another on land ownership, and a third on rights protection for displaced indigenous women (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 267-268). However, as of November 2012, none of these plans had been implemented in the Leticia area. The State and Constitutional Court, probably relying upon Order 004 of 2009, assume that women’s needs were included in the ESP. Meanwhile, community leaders justify their exclusively masculine approach to the ESP based on the existence of the Court Orders specifically focused on women. Thus, the State’s lack of measures to address these populations, the Court’s lack of measures to provide them with differential attention, and the community leaders’ interpretations of these Orders have affected the possibilities of recognizing the specific rights of displaced indigenous women and children.

These injustices emerge from two human rights ironies. First, human rights discourses focus more on homogeneous and generalist understandings of human beings than on the specific needs of minority groups (Brown, 1995, p. 101). In the Court’s discourse, the ESP’s focus on generalist indigenous subjects decreases the possibilities for specific recognition of indigenous women and children. Second, international discourses of human rights confer precedence to individual conditions over group associations. This precedence affects the cohesion of groups struggling for rights (Brown, 1995, p. 98). These individualist views may

have led the ESP leaders to interpret Court Orders on the rights of displaced indigenous women (092 of 2008 and Order 237 of 2008) as legal instructions to conduct separate plans for them. Although Plans on displaced indigenous women can be perfectly compatible with – and could even reinforce – the Leticia Witoto ESP, the individualist character of the Court’s human rights discourses may have contributed to community leaders’ exclusionary interpretations. These human rights paradoxes affect the specific recognition of several marginal positions and the production of community cohesion necessary to strengthen the ESP’s formulation and implementation.

Participatory Development and Indigenous Struggles for Land Access

As with other plans drawing on the participatory development paradigm, the ESP expects to produce social change through community dialogue using open and culturally-based languages, values, and means (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008; Huesca, 2003). Although processes used to formulate the ESP may illustrate topics crucial in understanding how indigenous people experience and resist marginal conditions, powers of decision-making remain in the hands of local and national State institutions. Neither the Constitutional Order nor the Ministry of Internal Affairs is clear on the mechanisms through which the ESP can influence State policies. Furthermore, indigenous people’s lack of experience in analyzing or formulating public policies constitutes a main obstacle in this process. To overcome this obstacle, indigenous participants in the ESP need the support of external agents or of indigenous people with knowledge of juridical mechanisms. In my fieldwork, State staff, non-indigenous professionals, and indigenous people educated in the State systems have facilitated the dialogue between the State and indigenous leaders – notably the elders and community leaders. In any case, the State’s structures, knowledges, and conditions dominate this relationship, which is paradoxically aimed at indigenous autonomy.

The thorny and crucial issue of access to territory may illustrate the limited possibilities of the ESP for producing structural changes through participatory development methods. Drawing on its participatory character, these Plans bring together indigenous, local, and national authorities and landlords for dialogues on territorial access. The Court, State, and indigenous agents promoting the ESP assume that groups dominant in their territories “are willing to surrender their power” (Parpart and Veltmeyer, 2011, p. 8). However, my

ethnographic and content analyses suggest that indigenous people's influence on such political will may be hindered by the economic interests of colonizers and by State administrative procedures that subordinate indigenous Plans to State and private structures. In order to protect the integrity of the indigenous territories from the invasion of economic colonizers, this process requires clearer political will to bridge the gap between community needs, law, and implementation processes (Stavenhagen, 2011).

To illustrate, in the Leticia Witoto ESP's assessment phase, indigenous people continuously refer to their critical need for land access. Through participatory cartography, participants in this Plan identify their territorial limits and conflicts, sources of water, sacred places, and best areas to cultivate food. However, these groups require a clear State policy on land redistribution in order to maintain or broaden their territory and recover the lands occupied by capitalist colonizers in the Tikuna-Witoto reserve (e.g., livestock farmers, touristic operators, merchants, loggers, etc.). Such a policy would require that the Colombian State expropriate livestock farms or parcels dedicated to lumber or tourism. In most cases, the owners of these farms and parcels are regional mestizo economic or political leaders with considerable influence on municipal and regional institutions. Since the State asserts that the ESP must be adjusted to the Development Plans of municipal and regional institutions, a policy of land redistribution in the Leticia area would affect the interests of political and economic elites directly related to these institutions. While the ESP produces territorial policies potentially beneficial to indigenous people, local elites use their political power to ensure their land access interests. Given the subordination of the ESP to municipal and regional Development Plans within the described legal framework, local and regional political and economic elites become both transgressors and potential guarantors of indigenous people's rights to land. Under these conditions, the ESP's participatory proposals on territorial redistribution for indigenous people are unfeasible. Effective changes require challenging negotiations with political and economic structures that have historically undermined indigenous people's access to land.

In short, the participatory character of the Leticia Witoto ESP is necessary but insufficient for producing actual changes to local, regional, and national structures that influence indigenous people's marginalization. These limited possibilities for the crucial need for land access challenge the scope of the ESP's participatory character. These limited

outcomes suggest the need for explicit legal and political measures to coordinate community, local, and national institutions, interests, resources, and proposals in order to overcome indigenous people's marginal conditions.

4.2. VISIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: POSSIBILITIES OF EMANCIPATION THROUGH THE ESP

Despite the limits and contradictions described in the previous sections, the ESP legal framework and implementation processes may also offer possibilities of emancipation for displaced indigenous groups. This framework and process may contribute to make visible the specific effects of displacement on indigenous people and may favour knowledge exchanges between indigenous peoples and State institutions. This section emphasizes the potentially empowering character of the ESP despite the unequal conditions of power in which they are created and implemented. I attempt to value these Plans as rich opportunities for intercultural dialogues and experiences of cooperation between indigenous groups and the State.

Due to the lack of reliable data on indigenous displaced communities, the gravity of indigenous displacement has been invisible to the broader Colombian society (Colombia, 2009, p. 159). The ESPs may contribute to generating information on indigenous displacement, an element that Order 004 specifies as an obstacle to address this social problem.⁶⁸ As suggested in section 4.1.1., the ESP may open institutional spaces for narratives and views that may make visible indigenous women and children's specific experiences of displacement. These Plans may help the communities to produce first-hand information on their territorial conflicts. This information may be useful in contexts where indigenous people discuss their possibilities to overcome displacement through universal and indigenous versions of human rights and development. These dialogues, conducted within the ESP implementation, may constitute important sources of information to complete State knowledge of indigenous territories and their inhabitants (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012).

⁶⁸ The Court establishes in Order 004 that this lack of information is mainly due to the absence of formal complaints, documentation of individual, and collective displacements from one reserve to another or from one rural settlement to another, to the geographical dispersion of displaced people, or to the dismissal of the problem of displacement by local authorities (Colombia, 2009, p. 159). Furthermore, the low number of complaints filed by people forced into displacement due to threats, lack of confidence in State institutions, or disinformation aggravates the inaccuracy of data on indigenous displacement (p. 17).

The ESP may also favour knowledge exchange between indigenous peoples and the Colombian State. One of the main complexities in formulating and implementing these Plans is related to indigenous people's lack of knowledge of State procedures and mechanisms to rights recognition (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012). In this respect, the Organization of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples (OPIAC) points to the need to train indigenous people on human rights with a differential focus on indigenous legislations. These processes should take place within the framework of international humanitarian law and use the "law of origin" to strengthen community cohesion and organization (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 38). With these purposes, the OPIAC proposes to document indigenous plans that aim to improve indigenous communities' living conditions (namely the Life Plans).⁶⁹ Furthermore, the OPIAC proposes to reinforce indigenous political organizations, to create Amazonian institutions to share indigenous knowledge, to strengthen indigenous leaders' abilities to demand rights, to train traditional authorities in legal administrative procedures, to favour intergenerational exchange between indigenous leaders, and to take into account both written and oral forms of indigenous knowledge (Cabria Medina et al., 2011, p. 43). These proposals may favour possibilities for the State to recognize indigenous people according to their own legal knowledge in connection with international law. These proposals may also reinforce processes of cultural recognition and political representation proposed through Order 004. In these ways, the ESPs may offer an opportunity for indigenous people to learn from the State's language of rights.

Through the ESPs, the State can also learn from indigenous people. The ESPs may open possibilities for relations of "epistemic-reciprocity" on topics such as rights, development, and forced displacement (Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011). These relations may lead indigenous people and State agents to formulate and implement the ESPs in ways that may influence contextually situated and plural policies on displacement. These policies may correspond with Santos' idea of a progressive and multicultural human rights policy with

⁶⁹ In the Colombian legislation related to indigenous peoples, the Integral Life Plans (or simply Life Plans) are documents in which indigenous communities define through participation their own priorities on endogenous development according to national, international, and indigenous laws. These Plans are conceived as a collective right of indigenous peoples, communities, reserves, or organizations (Muyuy Jacanamejoy, 2012, p. 24). The Life Plans are one main legal mechanism through which indigenous organizations enter into dialogue with local and regional State development institutions.

global scope and local legitimacy (1997, p. 13). This policy seeks to understand how alternative non-Western knowledges and rights practices can be innovative forces that contribute to inclusive institutional policies or decisions. The inclusion of marginalized subjects in the Court's discourse, the enlargement of the Plan beneficiary groups to 73 groups, and the continuous emphasis on a differential approach to indigenous displacement can be considered as some of these innovations. Since most of the ESPs are still in the formulation process, new possibilities of visibility and inclusion for indigenous people may emerge from the national implementation of these Plans. However, the ESPs must still overcome several problematic inequalities in order to reinforce their potentialities for indigenous peoples' possibilities of visibility, recognition, and influence on the national scale. In the next Chapter, I explore how the People of the Centre connect their indigenous knowledges to universal discourses in ways that may favour indigenous people's visibility and recognition and, at the same time, enrich the State understandings of indigenous people and forced displacement.

4.3. CONCLUSION

The analytical view of the ESP's legal framework developed in this chapter reflects complex processes that localize universal discourses of development and human rights in Colombian indigenous contexts. This localization process started with Law 387 of 1997, which produced the displaced subject at the national scale in accordance with human rights discourses. Further, the Constitutional Court invoked international law in Judgment 025, which established the rights of displaced people. The subsequent legal orders attempted to identify the specific contexts, causes, and cultural and material effects of displacement among indigenous subjects. By depicting indigenous women and children as the most affected subjects in this process, Order 004 attempted to localize national and international human rights frameworks as a means for alerting the Colombian State to the specific needs of displaced indigenous communities. These localization processes attempted to improve the recognition of the rights of displaced indigenous people in culturally sensitive terms. Localizing human rights according to indigenous people's specific terms and experiences of displacement may influence political mechanisms of representation for accurately addressing their marginality.

Despite these localizing strategies, my analysis of the key legal and para-legal documents framing the ESPs suggests that unequal power relations remain dominant in the ESP's legal framework and implementation processes. Influenced by development discourses, Judgment 025 identified the impacts of the historical socioeconomic injustices caused by displacement as an emergency. This Judgment's main proposals emphasized humanitarian aid and prioritized recognition of civil and political rights over cultural and economic ones. Similarly, Order 004's focus on community participation and cultural recognition does not include clear mechanisms of economic redistribution or land access – the main cause of forced displacement. This imbalance between cultural, political, and economic dimensions of justice reproduces models of “low intensity democracy,” leaving untouched the historical and economic causes of displacement. Furthermore, although Order 004 criticizes the statistical mechanisms of the displacement policy ruling prior to 2009, its procedures for defining the ESP's beneficiary groups have also been exclusionary for several displaced indigenous groups. Documents monitoring the ESP's implementation reveal that such procedures misrepresent indigenous people's realities of displacement. Lastly, the Court's emphasis on women and children as paradigmatic victims of forced displacement contrasts with the lack of explicit measures to address these populations. This lack has influenced exclusionary interpretations of the law with prejudice for women and children on the national and community scales.

Further, the unquestioned dominance of development discourse in the State's views on marginal subjects normalizes this universal discourse as the natural authority on indigenous people's lives. The State's assertion of development as a right may reduce indigenous people's possibilities to practice their own mechanisms for improving their living conditions. Articulated as the right to development, universal discourses of development and human rights may reproduce historical practices of “epistemic violence” under which it is difficult for subaltern subjects to defend their ideas or positions, even in participatory communication spaces. This form of violence may undermine the group's autonomy and deepen the conflicts that cause displacement.

These disempowering results of the ESP may have emerged from the Court's use of delocalized human rights and development discourses in its attempt to understand all situations equally and fully (Haraway, 1991, p. 191). State indexes and measures for analyzing

and addressing displacement may have formalized decontextualized views on indigenous displacement, leading to inaccurate recognition of indigenous groups at risk. Because they were produced from unmarked and ahistorical positions that classify all situations equally and from the top down, these indexes and measures may therefore have increased inequalities between displaced populations.

However, the ESPs also constitute possibilities for knowledge exchange between the State and indigenous people. A greater visibility of indigenous displacement may raise public consciousness on the contemporaneous exacerbation of indigenous people's marginality in the broader Colombian society. This public consciousness could facilitate solidarity links between indigenous groups, social movements, and institutions to demand appropriate State actions for addressing, preventing, and stopping the structural causes of forced displacement. Similarly, knowledge exchange may facilitate intercultural dialogues that could enrich the Colombian State's understandings of human rights and development. Indigenous knowledges on these topics could influence contextually and culturally appropriate State concepts, practices, and policies for respecting human dignity according to indigenous people's understandings and practices. These knowledge exchanges may create among State agents the political will necessary to produce the inter-institutional actions required to address topics critical to indigenous groups such as territorial distribution.

In accordance with these ideas, some indigenous leaders of the Leticia Witoto ESP refuse to see this Plan as merely another development program for receiving external aid. In a plenary of the Leticia Witoto ESP team, an indigenous woman leader suggests that this Plan may constitute an intercultural dialogue to "complement the government's knowledge about us [indigenous people] because they know nothing about us" (my translation). This woman's words summarize this chapter's main conclusion: Although unequal and problematically connected to powerful universal discourses, the ESP has the potential to open dialogues that recognize the historically neglected and inclusive indigenous versions of justice necessary for addressing the root causes of indigenous people's marginality.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE “WORD OF LIFE AND ABUNDANCE” IN FRICTION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

“The State must acknowledge that indigenous people are not peasants – we are different, have a different identity with different practices and, hence, must be treated differently.”
(Words of a Leticia Witoto ESP leader in a community meeting, my translation)

A Witoto oral narrative tells the story of a group of wolves who entered the house of an otter elder to steal his wife and his fishing net. After the theft, the otter elder asked an orphan otter to go to the wolves’ house and verify if they had his woman and net. To do so, the elder otter provided the orphan with the “tobacco of hypnotism.” The elder advised the orphan, “Don’t say anything about me, don’t even mention me.” However, the orphan forgot the elder’s instruction when he met the wolves and told them he was there on the otter elder’s behalf. Hypnotized, the wolves allowed the orphan to take the woman and fishing net. Once the orphan left the house, the wolf elder reacted: “How did he enter here, take the female and fishing net, and no one said anything?” Then, the wolf pack headed to the otter elder’s house. Meanwhile, the orphan confessed to the otter that he had mentioned him to the wolves. The otter elder reprimanded the orphan for his action and told him, “I’ll see what I can do.” The elder asked his wife to tell the wolves that he was ill. She did so when they arrived. Sceptical, the wolves asked the wife to allow them to see the otter elder themselves. The woman agreed. To the wolves, the otter elder appeared feverish and filled with pus. Convinced of his illness, the wolves left the otter elder alone and allowed him to remain with his wife and fishing net.

This narrative suggests through allegory the ways the People of the Centre see their relationship with the State in the Leticia Witoto Ethnic Safeguarding Plan (ESP). Just like the otter elder, the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders attempt to use their indigenous knowledges – represented in the narrative as the “tobacco of hypnotism” – to recover what used to be theirs: land, political autonomy, and culturally appropriate education and health-care systems. The indigenous community leader who told me this story suggests that the highest form of indigenous power is achieved by catching someone with his own weapons. He says that “indigenous people should catch the white people with the Safeguarding Plan they propose us. . . . After being hunted several times, the prey knows the hunter and learns to defend himself against the hunter” (ESP indigenous community leader, personal communication, October 23, 2012, my translation).

The community leader's reference to this narrative suggests that the People of the Centre are conscious of both this Plan's unequal character and the possibilities that it may open for them to develop power tactics to challenge their current marginality. As described in Chapter Two, tactics refer to the power that subaltern subjects produce without subverting the order defined by subjects who manage power structures (Certeau and Giard, 1990). In this spirit, the People of the Centre attempt to mobilize their indigenous knowledges in the Leticia Witoto ESP in order to produce positions of power for their communities without subverting the conditions of this Plan. The People of the Centre attempt to creatively appropriate this Plan, even though it is mainly controlled by the State according to universal human rights and development discourses.

This chapter analyzes the People of the Centre's tactics of negotiation with universal and State human rights and development discourses in the creation of the ESP. I analyze these negotiations through the notion of friction, which refers to "the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (Tsing, 2005, p. 4). This notion allows me to focus on the multiple practices, tactics, negotiations, power relations, identity narratives, strategies, or concepts that may emerge from heterogeneous and unequal encounters across difference. This chapter focuses on frictions between two indigenous notions (the notion of abundance and the law of origin) and two universal discourses (human rights and development) in relation to the Leticia Witoto ESP. I analyze two levels of negotiation in this Plan: the People of the Centre's inter-ethnic negotiations on the community scale and their tactics of negotiation with State agents, concepts, and procedures. Drawing on feminist critical approaches to development, I analyze how power and difference define positions of subaltern agents in these negotiations (Kothari, 2002; Mohanty, 2003; Parpart, 1995; Spivak, 1994; 1999). I conduct this analysis with reference to axes of gender, generation, ethnic belonging, land access, and histories of displacement.

The chapter's first section analyzes epistemological frictions associated with generational differences. I illustrate how negotiations between different epistemologies of human rights influence intergenerational rivalries and the dominance of State visions on human rights, to the detriment of traditional indigenous legal knowledges. Consequently, these intergenerational differences have affected the authority of traditional leaders such as the knowledgeable elders.

In the second and third sections, I analyze how power circulates at the community scale according to differences of gender, ethnicity, and possibilities of land access specific to each

group's historical conditions of displacement. These latter sections focus on the notions of abundance and the law of origin respectively. Drawing on these indigenous concepts, the Witoto renamed their ESP *Monifue Kai Komuya Uai*, which means "The Word of Life and Abundance." The second section explains how the People of the Centre use the notion of abundance to connect the ESP to their symbolic world, territory, gender roles, and collective mechanisms of power. I illustrate how, given its connection with gender distinctions, the notion of abundance produces or reinforces the exclusion of indigenous women taking part in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

In the third section, I analyze the People of the Centre's law of origin. I define this indigenous knowledge of law and justice and discuss its goals, means, and spaces of exchange. I describe how the law of origin regulates the ESP's two levels of negotiation. On the first level, the Witoto have used their law of origin to renew their historical alliance with the other six Peoples of the Centre and with four additional indigenous peoples of Leticia affected by forced displacement. I describe the role of the law of origin in the production of strategic connections between the groups that negotiate with the State in the ESP. These negotiations unite peoples who differ in their ethnicity, histories of displacement, and access to land. I analyze how these negotiations intensify cultural identity processes such as the production of collective identification, ethnic boundaries, and inter-ethnic hierarchies. At the second level of negotiation, I analyze how the Leticia Witoto ESP team connects their law of origin with international law. This connection produces frictions through which the Leticia Witoto ESP team feels more empowered to struggle for their rights at both community and national scales. Drawing on this law, the Leticia Witoto ESP team demands the recognition of their rights according to their right to cultural differences.

In the fourth section, I take up the Foucauldian reflection on the production of subjects through discourses. I analyze how indigenous community leaders produced through three different but interrelated legal discourses (the law of origin, the 1991 Constitution, and the ESP) have entered into conflict, producing rivalries within communities taking part in the ESP. I discuss how frictions between these three forms of leadership have affected the Leticia Witoto ESP's legitimacy among some indigenous communities and authorities.

I conclude by discussing how power relations produced in these frictions challenge the notion of human rights and development as being equally beneficial to all communities. Intercultural negotiations analyzed in this chapter suggest that these universal discourses do not

work equally everywhere but can produce new forms of power, marginality, and difference through contact with local agents. I take up concepts of the post-development approach and the counter-hegemonic perspective on human rights to explore how the notions of abundance and the law of origin may challenge and complement these universal discourses. I argue that human rights and development can be made more just by demystifying their alleged universality, by decolonizing difference in intercultural encounters, and by considering indigenous knowledges as modern and valid epistemologies that provide alternative understandings and practices of human rights and development.

My analysis draws from the participatory observations, interviews, workshops, and documentary analyses described in Chapter Three. Although I could not observe any direct negotiations between the indigenous leaders of the Leticia Witoto ESP and State representatives, I gathered data useful for understanding these negotiations.⁷⁰ After my fieldwork, I collected through telephone or internet conversations additional information on the end of this Plan's assessment phase and on the beginning of its introduction to and adoption by State local authorities. I complement these fieldwork, documentary, and interview data through references to the ESP's monitoring documents analyzed in Chapter Four (Cabria et al., 2012; Garay Salamanca et al. 2012); through insights that several researchers have provided on the Witoto and the People of the Centre (Bríñez Pérez, 2002; Echeverri, 1997; Huérfano Belisamón, 2010; Nieto, 2006; 2010; Pineda Camacho, 2000; Preuss, 1994; Stanfield, 1998); and through data that I collected on my previous research project in the region (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011).

The chapter goals are threefold. First, I aim to analyze the complex localization of human rights discourses in the indigenous communities that take part in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Second, drawing on their concepts, narratives, and practices, I attempt to identify the logical systems of thought and forms of power that indigenous people mobilize and renew to generate this Plan. Third, I aim to identify how indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP appropriate, challenge, and may eventually complement human rights and development discourses in order to produce more inclusive intercultural dialogues on these topics.

⁷⁰ The Ministry of Internal Affairs staff had planned an encounter with the Leticia Witoto ESP team for October 2012, but it was postponed several times until December 2012, when I had already left the fieldwork.

5.1. THE LETICIA WITOTO ESP: A HISTORY OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRICTIONS

According to oral testimonies, the first Leticia Witoto ESP team was formed in 2011, as a result of a project called Strengthening the Abilities of Indigenous Organizations on Project Management. This project was part of the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID) Initiative for Conservation in the Andean Amazon (USAID, 2013). According to one of the leaders of this project who is currently an ESP *promotor comunitario* (community leader), USAID sought to prevent indigenous people from abandoning their indigenous customs and leaving their territory. This approximately \$80,000 CAD project promoted political autonomy, territory conservation, equal access to rights, education and tourism programs, and training on public policies for indigenous people. This project's activities helped to consolidate a multi-ethnic group of leaders who became the basis of the indigenous team currently working on the Leticia Witoto ESP. Thus, a U.S. development agency influenced the creation of the multi-ethnic organization that currently struggles for indigenous people's rights in the ESP.

The Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs started promoting the Leticia Witoto ESP in May 2011. Although the Ministry staff customarily contacts indigenous associations to lead these Plans, they chose a former indigenous governor of the 11th kilometre to coordinate the Leticia Witoto Plan. "We do not even understand why they chose me," the former governor says (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation).⁷¹ According to this and other leaders, the Ministry probably chose him because the *Asociación Zonal de Consejo de Autoridades Indígenas de Tradición Autóctona* (Zonal Association of Indigenous Councils of the Amazonian Trapezoid, or AZCAITA) had problems in the management of State development projects previously implemented in the area. As I will discuss below (in section 5.3.3), this choice has led to frictions between the ESP team leaders and the indigenous authorities already existing in the Leticia area.

As a result of this contact, since 2011, new economic and political relations of power emerged between the State and the Leticia Witoto ESP indigenous leaders. The Direction of Indigenous Affairs of the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs has financially and technically

⁷¹ Probably in his 50s, this former governor is the current coordinator of the Leticia Witoto ESP team. His main function is to establish and maintain direct connection between the team and the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Given these functions, the ESP team sees the coordinator as the plan manager rather than as a knowledgeable leader.

supported this process. This Direction asks indigenous people to adjust their Plans to conform to State budget conditions and legal procedures. Therefore, in order to understand, propose, and implement their ESP, the Witoto and their allies have entered a foreign domain predominantly coded in Western legal terms written in Spanish.

Understanding and approaching this technical, juridical, and administrative knowledge constitutes a significant challenge for indigenous people in their endeavours to claim their rights. One of the ESP team's leaders suggests that these conditions have entailed a double difficulty for indigenous people. In order to accurately create this Plan, "We have had to learn from our own culture and we must know how the 'white people' think or know," he says (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, September 8, 2012, my translation). The Colombian State's requests have led the ESP leaders both to better understand their own culture (this learning process has been highly affected by migration and forced displacement) and to appropriate the national and international language and procedures of human rights that support these Plans.

Epistemological frictions between the listening and speaking practices of indigenous and State agents have played a central role in this appropriation process. In this respect, an indigenous community leader suggests the following:

Negotiation with white people is difficult because they do not know how to listen. When we speak with the staff of the Ministry [of Internal Affairs], we tell them, "We're going to speak and then you'll listen, and then you're going to speak and we're going to listen to you." However, they are used to just speaking or to thinking about what to say while we speak. We cannot arrive at agreements through such a practice. . . . Even if we speak the same language, the other [person] does not understand what you mean (ESP community leader, interview, November 12, 2012, my translation).

In other words, negotiations with the State require mutual understanding between interlocutors who differ both in their cultural concepts and in their practices of speaking and listening. The quotation above suggests that the Leticia Witoto ESP emerges from frictions between the Colombian State and the People of the Centre's codes, practices, and habits of knowledge exchange.

These frictions accentuate the disadvantaged position of indigenous participants in this Plan. Since the very beginning of their ESP, the Leticia Witoto leaders recognized that they needed external support to understand the Plan and to start developing it. After the Ministry contacted them in May 2011, the Leticia Witoto ESP proposed a work plan and a 35-member work team that combined indigenous and non-indigenous knowledges and leader positions. The team was structured into four committees: the first was formed by eight traditional

knowledgeable elders; a second committee consisted of four coordinators; and a third technical and thematic committee included seven members to work on indigenous topics such as territory, health, autonomy and indigenous justice, education, environment and productive activities, culture, and infrastructure (Uitoto, 2012). A fourth committee consisting of three members who would rotate monthly, were to provide professional support. This latter committee would comprise professionals qualified in non-indigenous topics such as State law, history, human sciences, health, education, environmental issues, economics, social sciences, and systems of geographical information (Uitoto, 2012, p. 3). The characteristics of this proposed fourth committee reveal that the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders saw technical non-indigenous knowledge as an indispensable requirement to fulfill the Ministry conditions. It can be argued that, like other plans influenced by universal development discourses, the ESPs foster transfer of technical knowledge between non-indigenous professionals and indigenous or local leaders. In this exchange, non-indigenous technical knowledge appeared to be a “natural helper” for indigenous people to overcome their marginal positions.

The Ministry staff rejected this work plan in November 2011. The State employees felt authorized to deny the “indigenous character” of the proposal, even though it had been discussed in the indigenous communities and approved by their authorities. According to the Plan’s coordinator, the Ministry employees found the structure “outdated and not functional.” In their view, the proposal surpassed the Ministry budget (it was an approximately \$149,000 CAD proposal). Further, the Ministry staff did not acknowledge the work plan as an indigenous production: “This is very academic, this is not an indigenous proposal,” the State employees argued (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation). As a result, in their search for rights recognition and autonomy, indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP have been compelled to follow the State’s administrative rules, concepts, and understandings of indigeneity. With this refusal, the State strengthened its role as the main gatekeeper in its relationship with the ESP indigenous leaders. This early failed negotiation illustrates that since the Plan’s beginning, the State established unequal conditions of power and knowledge with the indigenous people who engage in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

After the government’s refusal of their work plan, the ESP team once again started planning the Plan’s assessment phase. “Hard times came after the State’s rejection of the work plan, especially with the elders. No one believed in the process,” the team’s coordinator says.

Several community leaders started associating the ESP with State development programs that have systematically failed in their reserve. According to the coordinator, some elder leaders questioned with irony the ESP's legitimacy: "Is this another kind of entertainment for indigenous people?" (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation).

In April 2012, after several telephone conversations with the Ministry of Internal Affairs' staff, the Leticia Witoto ESP's coordinator was told, "We need to clarify how you will work. Organize yourselves for us to know how to provide the resources with which you can formulate the Plan." Thereafter, the ESP team started working on adapting the assessment methodology to the State guidelines and budget. One month later, the Leticia Witoto ESP team and the Ministry arrived at an agreement on the work plan and team. This agreement reduced the ESP team to a 22-member group with one coordinator and secretary, an eight-member council of knowledgeable elders, a four-member indigenous professional committee, and seven indigenous *promotores comunitarios* (community leaders). In November 2012, in order to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts and ensure fair participation of most of the peoples affected by displacement in the area, the team added a Tikuna elder and a Cocama promoter to the Plan. I will later reflect on some power and knowledge-related characteristics of the strategic inclusion of these peoples in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

Since December 2012 (six months later than agreed), the national government has provided this committee with a small budget and a monthly salary of approximately \$500 CAD for each ESP team member conducting this Plan's assessment phase activities. This salary has situated the Plan's team members in an ambiguous position in relation to the State and their communities. As with other State programs that focus on indigenous people since the 1991 Constitution, these indigenous leaders became a new kind of State representative in their own territories (Padilla, 1996, p. 88). From a Foucauldian (1980a) viewpoint, it can be argued that the Leticia Witoto ESP team members have become both the effects of State power in their indigenous communities, and "the vehicles" that experience, reproduce, and possibly challenge State power. Most ESP team members work full time on this Plan to address community problems. With this purpose, these indigenous leaders must follow State concepts and procedures that differ from their culture. As of 2012, the ESP had become a main source of income for most ESP team members. This relationship with the State has situated the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders in a double bind position: The dismissal of the State's conditions to develop the ESP may compromise their

salaries and other economic resources that may benefit their communities. At the same time, a complete acceptance of the State's requirements may decrease their communities' resistance and autonomy. For these reasons, the relationship between the State and indigenous leaders in the Leticia Witoto ESP has taken place through complex and ambiguous processes of proximity and power struggle.

The words of an ESP elder summarize this complexity: "Our struggle is against the stepfather government" (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, October 3, 2012, my translation). This analogy reflects that the People of the Centre do not see the State as a benefactor father. Indeed, most indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP consider the State, in addition to the illegal armed agents, to be the main entity responsible for their current conditions, which were influenced by forced displacement. A Witoto leader refers to this situation: "All we are experiencing [now] results from the massacre that took place here and the government has not been able to solve its consequences. . . . The government has improved, but there are still lots of weaknesses in their plans" (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, November 21, 2012, my translation) In other words, indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP see the State as both the main historical transgressor and the potential guarantor of their human freedoms (Brown, 1995; Santos, 199). The People of the Centre engage in the ESP process under historical unequal conditions of power that have led to a relationship of mistrust, distance, and strategic proximity with the State.

Although the ESP's assessment phase was supposed to last six months from January 2009, this phase has taken longer for most of the participating indigenous groups. One document monitoring this Plan suggests that, as of 2011, most ESPs were still in the assessment phase and that their processes of consultation with indigenous authorities were delayed until the end of 2011 (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012, p. 32). In the case of the Leticia Witoto ESP, the assessment phase lasted until February 2014 – almost four years longer than the time frame established by the Constitutional Court. This phase has included multiple community encounters, participatory activities, and workshops. Through these activities, the Leticia Witoto ESP aimed to collect information on the effects of displacement and on strategies to overcome such effects among seven indigenous communities of the Leticia urban area and the Tikuna-Witoto reserve. According to the Plan's coordinator, the team's main goal is to convince local, regional, and national governments to create public policies beneficial to these communities. As the next

section suggests, the Plan's assessment phase has led to frictions of power-knowledge between two generations of indigenous community leaders.

5.1.1. Intergenerational and Epistemological Frictions

The Leticia Witoto ESP team's structure is based upon two distinct forms of knowledge embodied in two generations of leaders. Members of the council of knowledgeable elders guide the entire team's decisions according to indigenous traditions. In contrast, professionals and community leaders (whose ages range from the 20s to 40s) legitimate their influence on the plan through their literacy and ability to deal with non-indigenous concepts. In this respect, the Leticia Witoto ESP's coordinator asserts, "They [the elder leaders] assure us and the State that the whole [Ethnic Safeguarding] Plan is formulated according to indigenous cultures" (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation). According to this group coordinator, the elders' main function is to confirm the indigenous traditional character of the Leticia Witoto ESP, to prevent the State from again rejecting the ESP team's proposals.

The role of the elders suggests that State views on indigenous culture as a continuous tradition are still dominant in this Plan. Warren and Jackson refer to similar processes in many other Latin American countries where "indigenous communities must legally establish their legitimacy through the rhetoric of cultural continuity in order to gain official recognition, protection, and access to resources including their lands" (2002, p. 8). The conditions of negotiation created by the State compel indigenous people to represent themselves in continuity with their cultural traditions despite the historical ruptures that they have experienced since the colonial period. Fearing an interruption of State support of the Plan, indigenous participants in the ESP represent themselves according to the State's conception of indigeneity, even if this conception differs from their history of multiple fragmentations and discontinuities in their traditions.

For their part, the professional committee members legitimize their positions of power through their experience in indigenous and non-indigenous institutions. To illustrate, the indigenous professional in charge of health legitimates his participation in the team by referring to his knowledge of both the indigenous ecological calendar (which calculates changes in illnesses, plagues, and harvests according to climate changes) and national legislation on education and health promotion. In exchanges with the other team members, this leader refers to

his involvement in institutions such as indigenous associations, national primary schools, and the Assembly of the Amazonas Province. The combination of indigenous and non-indigenous forms of power-knowledge ensures these professionals a dominant position in the ESP.

Most indigenous professionals and community leaders were educated in the Colombian *mestizo* culture education system, where they learned Spanish-language reading and writing, and some notions of Colombian State legislation. Since these latter kinds of knowledge take priority in conducting the ESP, these indigenous leaders have become highly influential in the ESP's formulation. As a result, despite their formal authority, the elders are mostly called to confirm the decisions that the ESP professionals and community leaders have already made.

This dominance of State legal views and procedures has favoured inequalities between older and younger generations in the Leticia area. In this respect, the ESP team coordinator narrates, "In the very beginning it was hard with the professional team. It was difficult to understand the way they spoke. . . . It was difficult for some professionals to adjust their academic language to our terms" (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation). The centrality of technical human rights discourses to these Plans has affected the elders' abilities to influence the ESP.

As a result of these epistemological differences, relationships between indigenous professionals and elders are ambiguous in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Some indigenous professionals suggest that "the elders must give us guidelines, patterns, and advice. They are the ones who know. As in every community, the elders are those who lead" (Indigenous professional A, personal communication, September 3, 2012, my translation). At the same time, other professionals disapprove of the elders' leading position. In their view, "Elders leading this Plan are scattered, confused and lost. . . . [The elders] do not know the direction [of the ESP] and are lost with the power they hold" (Indigenous professional B, personal communication, September 5, 2012, my translation). From these professional leaders' perspectives, these situations are mainly due to the elders' weak connection with their cultural bases. Other team members suggest that these elders are continuously engaged in practices that affect their commitment to the ESP such as alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, or commerce in the city. In this regard, an indigenous professional suggests the following: "We need to train these elders for them to guide the Plan." These views justify the elders' dependency on young indigenous professionals' guidance. Thus, in the ESP, negotiations between the knowledges of elders and professionals have reinforced

positions of power for young indigenous leaders prepared to understand and mobilize the State's knowledge. This unequal power-knowledge relationship has undermined the relevance of the elders as agents able to solve indigenous people's problems according to traditional knowledges.

This unequal relationship between older and young leaders in the ESP recalls a main paradox of human rights discourse: the inclusion of some subjects at the expense of the exclusion of others subjects (Brown, 1995). While the ESP aims at indigenous autonomy, it has also produced relations of dependency between elders and young indigenous leaders, the latter of whom are more closely aligned with the State knowledge that frames these Plans. Thus, intercultural dialogues on human rights are not necessarily egalitarian – they may reproduce or intensify inequalities of power connected with epistemological and generational differences.

I observed such relationships of dependency when the indigenous professional committee and I read the whole text of the Constitutional Court's Order 004 with the Leticia Witoto ESP team. Despite the importance of this Order for understanding and implementing the ESP, this collective reading took place seven months after beginning the Plan's assessment phase. The reading required several pauses and reflections to explain technical legal terms to the elders and community leaders. The main difficulty consisted of explaining this juridical document to a heterogeneous group of people accustomed to oral knowledge-exchanges, and with different levels of education (some of them are illiterate) and fluency in Spanish. After a four-hour collective reading, some ESP team elders made these commentaries:

- What is our function? *What should we do now?*
- We do thank God because the indigenous professionals have done impeccable work. This reading has been very good and clear. From now on, it is up to us to follow the Plan.
- *What is written must be accomplished without any doubt.* . . . Luckily I can read, at least a little bit.
- Understanding everything is difficult. We thank the professional team for their explanation because there are several words that we do not understand. For me there were many clear things. Henceforth, we must accomplish what the Order says. . . . The Word has been pronounced for us to become a compact group.
- I am very happy because the professionals are very practical in their explanations; their participation enriches our group (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, November 19, 2012, My translation and emphasis).

This collective reading and the comments that it generated reflect three characteristics of indigenous people's frictions with the universal discourse of human rights.

First, the reading of the Constitutional Order seven months after starting the assessment phase may reveal that indigenous people participate in State projects without a clear understanding of these projects and their implications for their communities. Second, the

expression “What is written must be accomplished without any doubt” suggests that indigenous leaders see written language as an order that must be accomplished. This attitude confers great importance to the State’s written knowledge to the detriment of oral indigenous knowledges. This attitude toward written knowledge can be compared either to the Christian relationship with the Bible or to the creator character that the Witoto confer to the Word (see Chapter Two and Preuss, 1994). This religious attitude to written knowledge may suggest a certain idealization of the Order 004’s content.⁷² New inequalities may emerge from these visions if indigenous people embark in actions related to this Order assuming the supremacy of its written language. This attitude may lead indigenous people to assume responsibilities that they do not completely understand.

Lastly, questions such as: ‘What is our function? What should we do now?’ reveal that these leaders see this Plan more as a norm than as a proposal to strengthen their own autonomy. As a result, the Court’s human rights discourse may generate a situation in which indigenous people feel in need of external guidance. Instead of collective autonomy, the ESP may have impelled indigenous people to search out mediators to understand the State legal knowledge – which explains, for instance, the value that the elders confer to the professional staff’s explanation of the Order. This attitude illustrates how human rights both regulate and emancipate the actions of subaltern subjects (Brown, 1995; Santos, 1997). In this case, indigenous people accept the precedence of the Court’s discursive regulatory function. Participants in this encounter see this discourse as a norm that defines their actions and means to struggle for rights recognition. The presence of international and national discourses of human rights in this Plan has authorized interventions of State forms of knowledge that are embodied in the indigenous professionals. Referring to the need for further explanation of the document, some elders who took part in the collective reading suggested sceptically, “We must still cool down these words” – that is, we need to understand these words better in order to avoid conflicts. These interventions may reinforce indigenous people’s dependency on external knowledge, with the

⁷² This attitude is not exclusive to the People of the Centre. The Awa indigenous people of the Colombian South West also refer to the ESP as “a shield, a tool to preserve what we are, defend ourselves from threats, and attain protection against violations to our fundamental rights as indigenous people and as human beings who inhabit a social state governed by the rules of law” (Garay Salamanca, 2012, p. 41, my translation). Given the written form of the constitutional Order, several Colombian displaced indigenous groups share high expectations of the ESP.

consequent devaluation of indigenous knowledges as an appropriate means to engage in a struggle for rights recognition.

5.1.2. Epistemological, Linguistic, and Gender-based Frictions in the ESP Community Negotiations

In the Leticia Witoto ESP, the dominance of the Colombian State and *mestizo* cultural views affects the participation of subjects only fluent in indigenous languages. Members of the knowledgeable elder council commonly intervene in Witoto in the ESP meetings. Due to forced displacement, migration, or acculturation, few young participants in this Plan can understand and translate the elders' speech into Spanish. As in the case of the Mohawk described in Chapter Two (Castellano, 2000), the lack of linguistic and cultural translation has interrupted the People of the Centre's possibilities of passing on indigenous knowledge from one generation to another. These linguistic conditions have weakened the influence of elder Witoto speakers on decisions related to the Leticia Witoto ESP.

In this respect, the only woman member of the elder knowledgeable council asserted in an interview that I conducted, "Here there is no one with whom I can speak in my dialect,⁷³ no one can explain it or understand it well. . . . If I get ill, disappear, or die, all my knowledge will be lost. . . . I have a lot [of knowledge] to transmit. It is important and useful, but there is no person who can translate all that I speak" (my translation). This elder woman emphasizes the possibility of losing not only an entire communication code, but also a whole system of thought directly connected to her indigenous language. Her words reveal epistemic and linguistic inequalities that have influenced the exclusion of subjects whose languages and thoughts differ from those of the State in the ESP.

Gender differences may have deepened these inequalities. The fact that the elder council mostly meets at the *mambeadero* (a space from which women are banned) affects the visibility of this elder woman among other members of the ESP team. Following traditional norms, this woman remains outside of the *mambeadero*, in other spaces of the *maloka*, where it is difficult

⁷³ This woman elder speaks Witoto-Murui, which is one of the five linguistic variations of the Witoto language. According to De la Hoz (2007) and to some Witoto leaders of the ESP, the other four linguistic variations are Bué, Mika or Minica, Muina, and Nipode. Some anthropologists and indigenous people suggest that each of these languages corresponds to a different ethnic group (see Kaufman, 1990). These oral and written sources suggest that the name Witoto was given by other indigenous groups to several peoples located in almost the same region and sharing similar linguistic practices. Accordingly, like the People of the Centre, the Witoto could also be considered a multi-ethnic formation.

for her to establish egalitarian dialogues with other leading elders. Furthermore, when she intervenes in the ESP meetings, the coordinator or other bilingual leaders minimally or poorly translate her deep and detailed talks, simply stating, for example, “She says she agrees with us.” Regarding this devaluation of the elder woman’s knowledge, another indigenous woman leader of the ESP suggests that

there are important details in everything she [the elder woman] says. When she speaks, she releases her deepest pain. She talks, starts reprimanding people, but they [men] shut her up. The coordinator says that she approves what they say, but no one translates what she says. I think she should reprimand them [the elders] and the elders must listen to her because she can guide them (ESP indigenous woman leader, interview, November 7, 2012, my translation).

In other words, the spatial exclusion related to traditional gender distinctions and her linguistic differences with the rest of the ESP team have influenced the dismissal of the only elder woman’s knowledge in this Plan.

Summarizing, although the ESP aims for egalitarian recognition of displaced indigenous people’s human rights, in some ways it produces or deepens inequalities, especially between elders and women subjects less fluent in Spanish and an emergent group of young male professionals. These generational, gender, and linguistic inequalities have emerged from the dominance of Colombian State rights discourses and from unquestioned forms of power produced by unmarked masculine positions legitimated by the State knowledge or by indigenous traditions. Consequently, the Leticia Witoto ESP team have not only contested marginality but have also produced or reproduced disparities among elders and women seeking rights recognition according to indigenous traditional languages and concepts. The notion of abundance, which I explain in the next section, has played a central role in the production and reproduction of several positions of power – including inequalities – during the ESP formulation.

5.2. THE PEOPLE OF THE CENTRE’S NOTION OF ABUNDANCE

In the Introduction Chapter, I described indigenous knowledges as conceptual and practical guides that facilitate people’s survival in their daily life (Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 2000). In Chapter Two, I introduced indigenous anti-colonial reflections in order to describe how indigenous knowledges are spatially situated according to positions of power and difference. I also described how indigenous people construct their knowledges through tradition, experience, and revelation. I established that indigenous knowledges produce logical systems of thought that interconnect culturally influenced epistemological, ontological, and axiological views (Scheurich

and Young, 1997; Dei, 2000; Meyer, 2011). I also referred to the role of indigenous knowledges in intercultural exchange, resistance to colonization, and in the production of identity and ethnicity.

This section takes up these conceptual elements of indigenous knowledges in order to explore the People of the Centre's notion of abundance in friction with human rights and development discourses. I illustrate how these people use this notion to connect elements of their material and symbolic culture with their cultural practices, gender roles, and axiological and ontological views. The notion of abundance illustrates how the People of the Centre tactically mobilize their knowledges in the ESP in order to overcome their marginal positions.

As explained in Chapter One, after acquiring metal axes through contact with “white people” in the late 19th century, the People of the Centre reinforced their philosophical views on multiplying their material means of existence (Echeverri, 1997). Henceforth, the People of the Centre defined themselves as the people of abundance, which is seen as the source of community strength. Taking into account substances that symbolize abundance, these people also define themselves as people of tobacco, coca, and sweet manioc. For the People of the Centre, abundance comes from a close relationship with territory, which ensures sources of food, health, medicine, and the possibility of producing and sharing wealth among families and communities. Families share the surplus of their work through feasts and donations that reflect the generosity of the donating family, which is one main basis for authority and leadership among the People of the Centre (Earle, 1994, p. 952; Clastres, 1987 [1974], cited in Nieto, 2010, p.177). Sharing abundance with other community members contributes to the prestige of each family in the eyes of the community and strengthens collective cohesion on indigenous reserves.

Like other indigenous knowledges, the notion of abundance is spatially situated and connected to cultural symbolism. Abundance is directly related to elements of material culture such as the *chagra* (the family parcel of land) and manioc. The former is the first space where indigenous people exchange knowledge, while they produce family food. Witoto families strengthen gender roles and family cohesion practices through activities related to the *chagras*. While men perform *chagra* tasks prior to cultivation, women are responsible for the process of cultivation (Briñez Pérez, 2002, p. 56). Witoto men focus on the *chagra's* centre (where they cultivate coca and tobacco), while women work from the periphery to the centre – where they cultivate manioc and other subsistence products. The men “open the *chagra*,” which means to

clearing weeds and animals from the access road, chopping down unnecessary trees, and clearing the land before cultivation. Together with the women, men burn the land to produce ashes that enrich the soil of the *chagra*. Henceforth, the women are charged with producing abundance for the family in the *chagra*. For their part, men are responsible for constructing the *maloka*, making canoes and other tools, hunting, fishing, collecting forest fruits, and cultivating coca (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 113). Thus, the gathering and production of the elements needed for family support is delimited according to complementary gender roles, defined according to the *chagra* tasks.

Witoto women's and men's roles in the production of abundance derive from the symbolic connection between men, women and manioc. Women represent "*Moniya riño*, the symbol of work. . . . [Because] women's genital organs receive manioc starch, which represents the men's semen" (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 121, my translation). Women's work symbolizes abundance and the group's continuity. For this reason, the Witoto conceive women as the force behind family and community. Just as men should be disciplined to gain healing knowledge, women must be disciplined to produce abundance. Women's central role in producing abundance can be associated with the centrality of manioc in Witoto narratives about the origin of the world and indigenous civilization. Bríñez Pérez (2002) reconstructs some of these narratives:

When the world appeared in the shadow of darkness, there were abundant breaths, smells, and dreams of hope. There was the illusion of living in this dark world. Thereafter, the world's needs were mixed together in a container that allowed manioc and other plants to grow. . . . A new tree was born [from this mix]. It grew to be very tall and produced several fruits such as *chontaduro* and *maraca*, and then all animals and plants on earth. The tree was called *nokina*, which means child.⁷⁴ Then, the manioc tree grew up so high that it became the tree of abundance. Then, the tree was chopped down with an axe. [When it fell down,] the tree was so big that its trunk formed the Amazon River. Its branches formed several rivers, from which several kinds of manioc emerged (2002, p. 105, my translation).

This narrative suggests that the tree of abundance produced the Amazon River and its basin as a territory appropriate for people to thrive.⁷⁵ Since manioc is the symbol of men's semen, the narrative establishes human existence as a result of the abundance of manioc varieties that grow in the Amazon region. Thus, manioc is the basis of abundance and human beings, which means that human life depends on Amazonian territorial conditions. Therefore, the notion of abundance

⁷⁴ The importance of this "child" can be noted both in this narrative and in narratives on knowledge quoted in Chapter Two. Like the child who produces knowledge, abundance is the basis of community existence.

⁷⁵ Comparable narratives can be found in the Tikuna myths of creation. Likewise, the Tikuna establish a direct relationship between manioc, abundance, collective existence, and their geographical context (see Goulard, 2009).

is a form of situated knowledge connected to the ability to produce the conditions that human groups require to live in the Amazon.



Pictures 5.1 and 5.2 Witoto Women Processing Manioc in the 11th Kilometre Community

The symbolism of manioc as the tree of abundance is related to the role of women in the People of the Centre's cultures. For the Witoto, women are responsible for transforming Amazonian manioc varieties (some of which are originally poisonous) into food that can be consumed by humans such as *casabe* (manioc bread) and *caguana* (manioc juice) – see Pictures 5.1 and 5.2. In the Witoto culture, women must know how to cultivate and harvest manioc plants, extract the poison from their roots (through pressing techniques and artisanal tools), and sift the manioc powder to produce the starch necessary to make *casabe* and *caguana*. While *casabe* ensures nutrition for the family, *caguana* is shared in community meetings. The act of sharing *caguana* with the community is connected to the practices of generosity that multiply abundance and confer prestige and authority to families who share. In short, the work of women to produce abundance provides the family with support and produces community positions of leadership.

In the Witoto mythological narratives, women's techniques for producing abundance symbolize advancements in the evolution of indigenous civilization. In this respect, Preuss suggests, "When they [the Witoto] discovered the tree [of abundance], they stopped eating soil" (1994, p. 51). Mythical narratives suggest that women played a critical role in discovering fire, a process necessary in this evolutionary path:

A woman elder, the fire-woman, brought fire to the children. She used to forbid the children to tell anyone that they were getting fire. Thereafter, they ate *casabe* and cooked manioc dough. When the fire-woman made the fire, which came from her mouth as she burped, the children took a charred stick and put an ant's nest on it to stir the fire up. The woman elder was not angry because they stole the fire. Rather, she told them to keep eating *casabe* afterwards. After taking the fire, the children prepared small balls of manioc dough to roast. People screamed for joy. Thereafter they left the white soil that they used to eat and stopped eating rotten sticks. They ate from the tree of abundance. They had gotten fire. . . . "We were poor people, we used to eat soil, now we eat the tree of abundance" (Preuss, 1994, pp. 72-75, my translation).

This production marked the evolution of the Witoto people's diet from rough to cooked food and ensured conditions for the Witoto to change their self-image from poor people into a new civilization of abundance. Women's work and wisdom were critical in transforming Amazonian manioc varieties into consumable products that reflect abundance. According to these narratives, women's work and wisdom occupy a central role in the evolution of Witoto people's civilization.

This definition of abundance is coherent with the importance of coca, tobacco, and manioc in the culture of the People of the Centre. Families must work together to transform these plants into consumable products. The People of the Centre consume coca powder only after a collective process of collecting coca leaves, burning them with ashes of *yarumo* leaves (*cecropia peltata*, trumpet tree in English), milling the mixture in a wooden ball with a *pilón* (wooden mallet), and sifting out its impurities. Similarly, to be consumed, tobacco needs to be dried, powdered, and mixed with salt extracted from vegetable sources. Families share the results of collectively processing manioc, tobacco, and coca in order to increase abundance in their communities. According to these customs, abundance among the People of the Centre depends on the ability to produce and share wealth through collective work.

The notion of abundance is particularly related to the People of the Centre's ontological and axiological conceptions. Indigenous anti-colonial research shows indigenous ontology to be a relationship of interdependence and complementarity between the subject who knows and the known object (Scheurich and Young, 1997; Dei, 2000; Meyer, 2011). Similarly, the Witoto see indigenous knowledges as their means to humanize nature. In their view, humans are one with

nature and creation because it is through human action that the territory comes alive, becomes habitable, and is transformed into a sacred world (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 36). In mythical narratives, once human beings found sweet and wild manioc, they started to know and name nature by chanting. Then, different names arrived and new vegetation appeared. The Word was the basis for understanding and completing creation. In the Witoto worldview, words have the power to create and transform realities: “Human beings complete creation by naming nature” (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 34, my translation). As suggested in Chapter Two, the Witoto refer to the Word as a “sacred creator.” For these reasons, Witoto ontology draws on the complementary relationship between human beings and nature.

This ontological vision contributes to the importance that the Leticia Witoto ESP team confers to the coherence between their words and acts. In order to refer to the functions of the “Word,” these team members continuously use two verbal expressions. First, *asentar la palabra* (to settle the Word), which conveys the need for appropriately settling the Word in space and among dialogue participants. The phrase *Asentar la palabra* refers to the ability to transform words into a force capable to fight against the (spiritual or physical) beings opposed to the speaker’s intentions. Second, *amanecer la palabra* (to sunrise the Word)⁷⁶ means to enact what has been uttered collectively. *Amanecer la palabra* is possible only after the community approves of decisions that imply collective actions and concern the common good.

These verbal expressions reflect the Leticia Witoto ESP’s goal of completing their world through the ways they discuss their own topics in meetings related to this Plan. Given their histories of exclusion, the Leticia Witoto continuously attempt to produce actions that allow them to *asentar la palabra*: to remove spiritual and material obstacles to their Plan’s implementation. Hence, instead of merely legal or rational discourse, the Leticia Witoto ESP team’s discussions are open to rituals, dances, and chants oriented toward accurately removing such obstacles (see Chapter Three). The People of the Centre discuss the ESP through symbols of abundance: coca, tobacco, and manioc – see Pictures 5.3 and 5.4. While sharing these substances, the People of the Centre are only allowed to pronounce words aimed at benefitting the community. The words that they share while consuming these substances must become true:

⁷⁶ This is a literal translation of the word *amanecer*, which could also be understood as to wake up or to begin to be light. I decided to leave the literal term “sunrise” in order to convey the original indigenous meaning probably related to the fact that the sacred community word is normally passed on in the night and should become real at dawn or in the morning.

they constitute a commitment to the community because the mythical owners of coca, tobacco, and manioc can punish subjects who disrespect words pronounced in the presence of these substances. Through these actions, indigenous participants in this Plan invite their ancestors, the Creator father, and some spirits (the so-called owners of the forest) to help them reinforce the ESP. Thus, the People of the Centre create their ESP through ritual communication. The sacred character of abundance symbols and words pronounced before the community in these rituals has influenced members of the Leticia Witoto ESP team to respect their engagement with their Plan as a sacred commitment. Accordingly, rather than rational Western discourses of human rights as such, it is their connections with local knowledges, beliefs, and practices that have motivated participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP to pursue conducting this Plan.



Picture 5.3 (Left): A Witoto Man Processes Coca Leaves to Produce Mambe (coca powder).



Picture 5.4 (Right): Ambil (tobacco powder), Mambe, and Caguana (manioc juice) are Shown During a Ritual Related to the Leticia Witoto ESP creation.

From an axiological view, the Leticia Witoto ESP team see their discussions of the Plan as public and sacred commitments to work for the good of the community. These people see laziness, lack of discipline, sensuality, and primacy of sexual desire as obstacles to the group's survival and as factors destabilizing the Witoto culture (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 127). For the Witoto, both women's and men's laziness are sources of community misfortune. Some mythological narratives refer to the chaotic situation of the world, when women did not know how to work and when *chagras* did not yet exist. At those times, the absence of *casabe* led to the death of several community members. Through discipline, women learned to work in the *chagra*, to transform manioc into food, and to create the basis of the group's harmony (Bríñez Pérez, 2002, p. 138). Similarly, discipline to transform and share coca and tobacco leads men to contribute to the group's cohesion. The Leticia Witoto ESP leaders refer to coca as men's

strength: “Coca is the principle of life, a principle that we can handle,” an ESP community leader says. Without coca or tobacco men do not have strength, and health, community and life are adversely affected. From the Witoto axiological perspective, discipline to cultivate, transform, and share the substances of abundance is a value that regulates work and makes possible the group’s survival.

These ontological and axiological views contribute to the positions of empowerment and resistance through which the Leticia Witoto ESP team members attempt to challenge their marginality. From positions of power produced through sharing symbols of abundance, the People of the Centre struggle to broaden their territories, promote community health and education systems, strengthen their political autonomy, and recover their mother tongues. The Leticia Witoto ESP team continuously refer to their need for “*amanecer la palabra del Plan*” (to make real what they discuss in the Plan) through honouring the words uttered in the presence of coca, tobacco, and manioc. Collective dialogues and rituals guided through the notion and practices of abundance have empowered this team to be subjects able to transform their marginality in relation to the State. This notion and practices constitute a framework of power-knowledge critical for this group’s cohesion and engagement in their unequal negotiation with the State. The ESP dialogues on their own culture, knowledges, territory, and communities have motivated these leaders to recall or reinforce their self-image as people of abundance.

These ontological and axiological views have influenced the Leticia Witoto ESP team’s emphasis on work and discipline as values to promote their Plan. In accordance with these two values, this team perceive this Plan as a *minga* where all peoples are the *minga*’s owners equally – although they are led by the Witoto. *Minga* is a Quechua word commonly used among indigenous Andean people to convey community work. In the Witoto language, *mingas* are called *cõnima caycon icub*, which means “let’s work together” or *coni-ma caroye* – “let’s help others.” This expression may also mean “Help me solve problems or let’s solve problems together.” The Witoto use these expressions especially when a person or family is in trouble. Drawing on these understandings, the People of the Centre interpret the ESP as an opportunity to produce links of solidarity between indigenous people of the Leticia area affected by forced displacement. In short, these indigenous people see the ESP as a possibility to solve difficulties together. The People of the Centre’s spiritual, emotional, epistemological, ontological, and

axiological views have strengthened the mutual inter-ethnic connections that they have established to generate the ESP.

5.2.1. Power, Differences, and Abundance

In Chapter Two, I discussed the interdependent relationship between power and knowledge. I suggested that power relations construct their own fields of knowledge and that, at the same time, knowledge always presupposes and constitutes power relations (Foucault, 1980; Hall, 2001). Articulations of knowledge and power are also evident in indigenous knowledges. In an interview on indigenous knowledges, an ESP community leader suggested “to release knowledge is to lose life and energy.” Since knowledge is power, “one cannot teach anything to just anyone at any moment” (Indigenous community leader, interview, November 8, 2012, my translation). In other words, like human rights and development, indigenous knowledges are discourses of power and knowledge that may produce differential relations that empower some subjects and disempower others. These processes of friction and negotiations across difference rearticulate power-knowledge relations within indigenous communities. Taking up Spivak’s suggestion on questioning the subaltern subjects’ conditions of expression even in anti-imperialist projects (1994), this section explores how indigenous knowledges may mask unequal conditions of expression for subaltern subjects. Although the People of the Centre have produced positions of solidarity and collective engagement through the ways that they mobilize abundance in this Plan, the ESP may also silence subaltern subjects, especially women.

The symbols of abundance are related to gender distinctions and unequal relations among the People of the Centre. According to symbolic distinctions, women are allowed to process and consume *caguana*, which symbolizes the semen (or fertility) necessary to produce abundance. In contrast, women are banned from contact with coca. Since coca symbolizes the feminine force of fecundation, women’s consumption of coca transgresses principles of complementarity between women and men. To illustrate the scope of this belief, in a spontaneous talk, an ESP indigenous professional explained to me that women who chew coca are commonly seen to be men because they consume another woman’s strength. Thus, symbols of abundance regulate strict binary gender distinctions and roles.

These distinctions are materialized in community spaces. Whereas the burning of coca may take place in the *maloka*, milling and sifting the powder takes place at the *mambeadero* while the

elders talk. Once the coca powder is ready, the principal elder offers a little to every man present in the *maloka*, calling him by name. Through this gift, the men in attendance are authorized to talk. Men exchange the most important ideas when coca powder is solid in their mouths. Given the masculine character of coca rituals, indigenous women are banned from *mambeaderos*. In daily life, women can share their words and knowledges only in family spheres such as the *chagra* and house. Since the consumption of coca is mainly related to the possibilities of publicly expressing and sharing ideas, distinctions ruled by the notion of abundance contribute to silencing women's thoughts and words in the community. This symbolic use of abundance illustrates how indigenous knowledges articulate power and culture, producing and reinforcing community inequalities.

In accordance with these views, despite women's relevance in the Witoto narratives of abundance, the Leticia Witoto ESP team's structure and activities have relegated women to a secondary position. Only two women (an elder and a community leader) take part as full-time participants in the 24-member team. Another young woman (in her 40s) participates as an observer, and other women elders who attend the meetings simply accompany their husbands. The latter group of wives provide the attending people with *caguana* and remain silent. As a result of this secondary participation, women's topics are almost absent in the ESP meetings. In an interview that I conducted, a former woman governor of the 6th kilometre, who takes part in the Plan as an observer, referred to this absence:

There is only space for the men's thoughts. They are the majority. There is no opportunity for the grandmother (the woman elder) to express the role of indigenous women, which is part of our indigenous knowledges. Women's words [function to] clean and sweep men's thoughts spiritually (my translation).

This leader suggests that policies related to women must be different to those of men in order to avoid repeating men's past mistakes. Furthermore, the leader speaks about the need for women to value their own knowledge: "We ourselves must understand, as indigenous women, that we are important to our community. Our cold thought is necessary to complement men. Everything will change when we understand this" (my translation). These women's words challenge other women to include their wisdom and needs in the Leticia Witoto ESP. However, as of November 2012, the Leticia Witoto ESP had not taken into account women's specific claims. Subjects such as domestic and gender violence, the effects of displacement on women, and women's specific needs for health care, family life, and employment remained untouched.

Furthermore, there is no consensus on gender exclusion among the two generations of women taking part in the Plan's formulation. As mentioned in Chapter Three, at the end of my fieldwork, I led a meeting to share some preliminary results of my research activities with the ESP team. Among other topics, I suggested the need for more accurate recognition of gender differences and women's needs in the Plan. The elder women reacted, arguing that they were already present in the discussions in spite of their silence: "Women must be present through *caguana*, which is the basis of collective gathering" (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, November 21, 2012, my translation). While for the elder women this symbolic substance seemed enough to represent women in the ESP, younger women leaders acknowledged the need for more participatory forms of women's representation. The only woman community leader of the ESP argued for closer attention to problems such as "protecting women from violence" or spaces "for indigenous children raised by their grandmothers while their mothers work" (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, November 21, 2012, my translation). Both young women – the community leader and the observer – suggested that the ESP must take into account women's specific problems, "otherwise this Plan would be unfinished and its brain [sic] would be incomplete" (Leticia Witoto ESP team meeting, November 21, 2012, my translation).

These views reflect the fact that women take part in this Plan with specific types of power, according both to gender and generational relations. Whereas for elder women, a participation through the symbols of abundance seems to be enough, young indigenous women challenge the silence that this symbolic representation may imply. From the latter position that questions sacred views of abundance ruled by men, young indigenous women leaders may open possibilities for the recognition of women's claims in this ESP. In view of similar gender inequalities among other communities implementing the ESP, one of the institutions monitoring these Plans suggests the need for a clearer and more specific inclusion of gender as a main axis of human rights recognition (Garay Salamanca et al., 2012).

Women's invisibility in the ESP suggests that neither indigenous knowledges, nor rights struggles, or participatory processes are neutral or egalitarian. Women's silence, symbolic exclusion, and the invisibility of their specific problems suggest that participatory processes based on local knowledge can also reproduce power inequalities (Huesca, 2002). Despite the participatory nature of the deliberations of the People of the Centre and their connection with local cultures and human rights, the ESP may reproduce and reinforce exclusionary and

disempowering practices that they are supposed to overcome. In spite of this problematic connection with local inequalities, the notion of abundance may also foster processes of community empowerment among communities taking part in the ESP.

5.2.2. Challenging Marginality through Spatial Appropriation, Community Organization, and Language Recovery

In contrast with the described experiences of disempowerment, this section explores some of the ESP team's tactics to exert power within a Plan mainly ruled by universal and national human rights and development discourses. I analyze these tactics through this team's spatial appropriation strategies and explore how these appropriations have facilitated community links, organizations, and projects potentially beneficial to indigenous communities.

The Leticia Witoto ESP meetings have reinforced community life in sacred spaces such as *malokas* and *mambeaderos*. Community activities to collect, discuss, and diffuse information related to the ESP have helped the People of the Centre reactivate the symbolic importance of *malokas* in the Leticia area. The research project that I led in the 11th kilometre community in 2008 identified a crisis of community leadership and collective dialogues in this community (Uruburu Gilède, Herrera Arango, and Rodríguez Caballero, 2011, p. 231). This study referred to the decline of the *maloka* as a space of intergenerational knowledge exchange. As a result of obstacles to passing on knowledge in these and other community spaces, no one in the 11th kilometre community was skilled enough to replace the *cacique* (indigenous chief) who died in August 2008. As of November 2012, the position still remained vacant. This crisis in community leadership was materialized in the context of declining community spaces.

In contrast, the Leticia Witoto ESP team have helped re-establish the significance of the 11th kilometre's *maloka* and of spaces for intergenerational knowledge exchange in the Leticia area. In an interview that I conducted, the ESP team coordinator suggests that the group uses this *maloka* to "tie the [ESP's] thoughts to its main sources." As discussed in Chapter Two, for the Witoto, the *maloka* (community house) symbolizes both the basis and the origin of community life. According to this cultural understanding, ESP leaders have used this Plan as a means to reactivate collective dialogue in several *malokas* of the Leticia urban and suburban areas. During my fieldwork, the ESP meetings took place every Saturday night between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m., mostly in the 11th kilometre *maloka*. These leaders have also conducted meetings in two other *malokas* of the reserve and in one *maloka* situated in downtown Leticia.

Throughout this process, the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders travelled from one reserve community to another to talk about their culture, problems, solutions, and traditional authorities. As a result of these displacements and talks, the ESP leaders created a new indigenous network of several communities called “The Path of Tobacco.” This name refers to a traditional indigenous commercial route that was reactivated through the USAID project and the ESP. Activities and inter-local connections produced by The Path of Tobacco have raised the visibility and influence of the ESP team leaders in the Leticia area. Like other participatory projects, the ESP may have given birth to networks where people with similar concerns can apply and share knowledge produced through their local dialogues on rights and development (see Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2006). The Leticia Witoto ESP team members have used the Path of Tobacco to reach new communities and indigenous groups (e.g., the Yukuna) who may broaden the number of participants in this Plan. In community meetings, they refer to this path to establish the direct connection between their present plan and the indigenous ancestral practices of exchange. This connection between past and present legitimates the positions of leadership of the ESP team members, most of who have been recently established in this area. Although the Path of Tobacco was still a new organization as of 2012, it reflects how the ESP activities have influenced one emergent inter-local network between indigenous communities of the Leticia area. The possibilities of this network for indigenous people will require further observation.

The Leticia Witoto ESP leaders have also led processes of spatial appropriation in the community *mambeaderos* of the Leticia area. Just like in the *malokas*, meetings at the *mambeaderos* had declined in frequency and quality in the Tikuna-Witoto reserve as of 2008. In the 11th kilometre community, these meetings were reduced to sporadic encounters to discuss specific community problems (Uruburu Gilède et al., 2011). As such, the reactivation of dialogues in *mambeaderos* has been a main goal and activity of the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders. This Plan’s team see dialogues in *mambeaderos* as a means to reinforce indigenous identity through knowledge exchange. For this reason, the Leticia Witoto ESP team discusses its most important decisions in the 11th kilometre *mambeadero*.

A Bora group of ESP leaders living in the Leticia urban area also plans their participation in ESP meetings in a *mambeadero*. Although spaces to chew coca are often situated inside *malokas*, the lack of space for this indigenous group on the reserve has forced these Bora leaders to recreate a *mambeadero* in the courtyard of a private urban house. Despite the private character

and reduced length of this courtyard, discussions in the Bora *mambeadero* have given birth to an indigenous organization that struggles for the rights of displaced indigenous people in Leticia, the *Asociación de familias indígenas sin techo residentes en el municipio de Leticia* (AFINTREL). As of February 2014, AFINTREL has started negotiations with the Leticia municipal authorities to establish an indigenous community on a plot of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve situated at the 10th kilometre of the Leticia-Tarapacá road. The establishment of this community in this area requires the expropriation of lands occupied by *mestizo* economic colonizers some decades ago. This emergent organization has contributed to actions through which local State institutions have begun protecting the indigenous reserve from illegal and historically common interventions of colonizers in indigenous lands. Born from the creative appropriation of spaces in precarious conditions, AFINTREL struggles to overcome territorial exclusion, a main topic addressed by the ESP. The production of the *mambeadero* as a space of collective participation and dialogue within the precarious conditions of an urban house may have influenced political practices of organization among displaced indigenous people who struggle for land access.

The Path of Tobacco network and AFINTREL organization were produced through the re-appropriation of *malokas* and *mambeaderos* in the Leticia area. The emergence of this network and organization under the conditions of the ESP suggests that negotiations with human rights and development discourses can also lead to creative mechanisms whereby community leaders produce certain forms of power.

In addition to spatial appropriation and community organization, the Leticia Witoto ESP team proposes to recover indigenous languages as a main strategy for gaining political autonomy. Language recovery is a difficult process influenced by historical conditions. As described in Chapter One, economic exploitation, evangelization, and alphabetization processes have devalued indigenous knowledges and languages. Furthermore, given forced displacement and migration, the coexistence of several indigenous groups with different languages has favoured Spanish as the regional lingua franca.

Historical conditions in which people were prevented from using their languages have led some indigenous people to reject the ESP leaders' initiative to recover them. In a personal interview, an ESP community leader illustrates such an attitude with his mother's case:

After the “slavery time”⁷⁷ there were many orphan children. They did not know which language to speak. The priests in charge of these orphans tied the children to a trunk to force them to speak Spanish. My mother lived at that time. She’s resentful when someone says that now is time to teach our language to the children. She says, “Why [should we speak the indigenous language] now and not before? I won’t teach anything [to anyone] now” (ESP community leader, Interview, November 8 2012, my translation).

Thus, some indigenous people still associate their own languages with a time of punishment and prohibition that they are not willing to relive. Historical experiences of exclusion surrounding the use of indigenous languages have hampered contemporary attempts for their recovery and incorporation into indigenous people’s daily lives.

Some ESP indigenous leaders justify the importance of the language recovery project on the grounds of the intrinsic relationship between indigenous languages, territories, and forms of power:

If you don’t have a territory, you lose your own education [system], your language, your autonomy, and you lose your role as a leader because there are no spaces to socialize as you are. We also lose our sense of belonging because, for instance here [in the Leticia area] we use foreign languages to communicate because we are people displaced from different places (ESP elder, community meeting, November 10, 2012, my translation).

One ESP team’s elder points to forced displacement as a main cause of losing indigenous languages:

The space where I used to talk as [a community] elder or knowledgeable person does not exist anymore. I could not establish my dialogues or go to my *mambeadero*. I didn’t have the space. This displacement entailed a cultural loss (ESP elder, community meeting, November 10, 2012, my translation).

Territorial loss due to forced displacement has directly weakened indigenous languages, knowledges, and the forms of power associated with them.

Accordingly, indigenous language recovery is a vast project that requires the reconstruction of concepts, practices, institutions, conditions, and spaces needed for collective expression in such languages. Despite its obviously cultural character, language recovery is intrinsically connected to economic and political processes for subverting indigenous people’s marginalization. Only territorial appropriation, access to resources, and the re-activation of indigenous institutions (e.g., education and governance systems) can ensure that these communities have the necessary means for their collective expression in their languages. For this reason, instead of being deemed a “soft right,” expression in indigenous languages directly

⁷⁷ As discussed in Chapter One, for several Amazonian indigenous peoples the “slavery time” refers to the 1860s-1930s period of the rubber boom and to its practices of exploitation of indigenous people.

depends on the recognition of “hard rights” – such as land, employment, housing, conditions of participation, education, political autonomy, and so on (see Stavenhagen, 2011). Thus, the Leticia Witoto ESP’s struggle for language recovery is part of broader indigenous struggles that have combined claims for political representation, economic redistribution, and cultural recognition (Fraser, 2009). Through these concrete struggles for language recovery, these indigenous people may contribute to comprehensive models of democracy capable of coordinating cultural recognition according to indigenous people’s terms and languages, political representation according to indigenous institutions, and economic redistribution in crucial domains such as territory.

From a subaltern cosmopolitan perspective on human rights, these tactics can be seen as “embryonic experiences of resistance” (Rodríguez Garavito and Santos, 2005). The “Path of Tobacco” network of knowledge-exchange, the association of indigenous displaced people who struggle for land access (AFINTREL), and the project of language recovery are still admittedly fragile and limited initiatives. However, these initiatives may improve indigenous people’s possibilities for recovering the material conditions to practice their culture; influencing local and national institutions; and coordinating their cultural, economic, and political claims. Although their scope still requires further observation, these initiatives illustrate power tactics that indigenous people produce within conditions of marginalization. In spite of their limits, these initiatives may potentially resist hegemonic relations of exclusion. These organizations and projects illustrate alternative forms of power that indigenous people produce through knowledge about themselves and their territory, within the marginal conditions of forced displacement and unequal negotiations with the State. While still embryonic, these appropriations can establish the basis for initiatives to establish indigenous people as groups with access to rights according to their cultural differences.

These empowering characteristics contrast with the experiences of disempowerment described above. The disempowering and empowering positions analyzed in the two last sections correspond with Ramos’ (2002) conception of human rights as a double-edged sword for indigenous people. Indigenous male leaders use human rights discourses and the notion of abundance to legitimize positions of power that may exclude indigenous women’s participation. At the same time, frictions between human rights discourses and the notion of abundance may contribute to power tactics, spatial appropriations, and indigenous organizations beneficial to

indigenous people. Both universal and indigenous knowledges can deepen power disparities already existing in indigenous communities and contribute to emancipatory practices in such communities. The existence of both empowering and disempowering characteristics challenges dichotomies between human rights as inherently liberating and indigenous knowledges as inherently patriarchal and conservative constructions. Both human rights discourses and indigenous knowledges are articulations of power and knowledge that can reproduce or challenge inequalities among marginalized subjects. The next section analyzes how the People of the Centre attempt to re-articulate the universality of human rights through power and knowledge relations related to the law of origin.

5.3. THE PEOPLE OF THE CENTRE'S LAW OF ORIGIN

Indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP negotiate with the State and universal human rights discourses according to a legal code they call the law of origin. As described in Chapter Two, the law of origin connects indigenous knowledges, collective history, cultural practices, and political claims. Padilla (1996) defines the law of origin as an alternative form of cultural and legal knowledge that indigenous people reinforce through their way of life. To illustrate this definition, this author quotes a letter sent by Iku indigenous leaders of the Colombian Caribbean to a representative of indigenous peoples at the 1991 Constituent Assembly:

Our tradition is the history of the origin from the beginning. Tradition embodies and maintains our law. Tradition is the living part of the law [that] relives our origin and keeps us in it. This [relationship between history and the law of origin] allows this tradition to be lived only in territories traditionally occupied and only according to our law, corresponding to the time and space allocated from the origin to our way of life (as cited in Padilla, 1996, p. 85, my translation).

The law of origin connects the history, tradition, territory, and principles that make possible the existence of indigenous people. For this reason, origin, tradition, and the task of safeguarding the land legitimate the law of origin. Similar to the concept of abundance, this law constitutes a form of indigenous knowledge critical to the survival of several Colombian indigenous groups.

Elder leaders taking part in the Leticia Witoto ESP suggest that the law of origin embraces multiple sacred principles applicable to experience and transmitted from the Creator father and the ancestors through the words and examples of elders. According the law of origin, justice takes place in daily life, with a spiritual purpose: "You must respect the norms of well-living and abundance. You must always follow the elders' advice. There's nothing to write, everything is

said and made by the Creator,” a Bora leader suggests in an interview that I conducted (my translation). Thus, the elders orally communicate the law of origin to the community through advice. For these reasons, the law of origin reinforces the authority of elders as mediators between the Creator, ancestors, and community members. From this perspective, indigenous justice depends on the respect of certain principles: “You must take into account that every action has a consequence and that everyone lives the consequences of their actions. You must respect every being’s life,” a Bora leader says in the same interview. The law of origin is to be lived, shared through oral communication, and applied through principles that maintain the common good.

Drawing on the law of origin, indigenous people see an individual’s bad behaviour as a kind of spirit that inhabits the person temporarily. This spirit must be stifled, or else the person may die. In other words, bad behaviour is not intrinsic to individuals who transgress norms. For this reason, individuals can always repair the damages that they cause. To illustrate, a man who kills a father with dependents is obliged to economically support the victim’s entire family, to stifle the spirit of selfishness. He must work for the sons of the deceased until they achieve economic independence. In contrast with the “white people’s law which aims for punishment,” an elder says, the law of origin primarily focuses on “repairing damage and on preventing its repetition” (Community meeting of indigenous leaders with the Colombian Supreme Court of Justice, November 2, 2012). The law of origin is a practical and spiritual form of indigenous knowledge focused on repairing damages and correcting temporary behaviours that may affect the community’s harmony.

Indigenous participants in the Leticia Witoto ESP attempt to challenge the universality of human rights through the law of origin. These challenging practices may produce new forms of indigenous power and identity differences among the Peoples of the Centre. Drawing on the law of origin, the People of the Centre aim to “be like the drop of water that slowly and persistently breaks the stone,” an indigenous community leader says in an interview (my translation). Through coherence and respect for cultural principles, the law of origin regulates the two levels of negotiation in the ESP: the People of the Centre’s inter-ethnic negotiations between indigenous groups and their negotiations with State concepts, procedures, and agents.

5.3.1. The Law of Origin in the People of the Centre's Inter-ethnic Negotiations

In contrast with other ESPs that the Colombian State conducts with one indigenous group at a time, eleven different indigenous peoples take part in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Since they share their territory with other displaced peoples, the Witoto decided to include members of ten additional displaced groups in their ESP. In this respect, the Plan's coordinator asserts: "While the government divides, we join. That's why we integrated several indigenous groups [to the Plan]. We are siblings" (Leticia Witoto ESP Coordinator, interview, September 2, 2012, my translation). Like in the rubber boom period, the Witoto have taken up the alliance of the People of the Centre (which includes the Bora, Ocaina, Nonuya, Muninane, Andoque, and Miraña) in order to reinforce themselves in relation to the State in the context of the ESP. Furthermore, the Leticia Witoto opened this alliance to other groups displaced to the area (e.g., the Cocama, Yagua, and Inga). In November 2012, the Witoto also included the Tikuna in their Plan. Despite their differences, these peoples seek common intercultural connections in order to consolidate power and unity prior to their negotiations with State agents.

The law of origin regulates these inter-ethnic negotiations. In this respect, an ESP's elder asserts,

The law of origin allows us to join all different thoughts into one, to share ideas and speak in the same codes. We must come to an agreement, otherwise we'll become extinct. When we do not understand each other it is because we lack knowledge of ourselves and of our law (ESP elder, Collective meeting, October 3, 2012, my translation).

In other words, the law of origin constitutes a source of commonality between the multiple displaced indigenous peoples that take part in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

This commonality may set the basis of a new indigenous multi-ethnic identity: a renewed alliance of the People of the Centre. The 11 indigenous groups in question have established these common links drawing on cultural and mythological negotiations. A Bora elder refers to his participation in inter-ethnic negotiations with other indigenous people after his forced displacement in the 2000s: "I suffered four years to understand four languages. Then, I understood that all of us are only one tribe, all these peoples come from the tree of abundance"

(ESP elder, Collective meeting, October 3, 2012, my translation)⁷⁸ Similarly, another People of the Centre elder leader suggests,

We should start with our own culture and tradition. There must be union in the process, word without discrimination. The law of origin does not discriminate against anyone. It is for the seven peoples and for the peoples who accompany us [making reference to the Tikuna, Cocama, Yagua, and Inga included recently in the Leticia Witoto ESP]. This must be the same with the [Ethnic] Safeguarding Plan (ESP elder, Collective meeting, October 3, 2012, my translation).

Indigenous mythological knowledge related to the law of origin has played a central role in these inter-ethnic negotiations.

In a community plenary of the ESP team, a Bora elder described how the People of the Centre use mythology to establish common links with other indigenous peoples: “We must identify where they are in our narratives. . . . We are in the Centre because we are *creation*. We [the People of the Centre] are people of tobacco, coca, and sweet manioc. The Tikuna, Cocama, and Yagua are there, *on the other side*” (my translation and emphasis). Thus, despite its apparent openness to other indigenous peoples, this mythological narrative reinforces the ethnocentrism of the People of the Centre and their dominant position as the true “creation,” in contrast with other indigenous participants in the Plan. Likewise, the narrative leaves the latter groups out of the Centre, “on the other side.” In other words, the possibility of achieving rights recognition through the ESP has led the Peoples of the Centre to establish both solidarity connections and inter-ethnic hierarchies through mythic ethnocentric narratives.

These hierarchies emerge from a direct connection between the Witoto and the State in the ESP. The Witoto people are the only indigenous group of the Leticia area directly mentioned in the Constitutional Court’s Order 004. Given their massive exploitation during the rubber boom, the Witoto are one of the most visible Amazonian indigenous groups within State Colombian institutions.⁷⁹ The other Peoples of the Centre and the Tikuna, Cocama, Yagua, and Inga were excluded from the constitutional order even though they also experienced, in different ways, the consequences of rubber exploitation and forced displacement. This incomplete State view on forced displacement has promoted the Witoto from a lower status to a ruling position among the indigenous groups of the Leticia area. Consequently, the ESP has transformed the Witoto from

⁷⁸ Pineda Camacho (2000) also acknowledges similar forms of social organization among the Witoto, Miraña, Bora, Andoque, and other Peoples of the Centre, in spite of their cultural differences.

⁷⁹ The Witoto’s visibility in relation to the State does not mean that they are well known by State agents. Like other plans addressed at the Witoto, Order 004 does not reflect the Witoto’s heterogeneous composition of four linguistic groups and their historical alliances with other six Peoples of the Centre.

outsiders with few territorial rights to the leaders of the most important State plan currently focused on indigenous people of this area.

The supremacy of the Witoto people in the ESP has produced new positions of power that affect democratic relations within this Plan. In October 2012, I attended the election of the governor of the Leticia Urban Indigenous Council. Customarily, this is a democratic process in which several leaders apply as candidates or several Council members nominate one or more candidates to be elected by vote. Then, there is a discussion where each candidate introduces his or her proposals for the community. However, in this case, a Council member nominated a Witoto leader as their new *curaca* (indigenous governor). The elder said “I nominate Guillermo. I think he is the person who has everything to be the new *curaca*. He is the one who will represent us” (my translation). In the subsequent dialogue, most men attending the meeting simply repeated this idea and confirmed the qualities of the candidate to occupy this position. At his turn to speak, another elder nominated a different leader (Luis) as governor. Intimidated by the majority of Guillermo’s supporters, the elder said: “I nominate Luis ‘in brackets.’ Although he is Ocaina, he could be a good leader. He is better known in the community than Guillermo” (my translation). When the second elder started introducing his arguments to defend Luis’ nomination, the Council member who had first spoken interrupted him, giving the floor to other indigenous people who supported the Witoto leader. No one else discussed or proposed other candidates. Without a vote, the Witoto leader became the indigenous governor.

The centrality of ethnicity as a main criterion in this election demonstrates that political power is not necessarily democratic among these indigenous people. As with gender exclusion, the ethnic hierarchies emerging in the context of the Leticia Witoto ESP put in question the egalitarian character of the human rights Plans. In this Plan, hierarchies that emerge from contact between some indigenous groups and the State’s discourse of rights may have produced new forms of unequal relations based on ethnic belonging.

This new leading position of the Witoto has produced a historical change in the inter-ethnic hierarchies of the Leticia area. The Tikuna have commonly rejected the presence of the Witoto and other People of the Centre in the lands that they occupy. However, the possibility of achieving rights recognition from the State has motivated the Tikuna to renew their cultural proximity to the Witoto. In order to be considered beneficiaries of the ESP, the Tikuna started to

consider themselves “part of the Witoto” through narratives drawing on mythological knowledge. In an interview that I conducted, one indigenous Tikuna female leader asserts,

We [the Tikuna] are *people of tobacco* as well. It was through tobacco that the elders forged the spiritual alliance to establish relationships with the Witoto. We are part of them because the Witoto are also coca, manioc, and *ambil* [tobacco powder]. The grandfather of tobacco struggled with the Witoto grandfather to harmonize all of this [territory of the Tikuna-Witoto reserve]. That’s the alliance that took place here (my translation and emphasis).

This narrative recognizes the ethnic boundaries between the Witoto and the Tikuna in order to merge them. Since ethnicity refers to “the production, reproduction and transformation of the social boundaries of ethnic groups” (Jenkins, 1994), these mythological negotiations produce a new ethnic identity that represents the Tikuna and Witoto alike as “people of tobacco.” In this inter-ethnic negotiation, the Tikuna mobilize their mythological and historical knowledge in order to achieve egalitarian political recognition from the State. In other words, the possibilities of sharing a better future together have motivated the Tikuna and Witoto groups to merge their ethnic identities in the ESP (Weber, 1995). Thus, the hope of achieving human rights recognition from the State has motivated the Tikuna to minimize their differences with the Witoto in order to take part in the People of the Centre’s strategic multi-ethnic group.

This strategic connection has entailed for the Tikuna and the Witoto an ambiguous process of inter-ethnic identification. As discussed in Chapter Two, identification processes take place through alignment and separation, desire, idealization, distance, proximity, and projection (Hall and Du Gay, 1996). In the alliance of the People of the Centre, ethnic groups construct identification links but maintain certain differences. Despite their strategic connection, both the Tikuna and Witoto maintain their distinct positions and interests in the ESP. To illustrate, some Tikuna leaders admit that their participation in the ESP includes the aim to regulate Witoto presence on their land. The only Tikuna elder who takes part in the ESP referred to these territorial problems in a tree-problem workshop that I conducted with the Plan’s team:⁸⁰

I wrote that [our main problem is] colonization. . . . We [the Tikuna people] lost our identity because we allowed people from other places to come into our territory. [Prior to their arrival,] our own management between Tikunas and Cocamas was comprehensible and easy to handle. When other *curacas* [indigenous governors] allowed other ethnic groups to come here, I mean other indigenous groups with different thoughts [here he indirectly refers to the Witoto and other Peoples of the Centre], this problem affected us. Then we lost our own cultural identity. Contemporary Tikunas do not want to know anything about *pelazón* or *masato*.⁸¹ Now they [the People of the Centre] have

⁸⁰ I described the tree-problem workshop’s characteristics in Chapter Three.

⁸¹ The *pelazón* is a traditional Tikuna rite of passage for women. From the Tikuna perspective, the *pelazón* represents the transition from childhood to adulthood and the possibility of sharing women’s fertility with the whole

increased several times, we cannot remove them from our territory, they are more than one thousand inhabitants and they used to be 350 when I arrived. It means that there is colonization between us (my translation).

In the same vein, a former Tikuna governor suggests, “the Safeguarding Plan will establish a limit. We won’t accept any other people [in the reserve]. Through the Plan we’ll make sure that those people, the Witoto *paisanos*, will stop coming here and having the opportunity to be educated there, in their home lands” (Tikuna governor, Interview, November 11, 2012, my translation).

According to these reflections, the Tikuna and Witoto peoples’ interests in the new multi-ethnic alliance differ from one another according to their relations with territory. While the Tikuna seek compensation for the effects of the constant migration of Witoto and other peoples onto their territory, the Witoto expect to strengthen the territorial appropriation that they gained through alliances forged with the Tikuna after the rubber boom. Although situated in the same space, these indigenous groups struggle for their rights from distinct positions of power defined by their own historical and cultural contexts. In spite of the apparent intention to merge their identities, differences persist in these inter-ethnic negotiations.

These distinct positions and interests of groups forging the new alliance of the People of the Centre are a reminder that ethnicity structures group interactions in ways that favour the persistence of cultural differences (Barth, 1995). It can thus be argued that the Tikuna and Witoto peoples’ contact with the State human rights discourses has simultaneously motivated processes of mutual commonality and differentiation. Although apparently contradictory, both processes aim to strengthen these groups’ strategic positions to achieve rights recognition from the State. Instead of homogenization, these indigenous peoples’ negotiations with universal and State human rights discourses may lead to new multi-ethnic links of commonality forged through mythical and historical knowledge; at the same time, each group preserves a certain singularity. These ambiguous, changing, and strategic processes of producing multi-ethnic identities challenge visions that assume human rights discourses to be homogenizing and universal, undermining cultural diversity.

community. *Masato* is a traditional beverage accompanying mainly this ritual. Both *pelazón* and *masato* constitute relevant markers of the Tikuna cultural identity (see Ramos, 2010).

5.3.2. Ethnicity, History and Land Access: The Intersection of Power and Differences in the ESP

In Chapter One, I suggested that the alliance of the People of the Centre has assembled peoples who were historically at war with each other (Stanfield, 1998). In the ESP in question, some displaced Bora and Witoto of the Leticia area have reactivated these rivalries. Differences in their historical conditions of displacement have fuelled inter-ethnic frictions. While most Witoto ESP team members migrated to Leticia in the aftermath of the rubber boom (1930s-1950s), other team members arrived in the area in the 1990s and early 2000s, as a result of the actions of armed actors (see Introduction and Chapter One). These historical differences shape distinct access to indigenous traditional knowledge, understandings of indigenous practices, forms of leadership, and territorial relations.

I observed certain struggles to be recognized as legitimate and qualified ESP leaders between people who arrived in the 1950s and others who arrived more recently in Leticia. People who arrived recently (I will call them the people of the townships) see themselves as having deep indigenous knowledge. This view is based on their recent and direct connection with indigenous elders situated in the homeland of the People of the Centre, near the Amazonian townships⁸² of La Chorrera, Tarapacá, Puerto Arica, and El Encanto. The people of the townships describe those who arrived after the 1950s (they call them the people of the road) as narrow-minded people ignorant of their own culture. The latter group are mainly orphans or people displaced during the period of the rubber boom. Under these historical conditions, they did not learn their culture from their own elders, or at least not in the same depth as the people of the townships.

Rather than merely historical, these differences are also ethnic. The people of the road are mainly Witoto and Tikuna, while the people of the townships are mainly Bora, Ocaina, Muinane, or Andoque. The words of a Bora professional who comes from the township of Tarapacá illustrate these differences: “The local Witoto are suffocated people. They will become extinct within the next 20 years. They’ll die when their elders die because young people do not practice their culture” (ESP professional team meeting, September 13, 2012, my translation). These

⁸² I use the word township as a literal translation of the Spanish word *corregimiento*, which in the Colombian legislation refers to a town with a local authority directly dependent on a broader municipality. In contrast with most Colombian townships, townships in the Amazonas province depend directly on the provincial government. This administrative measure is due to the geographical distance of these townships from the only two municipalities of the province and to their reduced operating budget.

differences also shape each group's views of the ESP. According to a Bora leader displaced from the township of Puerto Arica,

This [Plan] works because the government tells them [the people of the road] how to work. For them, it [the Plan] is like tourism, they dance because tourists come. . . . They work when tourists come or when there is money involved. Otherwise, it is as if they are not truly interested (Bora leader, interview, September 19, 2012, my translation).

From the viewpoint of the people of the townships, the people of the road use the ESP as another project to generate income through the external exhibition of indigenous culture.

The Bora elder of Puerto Arica explains the cultural causes of this behaviour: "People from here [the road] do not have their traditional basis." In contrast, he argues, the people of the townships see culture as "an internal process with a spiritual basis" (ESP professional team meeting, September 13, 2012, my translation). The people of the townships see themselves as living their culture inwardly in order to reinforce their community in relation to external agents. Thus, the role of indigenous culture in relation to the State defines differences between the peoples of the townships and the road.

The importance that the people of the townships attribute to inner cultural and spiritual processes can be interpreted as a mechanism to compensate for their lack of access to territory. In contrast with the "people of the road," who live on community lands legally acknowledged as an indigenous reserve, most people of the townships live in Leticia urban areas. Some of them live in a community *maloka* recently constructed with the support of the provincial authorities to host displaced indigenous people. Others occupy or rent hovels in Leticia slum areas. In this regard, the Bora elder of Puerto Arica asserts, "Our weakness is due to our geographical situation" (ESP professional team meeting, September 27, 2012, my translation).

For the people of the townships, the condition of being in a foreign territory deprived of land access constitutes another reason to criticize the people of the road:

Those who are here in the reserve have their own land, but they do not know it as they should. We, who [are forced to] live in the urban area, have difficulties because we do not have a *chagra* or at least a plot to sow, we do not have our own botanical garden to sow the plants to heal people, we do not have the means to solve our own problems (Bora elder, ESP professional team meeting, September 13, 2012, my translation).

This lack of material resources intensifies ethnic and historical differences between indigenous peoples taking part in the Leticia Witoto ESP. Most people of the townships take part in the ESP from marginal positions produced at the intersection of historical conditions of displacement, ethnic belonging, and land dispossession.

From this intersection of marginalities, the people of the townships use the ESP as a means to recover positions of power that they lost after forced displacement. Inter-ethnic differentiation plays a critical role in this power struggle. Referring to the people of the road who lead the ESP, some elders of the townships say, “Here there are no leaders, these people are fishermen or hunters. . . . They are not *maloka* owners [as we are]” (Bora elder, collective interview, October 22nd, 2012). Indeed, these new structures of power reveal other effects of displacement on indigenous forms of political and social organization. According to the people of the townships (who are mainly Bora leaders), the people of the road do not belong to the lineage of indigenous chiefs (*maloka* owners) and lack accurate preparation to lead a community. For the Bora leaders, Witoto indigenous leaders who “do not know the culture” are now leading those who used to be traditional leaders in Bora communities. Through this claim, the townships’ Bora people perceive themselves as knowledgeable indigenous people who challenge the power that the Witoto have gained through their direct contact with the State in the ESP. From these power-knowledge positions, the Bora attempt to resist current inter-ethnic hierarchies produced through the ESP.

These unequal inter-ethnic negotiations suggest that the alliance of the People of the Centre is everything but a homogeneous and egalitarian relationship. This multi-ethnic alliance brings together indigenous groups situated in different identity-based, historical, and economic positions of power. Although all of them share the experience of displacement, differences in history, ethnicity, and land access affect their positions in this alliance. These differences may intersect with one another, increasing the disparity and rivalry between peoples taking part in this human rights plan. Indigenous participants in the alliance of the People of the Centre continuously produce, minimize, and renew these identity differences in order to gain or recover hierarchies altered both by forced displacement and by their direct contact with the State in the ESP.

5.3.3. Indigenous, National, and International Law in the Leticia Witoto ESP

The law of origin situates indigenous Amazonian peoples in a strategic position in relation to national and international legislation. Some activities that I observed in my fieldwork demonstrated that several Amazonian indigenous groups (including the People of the Centre) do not necessarily identify themselves with the Constitutional order. In a workshop that the

Colombian Supreme Court of Justice led in Leticia in November 2012, several indigenous leaders defined themselves as “unconstitutional people.” This workshop opened discussions to plan possible arrangements between ordinary Colombian legislation, the ESPs, and the Programme to Guarantee the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Affected by Displacement. In this meeting, an indigenous leader asserted before one court magistrate and a vast audience of indigenous and non-indigenous legislators: “We are not ruled by the national Constitution because the law of origin comes from indigenous people’s Creator, ancestors, and territory, which existed before the Constitution” (my translation). Most indigenous attendees expressed agreement with this claim. These leaders legitimated the law of origin as their main or perhaps only legislative framework for addressing indigenous people’s problems.

Similarly, the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders proposed to conduct this Plan according to their law of origin. After a collective reading of the Constitutional Court’s Order 004, an ESP professional asserted, “We must conduct the Plan according to our own law. . . . This is not a white people’s party” (Collective meeting, November 16, 2012, my translation). For some indigenous leaders, this precedence of the law of origin over other legal frameworks does not exclude possibilities of rights recognition according to national and international law. Indeed, some Leticia Witoto ESP leaders suggest that the Colombian Constitution “should not be an alien document for us.” These leaders acknowledge that, despite their differences from the law of origin, Constitutional rights may become a mechanism to overcome indigenous people’s marginality.

Drawing on their law of origin, the People of the Centre situate themselves in an ambiguous position of cultural distance from and strategic use of national and international human rights frameworks. The People of the Centre directly connect their law of origin with the international discourse of human rights in order to produce positions of power in their relations with the State. With this purpose, the Leticia Witoto ESP leaders acknowledge the hierarchy of universal human rights discourse to make the State value their cultural specificity as an ethnic group. Such a purpose brings together three forms of belonging that do not necessarily coincide: ethnicity, citizenship, and universalism. Ethnicity gives precedence to the particularity of being “the chosen people”; citizenship refers to homogeneous belonging to the nation-state; and universality conveys the undifferentiated belonging to humanity (Bhabha, 2008; Ramos, 1998, p. 100). Given the assumed universal character of human rights, in the encounter between these

three forms of belonging, humanity often takes precedence over citizenship and ethnicity (Ramos, 1998).

The Leticia Witoto ESP team connects these forms of belonging in creative ways according to their indigenous knowledge of the law of origin. Given the universality of human rights agreements that support the Court Order, the People of the Centre see the Court as their main ally. Consequently, they see the State as an agent obliged to respond to its poor record in the recognition of indigenous people's rights. An ESP leader's speech in a community meeting on indigenous autonomy held in the indigenous council of the Leticia area illustrates this strategic view of the universality of human rights:

The State has been punished by the Court, which is their *patrón* (chief). They must return to us what is ours. . . . However, the State should not force us to be different from what we are. They must provide us with attention here, where we are, with what we are, and how we are. We do not need to do what the government says. . . . Do not compare us with other indigenous people, every group is different. . . . The State must acknowledge that indigenous people are not peasants – we are different, have a different identity with different practices and, hence, must be treated differently (my translation and emphasis).

In this speech, the ESP leader situates the Constitutional Court in a hierarchical position in relation to the Colombian State given its connection with international law. Drawing on this hierarchy, the leader proposes to press the State to recognize indigenous people's rights.

The recognition of this hierarchy is provisional because this leader uses their inclusion in the Constitutional Court's Order as a means to subvert the hierarchy of the universalistic belonging to humanity. Their discourse attempts to exert pressure on the State not only in order to achieve equality before law as human beings, but especially to achieve recognition according to the specificity of indigenous people. Thus, this leader's speech illustrates subaltern agents' struggles that are as much about difference as they are about equality (Rodríguez Garavito and Arenas, 2005). In this struggle, indigenous people strategically acknowledge the universality of human rights upheld by the Court in order to demand that the State acknowledge their rights according to their law of origin. In this way, the People of the Centre use the universality of the Court's human rights discourse to confer precedence to their right to be culturally different.

This precedence of indigenous laws and specificity over international and national legislations and institutions may influence inclusive visions of rights. The experiences of these indigenous groups affected by displacement can teach the State the relevance of contextualized views to deal with injustices in inclusive and plural ways. These indigenous people connect their

law of origin with universal human rights to establish the right to cultural difference as a non-negotiable basis from which to recognize the rights of displaced indigenous people.

This basis can open progressive intercultural dialogues to rethink human rights according to the historically neglected practices, understandings, and voices of indigenous and local agents. The law of origin's hierarchy in its interactions with national and international law has produced among these leaders a form of "place-based consciousness" drawing on local legal knowledge (Escobar, 2001). Consciousness of the potential of their law of origin has motivated these indigenous people to collectively imagine alternatives through which to overcome marginalization. One of the ESP leaders acknowledges the potential of their law of origin by proposing to use this Plan to "influence and modify the Constitution" according to such indigenous law (Indigenous professional, community meeting, November 19, 2012, my translation). This proposal may suggest the possibility of restorative and culturally based versions of justice. Although informal and embryonic, this proposal may open national laws to the multiple knowledges of law and justice of Colombian indigenous peoples.

5.3.4. Frictions between Subjects Produced through Different Legal Knowledges

The Leticia Witoto ESP has brought together three forms of indigenous leadership produced through three different legislative discourses. As described above, the law of origin legitimates the elders as community guides, whose knowledge derives from their connection with their ancestors and Creator. In contrast, the positions of the indigenous professionals and indigenous community leaders result from the ESP team leaders' interpretation of the Court Order and State mechanisms to formulate this Plan. These forms of indigenous leadership produced through the ESP have conflicted with authorities governing the Tikuna-Witoto reserve (namely indigenous governors and councils) according to Constitutional rights established after 1991.

The 1991 Constitution and the Decree 2164 of 1995 established indigenous governors (*curacas*) and councils (*cabildo indigena*) as the main authorities of indigenous reserves.⁸³ Thereafter, indigenous governors and councils became the main political and economic mediators between municipal and national authorities and indigenous communities. The

⁸³ As described in Chapter One, these State measures draw on colonial laws, 19th-century legislation on indigenous topics, and the claims of some Andean indigenous movements.

economic and political relevance of the indigenous councils in relation to the State has affected the influence of traditional indigenous authorities of Amazonian communities – namely, indigenous chiefs (*caciques*) and elder councils (*consejos de ancianos*). Indeed, in several communities of the Leticia area, these traditional authorities have been weakened or have disappeared.

With the aim of recovering the elder councils and drawing on the right to political autonomy promoted by Order 004, the Leticia Witoto ESP team is governed by an indigenous council based on the elders' knowledge. In this respect, one ESP indigenous professional asserts, "We must subvert the current order of the councils and governor. In Tarapacá [a township situated 200 kilometres to the north of Leticia] the community consults with the elders prior to [making] any decision. In contrast, here [in the Leticia area] the [indigenous] council makes every decision" (ESP indigenous professional, personal communication, September 11, 2012, my translation). Some Leticia Witoto ESP members consider the indigenous council and governors to be illegitimate authorities, given their origin in colonial and State structures of power. For these reasons, the ESP leaders are in rivalry with indigenous council members.

These rivalries are evident among the Tikuna-Witoto reserve inhabitants. These people are far from reaching a community consensus about the authority of the ESP council of knowledgeable elders. Several reserve inhabitants – including some ESP team members – argue that the ESP council members lack traditional knowledge, commitment, and discipline to lead this Plan. In their view, the ESP elders are merely interested into earning a salary from the government. Members of indigenous communities in the reserve are more likely to contest the authority of these ESP leaders than that of indigenous governors, who are democratically elected every year.

The State staff mechanisms to implement the Leticia Witoto ESP have also influenced these relationships of rivalry. As suggested in Section 5.1, from the very beginning of this Plan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs chose as its leader a former governor of the 11th kilometre community who no longer belongs to the indigenous council. This choice dismissed the authority of indigenous councils and the indigenous zonal association of councils (AZCAITA). Some members of indigenous councils attribute the deepening of their rivalry with the ESP leaders to this dismissal. I witnessed some of these conflicts during the public presentation of the activities to launch the ESP's assessment phase in the 11th kilometre community. At that point, the

indigenous governor complained because he was not consulted about these activities. He interrupted the meeting to argue that the Plan was not taking into account the area councils and their zonal association. The ESP professional team denied this claim by arguing that the formal participation of these authorities was expected during the Plan's community consultation, diffusion, and implementation phases. In the 6th kilometre community, an indigenous council member also interrupted a similar presentation of the ESP team. In front of a mainly Tikuna audience, this member said, "I do not understand why you present this Plan here if it is for the Witoto. The governor has not yet been consulted about this Plan" (my translation). Although the ESP team continued the presentation, the interruption produced comments that delegitimized this Plan and its team. As of November 2012, negotiations between the ESP team and the indigenous zonal association of councils (AZCAITA) had not been possible because the latter questioned the legitimacy of the ESP's assessment phase. These rivalries have affected the Leticia Witoto ESP's acceptance among some inhabitants of the reserve.

To summarize, the ESP's formulation in the Leticia area has produced complex negotiations and rivalries between forms of indigenous leadership produced by three legislative discourses. The localization of human rights discourses through this Plan has produced, reactivated, or deepened community power struggles between new and existing indigenous leaders. This case illustrates once again how human rights discourses produce power relations that can be articulated with local social conflicts and disparities. Although human rights discourses underlying the ESP are commonly mobilized as the "highest aspiration of the common people" (Ramos, 1998, p. 90; United Nations, 1948), their localization processes may intensify existing power inequalities on community scales. These frictions challenge the assumed universal egalitarianism of human rights discourses.

5.3.5. The Law of Origin in Friction with Human Rights

The specific ways in which indigenous people appropriate the Leticia Witoto ESP may reflect frictions with State concepts and procedures based in universal discourses of human rights. These frictions are evident in indigenous people's resistance to individual and homogenizing views of human rights as a legislative discourse that takes precedence over other forms of legislation.

The Leticia Witoto ESP team have mobilized their law of origin, instead of human rights-based individualistic views, to construct common links between displaced indigenous groups of the Leticia area. Through their historical strategy of forging inter-ethnic alliances to face non-indigenous people, participants in the Leticia ESP remind both the State and global human rights agents of the importance of collective associations and mechanisms in struggles for rights recognition. Throughout the assessment phase of this Plan, ethnic groups, tribes, indigenous councils, committees, and multi-ethnic associations have arisen as subjects struggling for rights and deserving of rights recognition. The emphasis placed by these indigenous peoples on collective associations challenges the centrality of individuals as subjects entitled to human rights and the role of the State as the only location of rights recognition. These indigenous practices are a reminder of the necessary recognition of collective subjects, visions, and practices in contemporary discourses of human rights.

On the other hand, inter-ethnic negotiations between the People of the Centre may challenge homogeneous views of humanity associated with human rights discourse. As established in Chapter Two, the universality of human rights draws on homogeneous conceptions of the human being (United Nations, 1948). In contrast, members of the alliance of the People of the Centre have produced new strategic forms of indigenous identity in order to negotiate with the State. These negotiations have produced multi-ethnic indigenous identities that contrast with the undifferentiated individual belonging that human rights discourses universalize. Identity and positions of power that the People of the Centre produce in the ESP recall the need for human rights policies adaptable to the continuous production of differences in contemporary intercultural relations.

Accordingly, indigenous experiences of human rights appropriation can also teach activists, institutions, and researchers about the importance of differences in the localization of human rights discourses. The People of the Centre's multi-ethnic identity may illustrate that globalization not only requires negotiation with particularity (Hall, 1998), but also leads to the continuous strategic production of cultural differences. In this case, this negotiation has produced the multi-ethnic identity of the People of the Centre; has produced identity differences or exchanges between the Tikuna and the Witoto; has created new forms of differentiation according to different moments of displacement; and has left room for intergenerational and gender differences. New and multiple identities produced through contact with State agents are

reminders that cultural groups continually recreate and produce their differences through strategic negotiations (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). As such, this analysis suggests the need for international law to take into account the continual production of differences and positions of power in intercultural communication. Awareness of the ways groups continually transform their identities by human rights agents may facilitate legislations and methodologies better adapted to the permanent production of heterogeneity in contemporary global encounters.

The ESP's intercultural exchanges on law may contribute to critical examinations of human rights as an incomplete global construction – an experimental work in progress and not an inflexible truth (Mutua, 2002, cited in Dembour, 2010). In this respect, the law of origin confers precedence to specific contextual conditions over undifferentiated forms of human belonging. In contrast with the universal discourse of human rights, which excludes collective associations, indigenous visions of law do not necessarily consider ethnicity, citizenship, and universalism to be mutually exclusive. These complementary visions can contribute to transcending the abstract and rational character of human rights. As a form of situated knowledge, the law of origin incorporates ethnic groups, specific local conditions, and multiple mechanisms of exchange such as rituals, narratives, dances and collective spaces into dialogue on rights recognition. The law of origin acknowledges the value of collective, cultural, spiritual, and mythic visions of law normally discarded in Western views of human rights. By connecting the indigenous legislation to specific contexts, culturally shared principles and practices, mechanisms of knowledge-exchange, and multiple dimensions of social life, the law of origin confers dynamism and a sense of belonging to indigenous rights struggles. These indigenous strategies of negotiation can be helpful for transforming human rights recognition into a daily, collective, and situated practice. These connections between cultural and political dynamics of law can strengthen people's participation and engagement in processes that attempt to produce transformations in their own living conditions.

Furthermore, the centrality of the law of origin in the described negotiations generates visible alternative forms of legal knowledge in intercultural dialogues on rights. The People of the Centre's law of origin proposes restorative forms of justice, values such as commitment between acts and actions to contribute to the well-being of the community, and an anti-essentialist view of subjects who transgress norms. This alternative knowledge of rights may enrich plural versions of human rights adjusted to the specific and concrete conditions of local

groups. Intercultural dialogues between ethnic and universal legal knowledges may give birth to renewed, more flexible, and contextually applicable versions of dignity and rights.

In the Colombian context, the law of origin may also complement the State's knowledge on indigenous people's experiences of displacement. Through the inclusion of other displaced and non-displaced indigenous groups in their ESP, the Witoto leaders may remind the State of the need for contextually situated policies on displacement. Their inclusion of traditional allies and the Tikuna in the Leticia Witoto ESP may be seen as an act of justice by the Witoto towards peoples helpful to their survival following two historically traumatic episodes – namely, the rubber boom and the displacement to the Leticia area. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Tikuna in the ESP reveals the importance of taking into account communities receiving displaced people in plans focused on displaced populations. Through these inclusive movements, the Witoto complement State knowledge of the indigenous people of the Leticia area and contribute to the recognition of the multiple effects of forced displacement on indigenous groups.

These inclusive movements take into account different positions of power from which subaltern subjects negotiate with human rights and development agents according to their histories of marginalization. The recognition of these specific marginal positions challenges homogeneous conceptions of humanity that may hide existing inequalities (Brown, 1995; Grewal, 2005). These inclusive negotiations illustrate that subaltern subjects struggle for rights recognition from multiple and changing differentiated positions situated in specific historical and cultural contexts.

5.4. CONCLUSIONS

The analyses introduced in this chapter can be summarized by this question: What are the possibilities of inclusion and recognition in intercultural dialogues on rights and development when one of the participants has systematically participated in the conditions of marginalization of the other? The narrative cited at the beginning of this chapter suggests that the People of the Centre answer this question just like a “prey [who] learns to defend itself by knowing the hunter.” From historical positions of distrust and resistance in relation to the State, these indigenous people use this Plan according to regulatory concepts, practices, and logics related to their notions of abundance and the law of origin. These two concepts connect the People of the

Centre's epistemological, ontological, and axiological views. These interconnected views provide clues to understanding the ESP's significance among these indigenous peoples.

From an epistemological view, the People of the Centre consider knowledge to be scientific when it is practical and useful to the community's survival. The notion of abundance and the law of origin lead the People of the Centre to understand this Plan as a practical and concrete opportunity to produce benefits for indigenous people. This chapter suggests that the ESP has motivated the People of the Centre to renew indigenous knowledges in ways that reinforce some community initiatives, produce strategic identities, develop creative tactics to challenge marginality, reactivate collective spaces, and create organizations and networks that may influence the process of rights recognition. These collective positions of cohesion and resistance emerge from indigenous people's knowledge of their territory and communities.

Simultaneously, the ESP team's structure has at times produced and reproduced positions of disempowerment among its participants. I illustrated these points through my analysis of the indigenous people's dependency on State knowledge of human rights; of the intensification of marginal positions based on gender, ethnic, and historical differences; and of inter-ethnic rivalries between subjects produced through different legal frameworks. For these reasons, indigenous knowledges can produce both empowering and disempowering positions for indigenous subjects.

These double positions suggest that Ramos' (2002) metaphor of human rights as a double-edged sword for indigenous people is not exclusive to this universal discourse. Epistemological inequalities between human rights and indigenous knowledges may empower some subjects at the expense of others. These frictions, produced through the localization of universal discourses, contest both the alleged neutrality of human rights as equally beneficial to all groups, and the romanticized understandings of indigenous knowledges as inherently free from oppression. Rather, power circulates and produces inequalities within these global and local discourses and through their unequal connections.

Accordingly, analyses of power and frictions between local and universal knowledges must take into account new hierarchies or forms of marginality that may emerge from such unequal connections. Power relations produced through these epistemological frictions suggest two interrelated insights into the circulation of power across multiple scales. First, drawing on their direct connection with the State, some ESP community leaders have at times reproduced

unbalanced relations at the community scale that they attempt to overcome on the local, regional, and national scale – such as epistemological dependency, women’s invisibility, and ethnic inequalities. These unbalanced relations illustrate how power circulates on micro scales in ways that can reproduce more general forms of global domination (Foucault, 1980a, p. 99). This characteristic of power is directly connected to the second insight: Instead of being held solely by the State, power is a relational construction continuously transforming local and community contexts. Furthermore, indigenous peoples’ connections with universal discourses have intensified power struggles among the Leticia-area inhabitants. Consequently, the People of the Centre’s contacts with human rights and development have increased the complexity of their inter-ethnic relations, instead of producing merely egalitarian outcomes. The ways that power circulates among these communities reflect that global and local scales are mutually interconnected (Mohanty, 2003). These circulatory movements confirm that local contexts are complex productions continuously contested through the convergence of unequal forces (Dirlik, 1996).

From an indigenous ontological viewpoint, the Leticia Witoto ESP has motivated the People of the Centre to see themselves as beings capable of completing their world – by naming it and working collectively to transform their habitat in order to overcome marginality. Participants in this Plan have reinforced inter-ethnic negotiations and intercultural dialogues to envision possibilities of rights recognition for their communities. These possibilities have motivated 11 indigenous groups to open and recreate their ethnic boundaries in order to produce new strategic indigenous identities. The production of new ethnicities described here is guided by the mythic knowledges and processes of identification of the People of the Centre, reminding us that indigenous identity is not a fixed or essentialist process. Rather, indigenous identity (or indigeneity) is a relational and political process that connects indigenous forms of knowledge and power to strengthen indigenous people’s forms of agency.

Members of the renewed alliance of the People of the Centre have transformed their image from one of displaced people needing help or losing their culture to active subjects aware of their cultural possibilities to overcome marginalization. Even if marginality has persisted or intensified for some of them, indigenous people taking part in this Plan have developed a shared consciousness of their struggle for rights recognition according to their law of origin. This rise in awareness of the People of the Centre’s abilities to overcome marginality results from knowing

the potentialities of their law of origin and from using this law to subvert the hierarchies between indigenous, national, and international legislations.

From an axiological viewpoint, the Leticia Witoto ESP activities have facilitated a context of shared values oriented toward the common good of the indigenous communities. Collective discussions amongst the multi-ethnic ESP team have strengthened indigenous values such as the coherence between their words and actions, respect for collective engagements, and working together with discipline and under the same culturally based law. These values have empowered indigenous subjects to struggle for recognition according to their specific differences. Although the ESP's implementation is still forthcoming, this Plan's appropriation according to cultural principles connected with indigenous knowledges may enable some positive outcomes for indigenous communities. Some of these outcomes are evident in the networks and organizations that the ESP leaders have produced to gain local and regional influence.

Regarding frictions between indigenous knowledges and development, this chapter describes how the Leticia Witoto ESP team was influenced by a previous negotiation with an international development agency (USAID). From a post-development viewpoint, instead of mere cultural homogenization, the ESP team's dialogues with development agents can lead to "new ways of thinking about" and acting in the world (Escobar, 2001, p. 157). In this case, indigenous views on the production of abundance through collective solidarity challenge individualistic State development views on economic improvement via external aid and monetary growth. While development programs establish poverty and scarcity as unquestioned premises, the People of the Centre perceive themselves and their lands as producers of abundance. These people share this conception even after being displaced from their traditional territories and sources of livelihood. Furthermore, while institutional projects emphasize economic growth through productivity, money is useless to the People of the Centre for wealth production. In the indigenous people's view, "money is useful for supplying immediate needs rather than for accumulating more money" (Nieto, 2010, p. 178, my translation). Indeed, money and material goods can become a source of illness when they become predominant in society (Micarelli, 2003, p. 112, quoted in Huérfano Belisamón, 2010, p. 157). Furthermore, the individualism of capitalist development contrasts with principles ruled by the notion of abundance such as producing community wellbeing and ensuring the group's survival through sharing the results of collective work.

In contrast with transient emergency aid emphasized in the ESP legal framework, the ESP leaders have promoted participatory dialogues on territorial redistribution to ensure the communities' eventual material and cultural stability. However, these participatory dialogues have not been enough to challenge marginality. Indigenous women's invisible and silent positions in the Leticia Witoto ESP confirm that participatory experiences can reproduce and even intensify local forms of exclusion (Huesca, 2002). Leaders of this Plan have reproduced gender inequalities by using symbols of abundance. On behalf of the respect to cultural traditions, these symbolic representations of femininity preclude an effective political participation of elder and young women. The claims of young women reconstructed in this Chapter suggest that the Leticia Witoto ESP team share different views about the respect to tradition to the detriment of women's participation. Dissent views suggest that indigenous traditions, as other cultural forms, can be transformed in order to avoid exclusions reproduced historically. In the studied case, the exclusion of women's claims on behalf of the respect to symbols of abundance suggests that local views of tradition as a static construction can reproduce and deepen exclusionary practices, even in participatory dialogues such as the ESP.

Prioritizing the notion of abundance over Western views of development may ensure more inclusive results in development programs led with the People of the Centre. The centrality of territory and the inclusion of spiritual dimensions constitute two important differences between the notion of abundance and other development paradigms. Foundational narratives quoted in this chapter describe the Amazon River and its basin as a place produced through the tree of abundance. In these narratives, inhabitants are located at the extremities of this tree to represent the multiplying of the tree's fertility through human action. Furthermore, this narrative strengthens the notion of common lineage of the People of the Centre as sons of a single Creator, who originate in the "Centre of the World" and who produce abundance. Producing abundance is thus connected to logical systems of knowledge, indigenous values, senses of territorial belonging, and spirituality. In order to avoid more failed development projects, institutional practitioners promoting development must know, value, and take into account these cultural meanings of abundance in their programs.

Lastly, connections between culturally defined knowledges and practices with international law may suggest new mechanisms of intercultural coordination between indigenous and State agents. This intercultural coordination may favour inclusive measures on topics that entail

synergies between multiple social dimensions such as economic redistribution, political representation, and cultural recognition. Projects such as language recovery may constitute a concrete struggle to intensify current State democracy models focused merely on the recognition of minimum vital rights. This project may create room for State programs on displaced subjects to recognize the historical contexts, structural economic inequalities, political forms of exclusion, and needs for cultural recognition necessary to ensure the indigenous people expression in their own languages. In these ways, the People of the Centre's law of origin may be recognized as a modern form of legislative knowledge that proposes alternative and culturally based conceptions of rights effective for more balanced intercultural encounters.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter responds to the following question: What can scholars and practitioners learn from indigenous people's negotiations with human rights and development? I respond by revisiting my general and specific research questions and by introducing the conceptual and methodological contributions of this dissertation to research in intercultural communication, human rights, and development. I also outline the relevance of my empirical findings in understanding the complexity of contemporary relations between global and local knowledges and introduce some limits of this research process. Drawing on these reflections, I propose some recommendations for the Leticia Witoto ESP, for human rights and development researchers and practitioners who work with indigenous and local populations, and for policymakers who engage with the ESP or other plans focused on indigenous people. Lastly, I detail some future research interests that emerge from my dissertation's conclusions and limits.

I started this dissertation with the preliminary question, how do indigenous people appropriate universal discourses of human rights and development in order to overcome their historical positions of marginalization? I answered this question by describing practices and systems of knowledge related to the notions of abundance and the law of origin. Both notions allowed me to identify negotiation tactics, mechanisms of identification and differentiation, forms of rivalry, and power relations produced by the Leticia Witoto ESP team during the creation of this Plan.

In accordance with their notion of abundance, the People of the Centre share a sense of collective survival reinforced through solidarity and by sharing the results of collective work. The People of the Centre see the production of abundance as a collective process – not as a goal to attain. The production of abundance regulates mechanisms of knowledge-exchange in the *chagras* (vegetable plot) and *mambeaderos* (spaces to chew coca), delimits gender roles in family and community work, and produces the capacities to ensure the survival of the group according to its cultural and contextual singularities. The notion of abundance suggests that the People of the Centre produce their material improvement through *amanecer la palabra* (the value of maintaining coherence between words and actions). For this reason, this notion connects material improvement with collective cultural practices, values, and knowledges.

On the other hand, the People of the Centre legitimate the importance of the law of origin in relation to other legislations by arguing that their law was given by the Creator and ensures the group's survival through a direct connection with their territory and ancestors. This indigenous view on law and justice connects spirituality, territoriality, history, and collectively shared principles. Drawing on this law, the Witoto broadened the scope of their ESP to ten additional peoples affected by displacement. Furthermore, the emphasis of the law of origin on the transient nature of negative spirits who motivate bad behaviour proposes a kind of justice focused on recovering the originally "good" character of the human condition. Culturally shared principles emphasize discovering and recovering this original human nature, even within subjects who transgress norms. My descriptions of the notion and uses of the People of the Centre's law of origin offers clues to answer theoretical needs about the ways indigenous people conceive the notion of human rights (Krotz, 2004).

The notion of abundance and the law of origin challenge and complement universal human rights and development discourses. Both notions challenge the individual, delocalized, and teleological character of human rights and development discourses and practices. The notion of abundance and the law of origin focus on collective knowledges and practices and on a direct relationship with the specific territorial, historical, and cultural context. These notions also insist on the contemporary importance of collective subjects such as ethnic or multi-ethnic groups, associations, and movements in processes of human rights recognition. The People of the Centre's demand to be recognized according to their ethnicity rather than according to a universal discourse of humanity reinforces the current value of collective visions of rights. This demand for recognition establishes the need for human rights plans focused on the cultural and contextual singularities of human groups. Furthermore, instead of setting future goals, both notions propose the improvement of material or political recognition under current conditions using the resources and abilities that indigenous people share in their present contexts. In their cultural narratives, abundance and respect to the law of origin are possible in the present by identifying the capabilities of indigenous people to survive in the Amazon region and to respect principles that strengthen the common good.

By recognizing indigenous versions of development or human rights, institutional agents can construct more sustained intercultural experiences of cooperation with indigenous people. For this reason, analyses of the negotiation tactics of disenfranchised subjects in their encounters

with State programs may contribute to more equitable human rights and development relations. Studies of how indigenous subjects creatively face universal discourses provide insights into the abilities and forms of agency that may influence empowerment for marginal subjects in their interactions with agents related to global discourses and forces.

I analyzed such negotiations through the notion of friction. Just as two sticks produce fire through friction, different world views and epistemologies in contact with one another can generate multiple, unpredictable, and diverse positions beneficial or detrimental to subaltern subjects. This dissertation analyzed frictions including the re-emergence of some traditional authorities (for instance, the council of knowledgeable elders), and the production of certain embryonic forms of indigenous organizations (AFINTREL) and networks (the Path of Tobacco) in the Leticia area. These leadership positions and organizations have influenced new agreements and exchanges with other indigenous agents and movements struggling from similar positions. For example, in December 2012, two Leticia Witoto ESP elders participated in a national gathering that assembled several indigenous groups near Bogotá who have developed comparable Plans. These exchanges have opened up possibilities for these leaders to produce synergies with other indigenous and non-indigenous groups and institutions at the national scale. In short, indigenous people's encounters with State and universal discourses are not necessarily unidirectional or negative. These encounters may influence processes of visibility and solidarity potentially beneficial to the communities that these indigenous leaders represent.

At the same time, frictions between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses have produced and reproduced exclusionary practices. My analysis reflects how indigenous people and State agents circulate these knowledges and discourses through the production of inequalities at the community scale and through the imposition of State visions or indigenous knowledges as unquestioned truths. In respect to indigenous knowledges, the notion of abundance normalizes masculine forms of domination within indigenous communities. Similarly, the law of origin reinforces the elders as the main guides of such communities. Thus, both universal discourses and indigenous knowledges are normative discourses connected to power relations.

Frictions produced in these unequal encounters suggest the need for analysis of how power flows between global and local organizations, practices, and locations. Instead of studying how people attain human rights, this dissertation analyzed how power circulates, produces effects on subjects and positions of enunciation and power, and potentially opens transformative

possibilities for marginalized subjects. These circulatory movements of power suggest the need for human rights and development plans capable of acknowledging how discourses can connect with local inequalities, how power disparities can intensify through contact with universal discourses, and how the State can reproduce exclusion through universal discourses disconnected from local realities. The analysis of the ways power circulates in intercultural relations between State and indigenous agents reveals inequalities produced in encounters across differences. This analysis is a critical step to address unequal power relations in more accurate ways.

In this dissertation, I studied the Leticia Witoto ESP as an intercultural friction between People of the Centre's indigenous knowledges and universal human rights and development discourses. I began this dissertation by proposing that human rights and development plans have failed or produced unexpected results in the Middle Amazon because State agents who promote these plans ignore, dismiss, or devalue the concepts and practices of indigenous people related to these notions (see Chapters One and Three). The dissertation's contextual, methodological, and analytical sections exemplify how the ESP legal framework promotes means of material improvement among displaced groups without considering their cultural practices and understandings of such improvement. Similarly, I described the multiple conflicts and forms of inequality that emerge from the implementation of legal discourses assumed as equally beneficial to every human group. I also illustrated some contradictions of the egalitarian recognition of human rights according to Western individualistic views and the inclusion of some agents (e.g., the young professional masculine leaders) to the detriment of others (e.g., women, elders, and people who are not fluent in Spanish). These Western dominant views on human rights and development contrast with more collective, spiritual, and locally situated understandings and practices of abundance and the law of origin.

This emphasis of the dissertation on relations of power and knowledge has also allowed me to identify how indigenous knowledges are directly connected to a larger cultural system influenced by particular local contexts. In Chapter Five, I illustrated how values such as the respect for words pronounced in front the community influence the People of the Centre's ontological views on themselves as beings able to complete creation. According to these axiological and ontological views, the People of the Centre see themselves as beings capable of producing abundance even in the marginal conditions of forced displacement.

This orientation to power-knowledge relations has also allowed me to explore dimensions commonly discarded in intercultural communication processes related to human rights and development. My focus on indigenous knowledges and forms of power allowed me to identify the role of spiritual conceptions and practices, material culture (e.g., symbolic substances, spaces, and delimitation of gender and generational roles), and mechanisms to mobilize and recreate tradition in the intercultural relations analyzed. These categories are useful to identify how micro and non-observable forms of power circulate into larger structures, affecting the living conditions of disenfranchised subjects.

My emphasis on power and knowledge has been also useful to challenge the assumed universality of human rights and development. I introduced how these discourses were produced in particular geographies and historical moments where some Eurocentric and masculine agents privileged specific concepts, techniques, and positions to classify the known world. By hiding their specific origin and connections with projects of power, human rights and development were diffused by certain elites as global discourses. In this process of globalizing particular views, human rights and development discourses and institutions have needed to negotiate with local agents and their epistemologies (Santos, 1997; 2002a). Among the People of the Centre, these negotiations have taken place through unequal frictions across cultures and epistemologies, producing multiple directions, interpretations, appropriations, and positions of power – including both empowering and disempowering positions. In these processes, universal discourses can be re-articulated and re-appropriated according to indigenous knowledges and can, at the same time, become sources of new inequalities even if they are allegedly oriented to the common good of humanity. In short, my analysis confirms the particular and not universal character of these discourses, their circulation through frictional connections with local knowledges and positions of power, and the ways they take multiple and even contradictory forms in their localization processes.

The power-knowledge framework also suggests how intercultural relations of power between universal discourses and indigenous knowledges produce specific subjects. Despite their discursive character and Western origin, the ESP framework has motivated some indigenous groups to shape their individual and collective identities in order to gain power through their direct negotiations with the State. Seeking rights recognition, these indigenous people have produced new strategic identities, forms of commonality, hierarchies, and exclusions. These

transformations of subjects through power and knowledge negotiations reveal the actual effects of power that circulates through universal and indigenous discourses.

Furthermore, my emphasis on power and knowledge has provided the dissertation with insights into the concepts and practices through which indigenous people resist and negotiate with human rights and development. The concepts of abundance and the law of origin, and the practices of negotiation related to them are useful to identify the epistemological positions through which these groups claim recognition to their singularity. Indigenous people's forms of power and knowledge are reminders of their agency for appropriating and reorienting unequal encounters across difference. Precisely the encounter with the "Other" (the State in this case) motivates the People of the Centre to renew, value, and know better their own concepts and practices of abundance and the law of origin. My focus on power and knowledge from the viewpoint of indigenous people has been useful to identify the rich, complex, situated, and continuously changing character of negotiations between local and global knowledges and agents in the Leticia Witoto ESP.

The main limits of an approach on indigenous knowledges refer to their necessary articulation with broader structures. A focus on power and knowledge from the viewpoint of indigenous knowledges cannot be separated from the institutional structures that have historically marginalized indigenous groups. It is important, in such a focus, to remind the political character of indigenous knowledges as means of power and resistance (Dei, 2000). This analysis requires the inclusion of the three dimensions – politics, culture, and economics – of contemporary struggles for global justice (Fraser, 2009). Otherwise, analyses on indigenous power-knowledge may reinforce the theoretical exoticism of indigenous peoples. The recognition, valorization, and visibility of indigenous knowledges through academic research are only starting points to produce more structural transformations. Scholars who work with indigenous people need to envision how to articulate the potential of indigenous knowledges with structures capable to redistribute power, facilitate the inclusion of indigenous knowledges in institutional decisions, and reinforce the scope of indigenous struggles at regional, national or even transnational scales.

I observed intercultural relations of power in the ESP by asking the following specific question: How can indigenous people speak of autonomy under the terms and conditions defined by their interlocutor, the State? I answered this question by identifying the People of the Centre's

tactic of articulating their law of origin with the universality of human rights. As described in Chapter Five, this tactic prioritizes indigenous people's ethnic belonging over belonging to the nation or to humanity. This tactic may remind State institutions of the contemporary importance of ethnicity, a form of belonging commonly discarded in individualistic human rights discourses (Ramos, 1998). Furthermore, this claim may remind institutional agents of the historical character of indigenous people's claims for rights. Acknowledging the relevance of ethnicity for indigenous people over other forms of belonging is a recognition by the State that indigenous people's rights are being claimed by peoples who enjoyed (or attempted to enjoy) them prior to contact with Western agents (Santos, 2002a). For this reason, Plans focused on indigenous people must show sensitivity to the singularities of culture and identity in accordance with their histories of marginalization.

Indigenous people's claims on their right to cultural difference can contribute to new meanings of difference, which have historically been used as a basis for exclusion in colonial relations. Discursive strategies that privilege ethnic differences may alert State agents to the need for policies that acknowledge indigenous people's existing forms of organization, practices, and knowledges. Instead of imposing new codes, means, or procedures, State Plans can achieve cultural legitimacy and sustainability by valuing indigenous concepts and practices. As discussed in Chapter Five, indigenous people establish their right to cultural difference as the main and non-negotiable basis for their struggle of rights recognition. As a basis of intercultural negotiation, the right to difference can open possibilities for the State to acknowledge and value different understandings, concepts, and practices of law. This right can provide State agents with clues to help overcome the epistemic inequalities that ground historical forms of political and physical violence. State plans that acknowledge and value indigenous people's knowledges can serve to "decolonize difference", rather than striving to eliminate it, as has been the case in historical colonial relations (Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011). In Chapter One, I illustrated power relations drawn on eliminating difference such as the rubber exploitation system and the epistemologically violent integration of indigenous groups to the State in the 20th century. Instead of seeing difference as an obstacle to be removed, difference can constitute a starting point to produce inclusive practices and discourses of rights that acknowledge the plurality of worldviews that converge in contemporary intercultural encounters.

This inclusive view of difference is what indigenous people demand by mobilizing their singularity as a basis of rights recognition. The recognition of identity plurality that the People of the Centre propose can be an important basis of inclusive policies on displacement that open spaces to indigenous people's expression in State-run Plans. Indigenous people's demands for recognition according to their singularity can contribute to new views of ethnic, cultural, and epistemological difference as a basis of cultural and legal plurality and not as a basis of violent or administrative forms of genocide or assimilation.

Taking into account the colonial and postcolonial relations described in Chapter One, I asked the following question: What are the possibilities of inclusion and recognition in intercultural dialogues on rights and development when one of the participants has systematically participated in the marginalization of the other? The Leticia Witoto ESP team's answer to this question is historically, culturally, and politically rooted. This indigenous team acknowledges the existence of an unequal, bloody, and epistemologically violent history of contact with Western agents – including the State. From a cultural viewpoint, the People of the Centre have connected the Court's discourse of human rights and their local knowledges to see themselves both as victims of State abuses and as subjects who deserve accurate rights recognition. This double position has empowered the Leticia Witoto ESP participants as political subjects capable of demanding State measures that benefit their communities according to their particular identities. The process of forging connections between human rights and the law of origin have raised indigenous people's consciousness of their opportunities for rights recognition as Colombian citizens.

A main lesson that human rights and development scholars and practitioners can take from this negotiation is to view indigeneity and citizenship as two complementary rather than rival forms of belonging. The discourses of indigenous leaders described in Chapter Five establish a position of negotiation from which indigenous people confer a superior – but not exclusionary – position to their indigenous law over national and global rights discourses. These complementary views raise new questions: What does it mean to be an indigenous person and a citizen in the contemporary world? What is the relationship between indigenous citizens and the State in a contemporary order where transnational forces and institutions are often seen to supersede the State? What is the nature of this relationship when the State has been both a main ally of transnational forces that transgress the rights of indigenous people and the only sphere for rights

recognition? This dissertation provides answers to the first question through description of the People of the Centre's negotiations between indigenous knowledges and universal discourses and ethnic and national forms of belonging. In respect to the second and third questions, this research reveals how transnational economic interests – such as the attraction of foreign investment to mineral exploitation on indigenous lands – have affected the transparency of processes of prior consultation with communities under the ESP. Similarly, I identify some inter-local networks as emergent mechanisms of power associated with this Plan. However, although the ESP team represents an example of international cooperation, my case study reflects little influence of transnational companies in the ESP. Their access to international support or their connection with transnational activism is still limited. Despite the cross-border nature of the tri-border Middle Amazon, the People of the Centre's contemporary struggles for power are mainly influenced by national and local economic and political agents – land colonizers and the State.

For this reason, in contrast with other subaltern struggles against globalization (such as those studied by Fraser, 2009; Santos, 2002a; Rodríguez Garavito and Santos, 2005), the Leticia Witoto ESP may have strengthened the State's role as the main human rights guarantor. The State defines economic, legislative, and epistemological conditions under which the People of the Centre produce and exert their initiatives. Although the ESP may open possibilities for regional and transnational connections and associations, this process is still highly State-centred. This supremacy of the State in the Plan can create relations of economic and political dependency that may hinder the continuity of social initiatives that have emerged through the ESP. Paradoxically, the relevance and dominance of the State discourses and procedures in this Plan may affect indigenous political autonomy, one of the ESP's main goals.

While State law and administrative procedures form the main framework for the ESP, positions of power produced in the ESP function on multiple geographical scales. The ESP came about following the Constitutional Court's Judgment 025 of 2004 and Order 004 of 2009, which address writs of protection filed by displaced indigenous populations drawing on legal resources afforded by Constitutional and human rights-based international agreements. Universal human rights discourses may have compelled the State to produce policies to prevent displacement or address its effects among indigenous communities. The initiatives that emerge from intercultural dialogues in the ESP confirm that indigenous peoples and their actions are not confined to community or local scales (Smith, 2005). Indigenous people are connected to global and national

dynamics in multiple institutional, economic, or discursive ways. As discussed in Chapter Five, proposals such as envisioning articulations between the Colombian ordinary legislation and the laws of origin suggest that indigenous people are conscious of the potential of their knowledge in law. This consciousness is also evident in the People of the Centre's idea of demanding a reform of the national Constitution according to their law of origin as suggested in Chapter Five. The connection between the law of origin and national and international legislations has raised the People of the Centre's consciousness on the potential of their own legal knowledges to produce institutional changes that favour culturally sensitive reforms in the State law. Emerging from the ESP, this form of consciousness may open dialogues in which indigenous groups may enrich the Colombian Constitution through their situated versions of justice. The embryonic proposal of a constitutional reform according to indigenous legislations can produce more flexible and inclusive national legislations able to acknowledge the value of culturally situated practices and concepts of rights recognition. The scope and actual effects of these proposals constitute a matter of potential future research on the influence of the law of origin in inclusive national rights recognition practices.

In order to identify indigenous people's opportunities for expression and inclusion, I interrogated the conditions and means – languages, codes, rituals, and spaces – through which these people participate in community dialogues related to the ESP. This question led me to explore the multiple epistemological frictions between written and oral languages and between indigenous, State, and international legislations. I explored the indigenous logical systems of knowledge (influenced by spiritual, collective, and situated practices) in friction with State views (influenced by individualistic and universalizing assumptions). These epistemological frictions led the ESP leaders to processes of intercultural translation in which indigenous professionals mediated between State and indigenous concepts. In these processes, young professional leaders closer to State education systems have become the guides of knowledgeable elders. As a result, the latter have entered into positions of dependency and their knowledge has lost relevance as an accurate means by which to deal with the State. This mediation has reinforced epistemic inequalities that benefit systems of knowledge influenced by Western visions and mobilized by the State.

Despite the dominance of these Western systems of knowledge, indigenous and State worldviews can work collaboratively. The People of the Centre have adapted some of their

practices to the State's requirements and conditions. Similarly, the Colombian State has doubled the number of peoples initially included in the ESP. In the case of the Leticia Witoto ESP, the staff of the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs accepted indigenous proposals such as extending the Plan to ten additional groups, creating new indigenous authorities, and producing the Plan through some ritual practices including the *asentamiento de la palabra* (settling of the word) and carrying out collective engagements to the Plan by consuming the substances that symbolize abundance (see Chapters Three and Five). Although these collaborative experiences are only a starting point, they suggest that relationships between the State and indigenous organizations are not necessarily antagonistic. New forms of collaboration between indigenous groups and the State may emerge from the ESP experience.

In this respect, the People of the Centre's exchanges with the State suggest egalitarian and mutually enriching negotiations are possible if both agents consider themselves and each other modern agents with valid knowledges by which to face contemporary problems. Mutually enriching dialogues between State and indigenous agents require that the latter learn the potential of both State and indigenous legal mechanisms for attaining rights recognition according to indigenous people's cultural specificities. Similarly, in order to compensate for centuries of epistemic exclusion, State policies and programs must be open to the indigenous people's views and critical evaluation. Indigenous people can use notions of justice related to their law of origin as criteria to evaluate the inclusive, participatory, and transformative character of the State's plans for indigenous people. These processes of evaluation can enrich and confer transparency on processes of implementation such as the prior consultation mechanisms already mentioned. Cultural exchanges that take into account existing knowledges or expertise within the communities may generate the political will among State staff to produce structural changes on topics crucial to economic redistribution, such as land access. Egalitarian knowledge exchange between indigenous and State agents may provide indigenous people with positions from which they can demand more inclusive participation in proposals that affect their lives. Mutual knowledge exchange between the State and indigenous people can establish the basis for State programs that respect indigenous people's differences and their right to be consulted prior to State interventions.

In order to evaluate the participatory character of the Leticia Witoto ESP, I raised the following questions: Who speaks on behalf of whom in intercultural dialogues on human rights

and development? Who is empowered, disempowered, or marginalized under these conditions of participation? In Chapter Five, my analysis on epistemological, generational, and gender frictions questioned the “who of justice” in the Leticia Witoto ESP. This question is useful for challenging the technical methods through which the State, human rights agents, and community leaders define who is included as a subject of rights and under which conditions (Fraser, 2009). The current implementation conditions of these Plans reflect several exclusionary practices: the dismissal of several displaced indigenous groups at risk of disappearance in Constitutional Court Order 004; the reduced possibilities of participation for indigenous leaders who are not fluent in Spanish, and for elders who do not have a deep understanding of State codes in the Leticia Witoto ESP; and the unequal conditions of participation for women, elders, and non-Witoto people in this Plan. This analysis of who the ESP considers a subject of justice suggests the need to implement mechanisms to overcome such exclusionary practices within human rights plans.

This evaluation suggests that invoking human rights discourses is not sufficient to ensure the equal participation and recognition of marginal subjects. Indeed, positions of power derived from the proximity of the Witoto people to the State (for instance, the supremacy of the Witoto in the multi-ethnic formation, non-democratic processes of leader election, and the imposition of new community leaders in rivalry with existent ones) reveal that local subjects’ connections with human rights can intensify local disparities and conflicts. These connections illustrate that human rights is a powerful discourse that can legitimize and intensify marginalization. In order to avoid these forms of marginalization, analyses of processes of human rights recognition must identify potential forms of empowerment and disempowerment that emerge from connections between universal and local discourses of power.

My analysis suggests that the ESP should broaden the topics and subjects included in discussions on the rights of displaced indigenous people. These Plans may influence State visions more specifically focused on displaced indigenous people who experience several forms of marginalization, such as being unemployed, land dispossessed, illiterate, female, a child, an elder, or belonging to a community who receives displaced people.⁸⁴ The dismissal of these specific forms of marginalization may ensure the recognition of some agents to the detriment of

⁸⁴ In my dissertation, taking into account the composition of the Leticia Witoto ESP team, I did not explore the crucial axis of disability. However, I acknowledge disability as a main axis of differentiation to understand specific experiences of negotiation with human rights and development universal discourses.

others, such as the reinforcement of young professional indigenous male leaders at the expense of women and elders in the ESP. The exploration of how subjects experience marginalization from several axes of differentiation is necessary to achieve inclusive mechanisms of rights recognition.

The shifting forms of marginality produced through the ESP at national and local scales suggest that indigeneity is a heterogeneous category in which no axes of difference can prevail over others. Drawing on the multiple characteristics of humanity, human rights plans must specifically address different positions of power, even those contextually defined by local groups – such as differences between indigenous governors and ESP leaders in the Leticia area. Only by taking into account different and culturally produced positions of power can human rights become continuously progressive and open discourses capable of reducing disparities. In order to achieve such goals, human rights need to be transformed into a form of situated knowledge. Intercultural dialogues amongst those experiencing specific conditions of marginalization can be useful for more inclusive and localized views of human rights recognition, which entails theoretical and methodological consequences for studies on intercultural human rights relations.

6.1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

My study of the possibilities for indigenous visibility and recognition in the ESP broadens the human rights domain from international law to cultural and communicational disciplines. This dissertation proposed to learn from indigenous people's concepts and struggles that contribute to inclusive views and mechanisms on human rights. In this vein, Santos suggests the need for a progressive human rights policy with global scope and local legitimacy (1997, p. 13; 2002b). Such a policy would acknowledge and deal with multiple inequalities on the global scale, and at the same time would be respectfully anchored in the values and practices of local groups. In realistic terms, it may be unfeasible to produce a general human rights policy that embraces all versions of human dignity based on several axes of differentiation in local communities. However, Santos' proposal can be interpreted as the necessary transformation of human rights into a methodology for understanding negotiations and frictions between several culturally situated concepts and practices of human dignity.

This proposal connects counter-hegemonic perspectives on human rights with ethnographic research. The counter-hegemonic perspective analyzes creative connections between alternative

legal frameworks and formal legal structures (Rodríguez and Santos, 2005; Santos, 2002a). Ethnography on indigenous people's negotiations with human rights can reflect multiple understandings, practices, and strategies of dignity recognition, inclusion and solidarity. From these counter-hegemonic and ethnographic perspectives, human rights can emerge as a methodology to understand how cultural principles contribute to the collective and inclusive coexistence of distinct cultural groups. This perspective implies that human rights agents acquire the skills to analyze and understand the notions of law of local groups according to their logical systems of knowledge. Instead of being used as a universal code generally applicable to all cultures, human rights can become a methodological domain to identify connections between situated knowledges, languages, and practices on human dignity. Understandings of local knowledges on rights can open spaces to collectively imagine and practice inclusive, intensive, and culturally relevant versions of justice. Thus, human rights would become a domain of intercultural analysis and translation capable of producing knowledges and practices of dignity respectful to local contexts. An emphasis on methodological mechanisms may transcend the use of human rights as a mere index for measuring social improvement. In these ways, human rights could construct local ethics connected to local cultures but with global scope.

My self-reflective accounts in Chapter Three contribute to these methodological views on human rights. My fieldwork experiences may inspire practitioners and researchers to question their institutionalized positions as natural guides who allegedly hold knowledge beneficial to local populations. Human rights and development researchers and practitioners can enrich their work by recognizing existing positions of power in local communities, by occupying multiple roles during the observation process, and by articulating their institutional goals in accordance with community needs. Researchers or practitioners can decentre their positions and goals in order to confer priority on the interests of local subjects. These decentred positions may contribute to long-lasting, inclusive, and respectful human rights and development programs. Taking flexible and self-reflective positions in encounters with local groups may lead institutional agents to develop and produce open methodologies adjusted to the complexity of local realities and willing to learning from them. These methodologies can also contribute to decolonizing human rights as a Eurocentric discourse allegedly superior to other cultures of rights and law. A view of human rights as an intercultural methodology implies that researchers and practitioners recognize the relational dimensions of this domain.

This dissertation argues that intercultural communication can contribute to an inclusive, plural, and continuous form of human rights. I see intercultural communication as the processes through which cultural groups use, produce, and recreate their power and differences in their encounters with other groups. I analyze intercultural relations in the Leticia Witoto ESP from several subaltern approaches to power and difference: feminist critiques of development, post-colonial reflections, post-development approaches, counter-hegemonic perspectives on human rights, decolonizing research, and post-socialist reflections on social movements, among others. These perspectives share an interest in the ways that subaltern subjects experience, resist, and attempt to challenge marginalization from historical positions of difference.

These subaltern approaches embrace a vast array of power relations. The multiple situations analyzed by these perspectives may present subaltern experiences in fragmentary ways. However, at the same time, this multiplicity of realities provides researchers with insights into the ways common people experience and contest globalization from their specific localities. Subaltern perspectives can constitute a heterogeneous paradigm through which to think through and challenge unequal power relations. This dissertation establishes dialogues between these multiple subaltern perspectives and applies them to understand a concrete struggle for power situated in a marginalized region historically connected to global and national forces. Thus, this dissertation connects intercultural communication with subaltern perspectives in order to re-think globalization from below, from the viewpoint of subjects who are situated on the margins. This theoretical strategy broadens the applicability of subaltern approaches in understanding the complexity of actions and knowledges through which local agents experience and attempt to influence global power structures. This dissertation contributes to analytical explorations of the transformative potential of approaches to power from subaltern perspectives.

These subaltern approaches facilitate politically engaged research practices. In this dissertation, I articulate indigenous and academic knowledges in order to consolidate the field of subaltern studies on intercultural and development communication in the context of globalization. I analyze indigenous logics of thought and action as part of this dissertation's commitment to making visible historical and silenced views of marginalized subjects (Spivak, 1994). The use of these concepts to understand indigenous people's experiences provides insight into processes for overcoming marginality according to subaltern subjects' understandings and logics. My analysis of these indigenous analytical categories and their epistemological, practical,

and spatial manifestations may contribute to decolonizing the academy. Such analysis attempts to make visible systems of thought historically neglected in order to reinforce the counter-hegemonic practices of indigenous communities.

This dissertation is only one small academic contribution in this direction. This contribution may open possibilities to future decolonizing research practices capable of understanding in more detail indigenous logical connections, practices, and analytical categories that explain and transform contemporary intercultural and unequal encounters. Given that representation exerts power because what is represented is commonly assumed as truth (Smith, 1995), subaltern theoretical and methodological perspectives can raise researchers' consciousness about the power that academic representations exert on the visibility of marginal struggles. Responsive, situated, nuanced, self-reflexive, and conjunctural analyses of subaltern strategies of power open academic possibilities to learn from situated initiatives that may produce inclusive global transformations. These academic practices may lead to new engagements between the academy, indigenous struggles, and political movements, as suggested by the decolonizing perspective.

This dissertation contributes to understanding indigenous people as active subjects who may invigorate the struggles of other marginalized subjects. My analyses describe how members of a multi-ethnic indigenous group creatively mobilize and reinvent their knowledges and practices in their negotiations with the State and universal discourses. These analyses contribute to a growing field of scholarship that argues that indigenous people are modern agents who continuously recreate themselves, and who are open to connection with modern discourses, but according to practices of negotiation capable of recognizing their singularities.

This study sets the bases for future experiences of cooperation between marginalized agents. Several scholars have documented how contemporary social movements of workers, peasants, and women have produced synergies with indigenous struggles in order to increase their influence (Le Bot, 2006; Warren and Jackson, 2002). The study of how power circulates within these forms of cooperation can strengthen these subaltern experiences of reorienting globalization. Among these forms of cooperation, collaborative strategies between indigenous groups and activists can strengthen contemporary struggles for social justice. In the studied case, the People of the Centre created new meanings that have expanded the scope of initiatives led by USAID and the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs. Although contextually situated and

culturally produced, the People of the Centre's tactics to gain power in the ESP may inspire other indigenous groups in their own ESP processes. This specific experience of intercultural negotiation may become a reference point to reinforce other experiences of collaboration between indigenous, national, and transnational movements struggling against marginalization. My analysis can open spaces of discussion on experiences of intercultural negotiation guided by human rights or development in the Americas region.⁸⁵

Topics studied in this dissertation matter because universal discourses of human rights and development define global relationships. As stated in the Introduction and Chapter Two, these two discourses define power relations, global classifications, and economic and technological relations between Western and Third World countries. Dominant development discourses have historically represented indigenous people either as objects of assimilation or as obstacles to progress (Escobar, 1995; Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2008; Ramos, 1998; Stanfield, 1998). These representations have authorized economic and State agents to disrespect indigenous people's rights to land access, collective associations, a healthy environment, or even life itself. Consequently, like the People of the Centre, most indigenous people have been expelled from territories situated on the frontiers of capitalist expansion. However, indigenous people's creative appropriations of human rights and development discourses may help reconfigure the direction that globalization takes. In Brazil, for instance, the Association of Indigenous Peoples (APIB) has delayed the construction of three massive dams in the heart of the Amazon rainforest – the Belo Monte dam on the Xingu River, and the dams of the Madeira and Tapajós rivers (Survival International, 2014; Amazon Watch, 2013). In Canada, the Cree of Manitoba and the James Bay of northern Quebec established creative negotiations with hydroelectric companies seeking to secure maximum control over and benefit from all sources of economic development on their traditional lands (Loxley, 2012). Similarly, in the Canadian Pacific coast, the West conservationist associations acknowledge First Nations' knowledge in programs focused on the conservation of Pacific marine protected areas (Gardner, 2009). In Colombia, the People of the Centre attained legal recognition in the 1990s of the Casa Arana's land (the main company of the rubber boom) in order to become the nation's largest indigenous reserve (Pineda Camacho,

⁸⁵ I refer, for instance, to the work of transnational NGOs that have supported the Colombian U'wa to stop oil exploitation in their reserves (Rodríguez Garavito and Alvarez, 2005); the work of OXFAM in Bolivian indigenous organizations (Lucero, 2013); or the Inuit Circumpolar Circle collaboration with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and conservationist NGOs such as Green Peace (Meyer, 2012).

2000). These achievements suggest that, in contrast with common prejudices that perceive indigenous people as pre-modern, folkloric, or barbaric, indigenous people are modern agents who can influence balanced environmental, intercultural, political, and economic relations on national and global scales. For these reasons, the analysis of indigenous people's negotiations with global discourses and institutions provides insights into how local agents challenge or reorient national, transnational, or global relations of power. This topic can enrich contemporary understandings of indigenous subjects and movements as global agents.

I have argued in this dissertation that the modernization paradigm of development and participatory approaches to development are dominant in the ESP legal framework. The relevance of development discourses in a human rights plan leads to two insights into the State's strategies of exerting power over indigenous people. First, categorization of development as a right may hide its pervasive effects as a normative discourse that imposes capitalist forms of economic productivity on indigenous communities. Second, the discourse of the right to development establishes a standardized view of economic growth mechanisms as the only means through which indigenous people can attain rights recognition from the State. As discussed in Chapter Four, the ESP legal framework establishes the State's obligation to integrate displaced groups into the "economic and social life of the nation" by stimulating their "material progressive improvement" (Colombia, 2004). This discourse leaves aside explicit descriptions of mechanisms of material improvement and dismisses local cultural practices related to this process. This discourse of rights naturalizes State and mestizo Colombian culture views on material improvement as applicable to all displaced groups indistinctively. This way to promote the right to development contradicts collective rights critical to indigenous groups' survival, such as the rights to self-determination and cultural differences – which includes the right to define the meaning, goals, and procedures related to material improvement. These articulations between development and human rights affect the ESP's main goal: safeguarding the cultural and physical specificity of indigenous people, which includes protecting indigenous groups' economic practices.

Further, this dissertation has explored some limits of the participatory paradigm of development. In Chapter Four, I identified the limits of the ESP team's participatory dialogues on territory. The participatory character of these dialogues is not sufficient to transform State political and economic policy or to contest the economic interests of institutions and groups

affecting indigenous people's access to territory. Although participation is an important and necessary component in community and local development processes, dialogues on development must include broader structures of power. These dialogues must envision mechanisms to subvert inequalities produced on national and regional scales and to confront the agents who produce them. Participatory development plans must include, from their foundations, multi-scalar strategies of dialogue that may ensure more long lasting and deeper structural transformations of marginality.

Similarly, in Chapter Four, I referred to gender and ethnic forms of exclusion that emerge from the notions of abundance and the supremacy of the Witoto. These exclusionary practices of local agents confirm that local knowledge is not enough to challenge marginality in participatory processes. Participation and local knowledge are not inherently sources of liberation for local communities (Huesca, 2003; Wilkins, 2000). Power inequalities circulate and are recreated even in emancipatory projects such as the ESP (Spivak, 1994). These visions challenge the assumption of participation as a means and end of development. In order to produce more egalitarian results, beyond mere participation – which is necessary and important – development scholars and practitioners must examine how power circulates through development plans. These circulatory movements of power can produce, disguise, or reproduce new social inequalities.

6.2. DISSERTATION'S LIMITS

The scope of my analysis of the negotiations of indigenous people in the ESP was constrained by the conditions in which I conducted my fieldwork. My research results were limited by the lack of a written Leticia Witoto ESP, even by the time of my analysis phase. Additionally, my budget and time constraints limited opportunities to conduct longer fieldwork research. These limits hampered, for instance, my opportunities to observe the ESP team's direct negotiations with State staff members. These limits suggest the need for further observations of the way the People of the Centre negotiate their ethnicity and knowledges in their interpersonal communications with State staff members. Similarly, the effectiveness of People of the Centre's influence on State programs is still a matter for future research.

This dissertation leaves unsolved the following post-development question: "How is local knowledge to be translated into power, and this knowledge–power into concrete projects and programs?" (Escobar, 2001, p. 157). My fieldwork conditions allowed me to mainly focus on

community processes within the Leticia Witoto ESP's assessment phase. I identified some creative appropriations according to indigenous knowledges, nascent initiatives, organizations, networks, and opportunities for visibility that emerged from this phase. However, the continuity and effects of these appropriations and organizations require further research. My research data are still limited when analyzing the influence of these positions and discourses on the Leticia Witoto ESP's final version and implementation phases. In short, this research focuses on the intercultural processes of producing the ESP rather than on its final outcomes. Despite these limits, the focus on this process has provided rich material to understand contemporary frictions between indigenous knowledges and human rights and development discourses.

In methodological terms, conducting two case studies at the same time during my fieldwork generated several analytical constraints. As explained in Chapter Three, I delimited the Leticia Witoto ESP as a case study only during my second stint of fieldwork. Simultaneously, I maintained the Tikuna video makers' case study in order to avoid the possibility of finding myself without any case study at all – as happened in the beginning of the second instance of fieldwork. Only after analyzing the results of my observations at the end of this instance, did I discard the Tikuna video makers' case, given my lack of detailed data. My work with the Tikuna video makers affected, in some cases, my opportunities to take part in research activities with the Leticia Witoto ESP team. I tried to overcome my lack of participation in some of these activities through interviews or observations, but some key information shared in these encounters was difficult to recover. Conducting these two case studies on both sides of the Colombo-Brazilian border entailed duplicated efforts that may have prevented more in-depth understandings of what was to become my main case, the Leticia Witoto ESP.

However, my experience with the video makers provided me the complementary experience of the multiple complexities related to research with indigenous people and the role of intercultural negotiations on the production of ethnographic knowledge (see Chapter Three). This experience was also useful in identifying my own limits in intercultural research. More than the limitations of the Tikuna video makers' availability or my own research abilities, our research relationship was hindered by cultural, national, and linguistic differences that affected the production of more complete results. The recognition of my own limits as a researcher constitutes an important learning experience. This lesson can influence future research proposals where I can take into account my limited possibilities of controlling contextual factors in

fieldwork. I learned from this experience that I need to acknowledge my own cultural and social differences with research participants before delimiting a case study. Also the Witoto people's need to articulate my research to their community activities taught me the need to construct responsible and reliable relations in the fieldwork. These intercultural negotiations suggest that the researcher's contextual positions in the fieldwork play a central role in intercultural research.

Frictions between my institutional and cultural practices and those of indigenous people affected not only my conditions of negotiation in the fieldwork, but also my opportunities to confirm or elaborate on some information in the analysis phase. I wrote this thesis in a very different geographical and cultural context (the Canadian academic environment) and within the eighteen months following my fieldwork. I produced data in this dissertation under limited conditions of communication with my research subjects which may have affected my access to information necessary for clarifying some topics. I attempted to overcome these obstacles through documentary analyses and through some telephone and internet conversations with the Leticia Witoto ESP team members. However, these conditions of communication provided limited insights into topics such as the actual impact of the studied negotiations on the ESP's implementation phase. For these reasons, and taking into account the ethnographic character of this dissertation, knowledge introduced here exclusively refers to the Leticia Witoto ESP assessment phase and cannot be generalized to other phases of this Plan. Although this case study may reflect some dynamics of indigenous people's negotiations with the State, it does not substitute specific analysis of other ESPs.

Another important limit of this dissertation involves the dissemination of findings. As described in Chapter Three, I led meetings to share my preliminary research results with indigenous participants in this dissertation. Furthermore, I plan to introduce my research results to the Leticia Witoto ESP team and to academic groups focused on displaced indigenous people. However, I must still envision methodologies to communicate this research results to State staff related to the ESP, policy makers, or human rights and development agents related to indigenous people. Through the use of creative and accurate dissemination processes in communicating with institutional agents, it is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to the decolonizing goal of influencing unequal structures of power in order to strengthen indigenous struggles.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ESPs constitute rich initiatives and unique opportunities for displaced indigenous people. However, in this dissertation I criticize four limits of this Plan's implementation processes: the exclusion of several indigenous peoples affected by forced displacement as ESP beneficiaries; the Leticia Witoto ESP's exclusionary conditions for women, elders, and non-Witoto people at local and community scales; the State's irregular mechanisms of prior consultation with indigenous communities; and the Plan's limited scope for producing changes in regional or national power structures of economic redistribution such as access to land. Although imperfect, these Plans result from the coordinated work between the Constitutional Court, the State, and indigenous people to protect indigenous groups endangered by the Colombian internal conflict. Despite these limits, the ESPs need to be strengthened in order to ensure their purpose of protection for endangered indigenous peoples.

The ESPs can create spaces through which to produce coordinated actions between community, local, and regional authorities. These processes of coordination must be clear and transparent about the ESP's scope and possibilities. On the community scale, transparency and clarity imply that indigenous people identify the specific limits and possibilities of addressing their claims through the ESP. False expectations on critical topics such as territory can lead to collective disappointment which, like a boomerang, undermines the community's motivation to take part in this Plan. Transparency by State agents and indigenous leaders on this Plan's limits and possibilities can avoid experiences of disempowerment such as those systematically produced by development projects in the Leticia area since the 1990s.

On the local scale, ESPs can create spaces for indigenous people to develop their abilities to negotiate critical topics with local institutions. Under their current conditions of implementation, the Leticia Witoto ESP can more easily reinforce indigenous people's collective abilities than produce structural changes. More than a space to produce immediate structural results, this ESP facilitates dialogues to strengthen indigenous people's ability to use State mechanisms according to their cultural practices. Drawing on the Leticia Witoto experience, the ESPs in general can be valued and strengthened as spaces in which indigenous people learn from one another and are motivated by the possibilities of recognition that the State proposes through human rights and development discourses. As of 2012, however, the Leticia Witoto ESP team still lacked training on crucial State concepts and mechanisms beneficial to their living

conditions. In order to overcome this problem, the ESP team could coordinate actions with local authorities to explain the concepts and mechanisms beneficial to indigenous people's rights recognition. In order to avoid the production of epistemological dependency, this training must first recognize indigenous people's practices and abilities to also contribute to State decisions.

The implementation of the ESP on the national scale and in the Leticia area suggests the need for more explicit actions to make real the Plan's specific focus on marginalized groups. As discussed in Chapter Four, disparities between discursive and practical strategies of inclusion in Constitutional Court mandates have led to the exclusion of women, elders, and children in the Leticia Witoto Plan. Such lack of clarity has also led indigenous leaders to misinterpret the Court's discourse related to the specific attention to indigenous displaced women. These situations suggest that undifferentiated understandings of indigenous identities are present both among national and indigenous authorities. To counter these exclusionary practices, national and community authorities can assess the inequalities of power that already exist within indigenous communities according to differences of gender, age, ethnic belonging, access to land, disability, and so forth. By assessing heterogeneous positions of power within indigenous groups, indigenous leaders can alert national authorities to the need for specific mechanisms to overcome such inequalities. Differential experiences of displacement can be more accurately addressed through plans that integrate actions beneficial for the specific needs of women, children, the dispossessed, and other subjects who experience displacement from several marginal positions. The acknowledgment of these multiple positions can set the basis for the practical measures needed to transcend the current merely discursive character of the differential attention paid to marginalized subjects in the ESPs.

The recognition of these axes of power requires new State visions on indigeneity as a mobile and changing form of identity. As discussed in Chapter Five, in the ESP, State visions associate indigeneity with continuous pre-modern indigenous traditions. Challenging this common perception, this dissertation depicts indigeneity as the identity processes that indigenous people continuously renew and transform within unequal colonial and postcolonial relations. Instead of continuity with the past or with tradition, indigeneity implies the capacity of indigenous groups to define themselves as distinct contemporary cultural groups by connecting the multiple fragments of their histories of colonization. State policies must acknowledge this fragmentary character of indigeneity. This recognition may lead State policies to focus on

reinforcing indigenous people's abilities to face unequal encounters with national and global political and economic forces. State plans can strengthen activities through which indigenous groups reinforce their indigeneity as an ability to achieve equal rights while preserving and asserting the value of their cultural, political, and epistemological differences. State programs can focus on reinforcing indigeneity through supporting culturally relevant education, economic redistribution of resources, and possibilities for efficient political participation.

One of this dissertation's goals is to analyze and identify indigenous subjects' contribution to fairer connections with universal human rights and development discourses, procedures, and agents. I identified the notion of abundance and the law of origin as collectively created concepts and abilities that produce and maintain the common good in the People of the Centre's communities. Human rights agents may produce more inclusive negotiations with indigenous people through the recognition of culturally-situated discourses on shared values such as the law of origin. Similarly, before proposing new techniques to improve material conditions, development agents should take into account indigenous people's cultural and economic practices for producing and sharing abundance. Human rights and development agents will create more inclusive, long-lasting, and mutually beneficial relationships with indigenous people when they recognize existing practices, knowledges, and systems of thought in local communities. Rather than imposing external knowledge transfer, these Plans could focus on how to reinforce the community's abilities as practical and culturally situated mechanisms that contribute to more inclusive human rights and development goals.

Given the embryonic, fragile, and limited scope of indigenous initiatives in the ESPs, they need to be recognized and reinforced through interethnic and inter-institutional alliances, collaboration with the State, or international cooperation. Associations, networks, and organizations that have emerged from the ESP experience require not only State recognition but also international and transnational support. Cooperation and exchange can be egalitarian only if indigenous people are able to use their knowledges to maintain the relevance of their differences in intercultural negotiations. Egalitarian links between indigenous, local, and transnational institutions may transform the People of the Centre's initiatives into regional or transnational networks, movements, and political and cultural processes. Reinforced through indigenous cultural principles, indigenous processes of contestation may lead to new versions of justice and

mechanisms of visibility for indigenous subjects in particular, and more inclusive legal mechanisms for human beings in general.

6.4. FUTURE RESEARCH

Contemporary indigenous movements provide rich insights into local agents' negotiations with the State or global forces. Often, these indigenous movements establish strategic alliances with other indigenous agents or with transnational organizations in order to reach their goals. This dissertation leads me to analyze the intercultural frictions produced in these alliances. My future research projects might explore the intercultural dynamics of these alliances on larger scales. I might focus on the multiple forms of power and knowledge that emerge from frictions between several indigenous groups associated with transnational indigenous movements. Coalitions to protect the Amazonian region from deforestation, bi-national alliances between indigenous people in North America, and Pan-American associations of indigenous people illustrate some of these multi-ethnic associations. I am interested in the production of indigenous knowledges and power in these relations, their effectiveness in the transformation of local conditions of marginality, and their influence on the production of indigenous people as agents with global influence. These research interests contribute to the multiple theoretical and methodological subaltern perspectives on global relations of power referenced in this thesis.

I plan also explore the concept of intercultural collaboration. This dissertation leads me to explore multiple knowledge exchanges and possibilities of autonomy and dependency that derive from indigenous people's collaboration with researchers or NGO practitioners. I envision evaluating the potential of collaboration between transnational organizations and indigenous people to strengthen mechanisms of economic, cultural, political, or environmental justice. In particular, I am interested in how power circulates in these relations and produces empowering and disempowering positions for indigenous people. Furthermore, my future research projects may explore the inclusive possibilities that subaltern agents produce through their contemporary intercultural negotiations with global agents.

Human rights are a topic of central interest for my future research. In this dissertation, my understanding of the topic is broadened by indigenous perspectives. My analyses lead me to see human rights as an incomplete discourse particularly influenced by Western histories and epistemologies, yet powerful for potentially transforming contemporary inequalities. This

dissertation motivates me to conduct an in-depth analysis of plural legality within human rights plans, and to recognize the diverse local versions of dignity that may enrich current universal human rights discourse. These analyses may enrich intercultural communication from the viewpoint of power and difference in contemporary struggles for rights of disenfranchised subjects.

This dissertation has been a fruitful and inspiring learning exercise. It not only reflects research on intercultural communication, but also results from intercultural frictions. My fieldwork experiences allowed me to demystify, respect, value, and begin to understand indigenous people's differences. Relationships emerging through my ongoing research with these communities led me to value and make visible the contemporary importance of meeting and understanding marginalized subjects commonly described as the "other" of history. I learned from this dissertation that research is not merely an academic activity, but an overall human activity. Research offers the possibility to create connections, to learn from those connections, to realize the conditions in which others live, to understand the ways they confer meaning to what they live, and to envision with them the possibility to overcome historical injustices. This dissertation allowed me to learn from indigenous people's creativity, adaptability, flexibility, and resistance to discourses and forces articulated by dominant forces as universal. Indigenous people's persistent practices in spite of their difficult living conditions led me to question and rediscover my own role as a researcher engaged with subaltern struggles and to understand the place of research as a political action. I hope that the analyses, narratives, concepts, and experiences that I described through this dissertation will inspire other researchers and practitioners to envision strategies to transform contemporary global and intercultural inequalities.

REFERENCES

- Alape, A. (1985). *La paz, la violencia--testigos de excepción: documento*. Bogotá, Colombia: Planeta.
- Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos (2014). Historia. Retrieved August 08, 2014, from <http://www.anh.gov.co/la-anh/Paginas/historia.aspx>
- Amazon Watch (2013). Indigenous Peoples Stop Dam Construction With New Occupation at Belo Monte Site. *Earth First Journal*. Retrieved from Earth First Journal website: <http://earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/2013/05/02/indigenous-peoples-stop-dam-construction-with-new-occupation-at-belo-monte-site/>
- Angrosino, M. V. (2005). Recontextualizing Observation: Ethnography, Pedagogy, and the Prospects for a Progressive Political Agenda. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Antropologia, A. B. d. (2009). Nota sobre a ameaça iminente de fechamento do Museu Magüta. 2011, from <http://www.abant.org.br/conteudo/005COMISSOESGTS/Documentos%20da%20CAI/Nota%20sobre%20fechamento%20do%20Museu%20Maguta.pdf>
- Aponte Motta, J. (2011). La frontera en el espacio urbano: expresiones del límite entre Leticia (Colombia) y Tabatinga (Brasil). *Mundo amazónico*, 2, 24. doi: 10.5113/ma.2.13902
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press.
- Arango, R., and Sánchez, E. (1998). *Los pueblos indígenas de Colombia 1997: desarrollo y territorio*. Colombia: TM Editores, Departamento Nacional de Planeación.
- Aung-Thwin, M. (2002). Parochial Universalism, Democracy Jihad and the Orientalist Image of Burma: the New Evangelism. *Pacific Affairs*, 74(4), 22.
- AZCAITA (2008). *Plan de vida de los pueblos Tikuna, Uitoto, Cocama y Yagua*. Leticia: Alta Voz Comunicaciones.
- Banister, E. M. (1999). Evolving Reflexivity: Negotiating Meaning of Women's Midlife Experience. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(3), 20. doi: 10.1177/107780049900500101
- Bara Nieto, P., Sanchez, R., and Wilmsmeiner, G. (2006). *Hacia un desarrollo sustentable e integrado de la Amazonia. Los corredores de transporte en la cuenca amazónica central – occidental y sus afluentes principales en Brasil, Colombia, Ecuador y Perú*. Santiago de Chile: Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, División de Recursos Naturales e Infraestructura.
- Barbosa Mendoza, C. E. (2006). *El desarrollo propio en Macedonia: Una mirada al desarrollo indígena en la ribera amazónica colombiana*. (Master's degree in Amazonian Studies), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Amazonia, Leticia.
- Barnett, G. A., and Lee, M. (2002). Issues in Intercultural Communication Research. In W. B. Gudykunst and B. Mody (Eds.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Barth, F. (1995). Les groupes ethniques et leurs frontières. In P. Poutignat, J. Streiff-Fenart, F. Barth and J. Bardolph (Eds.), *Théories de l'ethnicité*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Baudrand, V. (2002). Les flux de la mondialisation. In V. Baudrand and O. Vilaça (Eds.), *Les éléments clés de la mondialisation* (pp. 81-143). Levallois-Perret, France: Studyrama.

- Belanger, Y. D. (2008). *Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada: Current Trends and Issues*. Saskatoon: Purich Pub.
- Bellier, I., Chaumeil, J.-P., Goulard, J.-P., Santos Granero, F. B., and Rey de Castro, F. (1994). *Guía etnográfica de la Alta Amazonía. Volumen I Volumen I*. Quito; [Lima]: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales; Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Bisharat, G. E. (1997). Exile to Compatriot: Transformations in the Social Identity of Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, Power, Place : Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (pp. 203-233). Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Bode, I. (2014). Francis Deng and the Concern for Internally Displaced Persons: Intellectual Leadership in the United Nations. *Global Governance* 20(2), 18.
- Boisier, S. (2005). ¿Hay espacio para el desarrollo local en la globalización? *Revista de la CEPAL (Comisión económica para América Latina)*. (86), 15.
- Briggs, J., and Sharp, J. (2004). Indigenous Knowledges and Development: A Postcolonial Caution. *Third World quarterly.*, 254, 661-676.
- Bríñez Pérez, A. H. (2002). *Casabe, símbolo cohesionador de la cultura uitoto*. [Bogotá]: Ministerio de Cultura.
- Burger, J. (2011). The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: From Advocacy to Implementation. In S. Allen and X. Alexandra (Eds.), *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Pub.
- Cabria Medina, H., Padilla, E., Fuentes Cuaspud, C., and Teteye Botyay, J. B. (2011). *Programa de garantías de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas de la Amazonia colombiana*. Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana. Bogotá.
- Cadavid, A. (2005). *Como entregarle las llaves al ladrón. Colectivo de comunicación de los Montes de María Línea 21*. Department of Social Communication. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Bogotá.
- Cadavid, A., Fayad Sanz, D., Casadiegos Gaona, A., and Luna, N. J. (2007). *II Laboratorio de paz. Estrategia de comunicación. Diagnóstico de comunicación y cultura*. Pamplona: Corsonoc, Acción Social de la Presidencia de la República, , Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.
- Castellano, M. B. (2000). Updating Aboriginal Traditions of Knowledge. In Dei, G. J. S., Hall, B. L., and Rosenberg, D. G. (Ed.), *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts. Multiple Readings of Our World* (pp. 96-157). Toronto: Buffalo : Published in association with University of Toronto Press.
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2013.). *La política de reforma agraria y tierras en Colombia. Esbozo de una memoria institucional*. Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional.
- Certeau, M. d., and Giard, L. (1990). *L'invention du quotidien. 1, 1*. [Paris]: Gallimard.
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative Inquiry. Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Clifford, J. (1988). *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, J., and Marcus, G. E. (1986). *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California.

- Colle, R. D. (2008). Threads of development communication In J. Servaes (Ed.), *Communication for Development and Social Change*. New Delhi, India; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Colombia, Corte Constitucional (2004a). *Sentencia N° T-025 de 2004*.
- Colombia, Corte Constitucional (2004b). *Auto 185/04. Solicitud de información sobre el cumplimiento de la orden contenida en el ordinal quinto de la parte resolutive de la sentencia T-025 de 2004, relativa a los mínimos de atención a la población desplazada*. Bogotá.
- Colombia, Corte Constitucional. (2009). *Auto 004/09. Protección de derechos fundamentales de personas e indígenas desplazados por el conflicto armado en el marco de superación del estado de cosas inconstitucional declarado en sentencia T-025/04*. Bogotá.
- Colombia, Congreso de la República (1997). *LEY 387 DE 1997* Bogotá. Congreso de la República.
- Colombia, República de (1991a). *Constitución Política de Colombia*.
- Colombia, República de (1991b). Text of the Constitution of Colombia (1991). Unofficial translation. http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/colombia_const2.pdf
- Colombia, República de (1993). *Ley 60 de 1993*. Bogotá: Diario Oficial Retrieved from <http://www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=274>.
- Colombia, República de (1994). *Ley 160/94. Capítulo XIV. Resguardos indígenas*. Bogotá: Retrieved from <http://www.incora.gov.co/capitulo14.htm>.
- Colombia, República de (1994). *Ley 160/94. Capítulo XIV. Resguardos indígenas*. Bogotá: Retrieved from <http://www.incora.gov.co/capitulo14.htm>.
- Colombia, República de (1997). *Ley 368 de 1997 Por la cual se crea la Red de Solidaridad Social, el Fondo de Programas Especiales para la Paz, y el Fondo del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternativo -Fondo Plante-, y se dictan otras disposiciones*. Bogotá: Retrieved from http://www.secretariassenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley/1997/ley_0368_1997.html.
- Colombia, República de (2005). *Censo general 2005*. DANE. Bogotá.
- Colombia, República de (2007). *El proceso de planificación en las entidades territoriales: el plan de desarrollo y sus instrumentos para la gestión 2008 - 2011*. Bogotá: Departamento Nacional de Planeación. Escuela Superior de Administración Pública.
- Colombia, República de (2012). *Informe de gestión 2012*. Retrieved from http://www.accionsocial.gov.co/Consulta/Consultas/Seguimiento/UACT_INFORME_GESTION_2012.pdf.
- Colombia, Ministerio del Interior (2012). *Informe de avance presentado a la honorable Corte Constitucional Autos 004 de 2009, 382 de 2009, 174 de 2011, 092 y 237 de 2008, 008 de 2009*. Bogotá, Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas, Rom y Minorías
- Corriveau, S. (2008). *Analyse politique et classification des relations de partenariats interorganisationnelles entre ONG canadiennes et organisations locales sud-africaines*. Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal.
- Cowen, M. and Sherton, R. (1995). The Invention of Development. In J. S. Crush (Ed.), *Power of Development*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Cox, M. (2009). Viewing the Millenium Development Goals through the Prisms of IR Theory: An Intersection of Human Rights and State Interests. In N. Shawki and M. Cox (Eds.), *Negotiating Sovereignty and Human Rights Actors and Issues in Contemporary Human Rights Politics* (pp. 159-180). Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

- Crain, M. (1997). The Remaking of an Andalusian Pilgrimage Tradition: Debates Regarding Visual (Re)presentation and the Meanings of 'Locality' in a Global Era. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (pp. 291-312). Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Crush, J. S. (1995). *Power of Development*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Cupples, J., Glynn, K., and Lariosz, I. (2007). Hybrid Cultures of Postdevelopment: The Struggle for Popular Hegemony in Rural Nicaragua. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(4), 786-801.
- Cutter, C. R. (1995). *The Legal Culture of Northern New Spain, 1700-1810*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- De la Hoz, N. (2007). *Diversidad biológica y cultural del sur de la Amazonia colombiana* N. De la Hoz (Ed.)
- Dei, G. J. S. (2000). Rethinking the Role of Indigenous Knowledges in the Academy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(2), 111-132.
- Dei, G. J. S., Hall, B. L., and Rosenberg, D. G. (2000). *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World*. Toronto; Buffalo: Published in association with University of Toronto Press.
- Dembour, M.-B. (2010). What Are Human Rights? Four Schools of Thought. February 2010, pp. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 32(1), 20. doi: 10.1353/hrq.0.0130
- Dembour, M.-B., and Kelly, T. (2011). *Are Human Rights for Migrants? Critical Reflections on The Status of Irregular Migrants in Europe and the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Dembour, M.-B. (2012). What are human rights? Four Schools of Thought. In T. Cushman (Ed.), *Handbook of Human Rights*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., and Smith, L. T. (2008). *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Dirlik, A. (1996). The Global in the Local. In R. Wilson & W. Dissanayake (Eds.), *Global/local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Echeverri, J. Á. (1997). *The People of the Center of the World. A Study in Culture, History, and Orality in the Colombian Amazon*. (Ph D.), New School for Social Research, New York.
- Embajada del Brasil en Perú. (2013). *La apertura del río Amazonas a la navegación internacional*. Retrieved May 10, 2013, from http://www.perubrasil.com/system/embajadabrasil/integropedia/ip_content_subchapter.asp?edt=1&ch=3&sub=4
- Erthal, R. M. d. C. (1998). *O suicídio Ticuna na região do Alto Solimões - AM*. (PhD), Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública. Retrieved from http://portaldesic.iciet.fiocruz.br/transf.php?script=thes_chap&id=00002306&lng=pt&nr m=iso
- Erueti, A. (2011). The International Labour Organization and the Internationalisation of the Concept of Indigenous Peoples. In S. Allen and A. Xanthaki (Eds.), *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (pp. 93-120). Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Pub.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, A. (2000). Place, Power, and Networks in Globalization and Postdevelopment. In K. G. Wilkins (Ed.), *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power* (pp. 163-173). Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Escobar, A. (2001). Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization. *Political Geography*, 20(2), 139-174.
- Everett, D. L. (2009). *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle*. New York: Vintage Departures.
- Fadnes, E., and Horst, C. (2009). Responses to Internal Displacement in Colombia: Guided by What Principles? *Refugee* 26(1), 10.
- Fine, R. (2012). Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights. In: T. Cushman (Ed.), *Handbook of Human Rights*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Fontana, A., and Frey, J. H. (2005). The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1980a). Two Lectures. In M. Foucault and C. Gordon (Eds.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (pp. 78-108). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980b). Truth and Power. In M. Foucault and C. Gordon (Eds.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (pp. 109-133). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980b). Truth and Power. In M. Foucault and C. Gordon (Eds.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (pp. 109-133). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980c). Power and Strategies. In M. Foucault and C. Gordon (Eds.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (pp. 134-145). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M., and Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and the Power, *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (4), 777-795
- Franco, R. (2012). *Cariba malo: episodios de resistencia de un pueblo indígena aislado del Amazonas*. Leticia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Sede Amazonia.
- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking recognition. *New Left Review*(3), 14.
- Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Freire, J. R. (1999). A descoberta do museu pelos índios. *Terra das Águas. Revista do Núcleo de Estudos Amazônicos*, 1(1), 11-38.
- Fujiwara, A. (2012). Japanese-Canadian Internally Displaced Persons: Labour Relations and Ethno-Religious Identity in Southern Alberta, 1942-1953. *Labour/Le Travail* 69, 26.
- Gaitán Moya, J. A., and Piñuel Raigada, J. L. (1998). *Técnicas de investigación en comunicación social: elaboración y registro de datos*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- García Ixmatá, A. P. (2010). Maya Knowledge and Wisdom. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 5(2), 23.
- Garay Salamanca, L. J., Barberi Gomez, F., Ramirez Gomez, C., Salinas Abdala, Y., Lopez Montano, C., Gomez, M. A., Betancur, J. C. (2012). *El reto ante la tragedia humanitaria del desplazamiento forzado: Superar la exclusión social de la población desplazada*. Bogotá: USAID. Organización Internacional para las Migraciones. Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.

- García Chacón, B., Gonzalez Zabala, E., Quiroz Trujillo, A., Velásquez Velásquez, A. M., and Ghiso Cotos, A. M. (2002). *Técnicas interactivas para la investigación social cualitativa*. Medellín: Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigo.
- Gardner, J. (2009). *First Nations and Marine Protected Areas. Summary Report: An introduction to First Nations Rights, Concerns and Interests Related to MPAs on Canada's Pacific Coast*. Vancouver: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.
- Geertz, C. (1986). Making Experiences, Authoring Selves. In V. W. Turner and E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of experience* (pp. 373-383). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Geoactivismo.org. (2012). *Los pueblos indígenas en riesgo en Colombia*. Retrieved April 1st, 2014, from <http://geoactivismo.org/2012/05/30/los-pueblos-indigenas-en-riesgo-en-colombia/>
- Glenn, H. P. (2011). The Three Ironies of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In S. Allen and A. Xanthaki (Eds.), *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Pub.
- Gómez, M. (1995). *Derechos indígenas: lectura comentada del Convenio 169 de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo*. México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista.
- Goulard, J.-P. (2009). *Entre mortales e inmortales: el Ser según los Ticuna de la Amazonía*. Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica : Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos.
- Gran Colombia. (2014). In Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/241012/Gran-Colombia>
- Grewal, I. (2005). *Transnational America. Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Grossberg, L. (1992). Mapping Popular Culture. In L. Grossberg (Ed.), *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (pp. 69-87). New York: Routledge.
- Gudykunst, W. B. M. B. (2002). *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Gudynas, E., and Acosta, A. (2011). La renovación de la crítica al desarrollo y el buen vivir como alternativa. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 16(53), 12.
- Gülalp, H. (1998). The Eurocentrism of Dependency Theory and the Question of 'Authenticity': A View from Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 19(5), 951-961.
- Gumucio Dagron, A., and Tufte, T. (2006). *Communication for Social Change Anthology: Historical and Contemporary Readings*. South Orange, N.J.: Communication for Social Change Consortium.
- Gumucio-Dagron, A. (2008). Vertical Minds versus Horizontal Cultures: An Overview of Participatory Process and Experiences. In J. Servaes (Ed.), *Communication for Development and Social Change*. New Delhi, India; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Gumucio-Dagron, A., and Tufte, T. (2008). *Antología de comunicación para el cambio social: lecturas históricas y contemporáneas*. New Jersey: Consorcio de Comunicación para el Cambio Social.

- Gupta, A., and Ferguson, J. (1997). *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Gutiérrez Rey, F., Acosta, L. E., and Salazar Cardona, C. A. (2004). *Perfiles urbanos en la Amazonia colombiana: un enfoque para el desarrollo sostenible*. Bogotá: Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones Científicas-SINCHI : Ministerio de Ambiente, Vivienda y Desarrollo Territorial: COLCIENCIAS.
- Guzmán Campos, G., Fals-Borda, O., and Umaña Luna, E. (2005). *La violencia en Colombia*. Bogotá: Taurus.
- Haarmann, H. (2007). *Foundations of Culture: Knowledge-Construction, Belief Systems and Worldview in their Dynamic Interplay*. Frankfurt am Main; Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Hall, S. (1996). On postmodernism and Articulation. In S. Hall, D. Morley & K.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (pp. 141-145). London; New York: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1997). Theories of Representation, Discourse, Power and the Subject. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage in association with the Open University.
- Hall, S. (1998). Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (pp. 41 – 68). Basingstoke [u.a.]: Macmillan [u.a.].
- Hall, S. (2001). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage: in association with the Open University.
- Hall, S., and Du Gay, P. (1996). *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Hardenburg, W. E., Reginald, E. C., and Casement, R. (1912). *The Putumayo, the Devil's Paradise; Travels in the Peruvian Amazon Region and an Account of the Atrocities Committed upon the Indians Therein*. London: T.F. Unwin.
- Hayday, N. (2009). From Repression to Renaissance: French-language Rights in Canada before the Charter. In J. Miron (Ed.), *A History of Human Rights in Canada: Essential Issues* (pp. 182-200). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- Hellum, A. (1998). Women's Human Rights and African Customary Laws: Between Universalism and Relativism - Individualism and Communitarianism. *European Journal of Development Research*, 10(2), 16.
- Hernández Castillo, R. A. (2002). National Law and Indigenous Customary Law: The Struggles for Justice of Indigenous Women in Chiapas, Mexico. *Gender justice, development, and rights / ed. by Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi. - Oxford [etc.] : Oxford university press : for UNRISD*, 384-412.
- Herrera, Á. D. (2013). Communication internationale et communication interculturelle. Regards épistémologiques et espaces de pratique. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 38(1), 3.
- Hidalgo Flor, F. (2011). Buen vivir, Sumak Kawsay: Aporte contrahegemónico del proceso andino. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana.*, 16(53), 9.
- Hofweber, T. (2013). “Logic and Ontology”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 Edition). Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/logic-ontology/>>.

- Hsab, G., and Stoiciu, G. (2011). Communication internationale et communication interculturelle : des champs croisés, des frontières ambulantes. In C. Agbobli and G. Hsab (Eds.), *Communication internationale et communication interculturelle regards épistémologiques et espaces de pratique* (pp. 9-26). Québec [Que.]: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Huérffano Belisamón, Á. (2010). *San José Km.6. Transformaciones de una comunidad Ticuna del Amazonas colombiano*. (Master's degree in Amazonian Studies), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Amazonia, Leticia.
- Huesca, R. (2000). Communication for Social Change among Mexican Factory Workers on the Mexico-United States Border. In K. G. Wilkins (Ed.), *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power* (pp. 73-87.). Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Huesca, R. (2002). Participatory Approaches to Communication for Development. In W. B. M. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication* (pp. 499-518). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Huesca, R. (2003). From Modernization to Participation. The Past and Future of Development Communication in Media Studies. In A. N. Valdivia (Ed.), *A Companion to Media Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Ingram, D. (2012). Group rights. A Defense. In T. Cushman (Ed.), *Handbook of Human Rights*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Ireland, N.L.(2006). *The 1916 Rising: Personalities & Perspectives*. (Online exhibition). Retrieved from http://www.nli.ie/1916/1916_main.html.
- Isaac, T. (2012). *Aboriginal Law: Commentary and Analysis*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Pub.
- Ishay, M. (2004). *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jacobs, K., and Manzi, T. (2000). Evaluating the Social Constructionist Paradigm in Housing Research. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 17(1), 35-42.
- Jenkins, R. (1994). Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17(2), 26.
- Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). The Methodology of Participant Observation. In D. L. Jorgensen (Ed.), *Participant Observation: a Methodology for Human Studies* (pp. 12-26). Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Kaba, B. (2006). *Etude comparée des facteurs et du processus d'adoption des technologies de l'information et de la communication au Québec et en Guinée: Application aux téléphones cellulaires*. (PhD Administration), Université du Québec a Montréal, AC20 U5511[D1393. Retrieved from <http://accesbib.uqam.ca/cgi-bin/bduqam/transit.pl?&noMan=24781309>
- Kane, O. (2008). *Économie de la régulation postcoloniale du secteur des télécommunications sénégalaises dans le cadre de la gouvernance globale : le cas des ressources communes*. (PhD Communication), Université du Québec À Montréal., Montréal.
- Kaufman, T. (1990). *Language History in South America: What We Know and How to Know More* Retrieved from /z-wcorg/ database
- Key, C. (2011). Development Theory from a Latin American Perspective. In H. Veltmeyer (Ed.), *The Critical Development Studies Handbook: Tools for Change* Halifax, N.S.; London; New York: Fernwood Pub.; PlutoPress.
- Kincheloe, J. L., and Steinbert, S. R. (2008). Indigenous Knowledges in Education.

- Complexities, Dangers, and Profound Benefits. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln and L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (pp. 135 -156). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Kothari, U. (2002). Feminist and Postcolonial Challenges to Development. In U. Kothari and M. Minogue (Eds.), *Development Theory and Practice: Critical Perspectives*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave.
- Krotz, E. (2004). Antropología, derechos humanos y diálogo intercultural. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales (Costa Rica)*, 2(104), 8.
- Lambe, J. P., and Longboat, R. D. (2011). As We Come to Being: Indigenous Knowledge, Figurative Language, and Dynamics of Relationships. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 31(2), 77-84.
- Larrea, A. M. (2010). La disputa de sentidos por el buen vivir como proceso contrahegemónico. In SENPLADES (Ed.), *Los nuevos retos de América Latina: Socialismo y Sumak Kawsay*. (pp. 200). Quito, Ecuador.
- Le Bot, Y. (2006). Les mouvements indiens en Amérique latine. In C. F. Gros and S. Marie-Claude (Eds.), *Être indien dans les Amériques : spoliations et résistance : mobilisations ethniques et politiques du multiculturalisme*. [Paris]; Éditions de l'Institut des hautes études de l'Amérique latine: Éditions de l'Institut des Amériques
- Levitt, K. P. (2011). Rolling Back the Canvas of Time. In H. Veltmeyer (Ed.), *The Critical Development Studies Handbook : Tools for Change*. Halifax, N.S.; London; New York: Fernwood Pub.; Pluto Press.
- Loxley, J. (2012). Alternative Approaches to Hydro Compensation and Agreements with First Nations. *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 8(1), 11.
- Lucero, J. A. (2013). Seeing like an International NGO: Encountering Development and Indigenous Politics in the Andes. In E. Silva (Ed.), *Transnational Activism And National Movements in Latin America: Bridging the Divide* (pp. 180-104). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mailloux-Béique, I. (2006). *Échos de la marge : médias alternatifs et émancipation citoyenne*. (M. Sc. Communication), Université de Montréal, Montréal.
- Malkki, L. H. (1997). National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identities among Scholars and Refugees. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (pp. 52- 73). Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Manzo, K. (1995). Black Consciousness and the Quest for a Counter-Modernist Development. In J. S. Crush (Ed.), *Power of Development*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography In/Of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95.
- Marglin, S. A. (1990). Towards the Decolonization of the Mind. In F. Apffel-Marglin and S. A. Marglin (Eds.), *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture, and Resistance* (pp. 1-28). Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University.
- Massey, D. B. (2005). *For Space*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.
- Matte, F. (2007). *L'aide humanitaire d'urgence en actions. Une approche ethnographique : le cas de Médecins sans Frontières*. (M.Sc. Communication Master's Dissertation), Université de Montréal, Montréal.
- McCarthy, E. D. (1996). *Knowledge as Culture: the New Sociology of Knowledge*. London; New York: Routledge.

- Melkote, S. R. (2000). Reinventing Development Support Communication to Account for Power and Control in Development. In K. G. Wilkins (Ed.), *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power* (pp. 39-54). Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Méloche, G. (2007). *Du conflit au dialogue, réflexions pour une éthique de l'intervention. L'expérience de construction identitaire de la communauté de Tambogrande au Pérou à travers sa lutte pour s'approprier son développement.* (PhD communication), Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal.
- Meyer, M. A. (2011). Ekolu mea nui: Three Ways to Experience the World. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 31(2), 11-16.
- Meyer, W. H. (2012). Indigenous Rights, Global Governance, and State Sovereignty. *Human Rights Review*, 13(3), 21. doi: DOI 10.1007/s12142-012-0225-3
- Mirza, M. (2011). Disability and Humanitarianism in Refugee Camps: the Case for a Travelling Supranational Disability Praxis. *Third World Quarterly*, 32(8), 9.
- Mitchell, L. M. (2006). Child-Centered? Thinking Critically about Children's Drawings as a Visual Research Method. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 22, 60-73.
- Mohanty, Ch. T. (2003). Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(2), 499-535.
- Moulin, C. (2009). Borders of Solidarity: Life in Displacement in the Amazon Tri-Border Region. *Refugee*, 26(2), 14.
- Muyuy Jacanamejoy, G. (2012). Tejiendo el canasto. Propuesta metodológica para la construcción colectiva de los planes integrales de vida de los Pueblos Indígenas de Colombia. Bogotá: Presidencia de la República. Retrieved from www.pueblosindigenas.gov.co.
- Myerhoff, B., and Ruby, J. (1982). Introduction. In J. Ruby (Ed.), *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology* (pp. 1-35). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Nahon-Serfaty, I. (2005). *Le discours sur la réforme de la santé au Venezuela : la transition Chávez (1999-2001).* (PhD Communication), Université de Montréal, Montréal.
- Navarro-Flores, O. (2006). *Les relations de partenariat Nord-Sud: Du paradoxe au compromis. Une approche institutionnaliste des relations entre ong dans le secteur de la coopération internationale.* (PhD Administration), Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal. Retrieved from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1273114141&sid=7&Fmt=2&clientId=48948&RQT=309&VName=PQ>
- Nayak, B. S. (2013). Challenges of Cultural Relativism and the Future of Feminist Universalism. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 6.
- Nieto, J. V. (2006). *Mujeres de la abundancia.* (Master's Degree in Amazonian Studies), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Amazonia, Leticia.
- Nieto, J. V. (2010). Proyectos de desarrollo para las mujeres en la comunidad indígena del Once: Un análisis desde la convivencia y la diferencia. *Mundo Amazónico*, 1(1), 21.
- Organization of American States (1969). *American Convention on Human Rights. "Pact of San José, Costa Rica".* San José, Costa Rica: Retrieved from http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights.pdf.

- Oliveira Filho, J. P. de (1987) *O Projeto Tükuna: uma Experiência de Ação Indigenista*. Em: Pacheco De Oliveira Filho, J. Ed. (1987) *Sociedades indígenas e indigenismo no Brasil*. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Editora Marco Zero.
- Ong, W. J. (1982). *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word*. London; New York: Methuen.
- Ospina, W. (2008). *El país de la canela*. Bogotá: Editorial Norma.
- Ortiz, C. M. (1990). *La violence en Colombie. Racines historiques et sociales*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Overing, J. (2006). The Backlash to Decolonizing Intellectuality. *Anthropology and Humanism*, 31(1), 11-40.
- Padilla, G. (1996). La ley y los pueblos indígenas en Colombia. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 1(2), 78-97.
- Parmar, A. (2011). The Cultural Matrix of Development and Change. In H. Veltmeyer (Ed.), *The Critical Development Studies Handbook: Tools for Change*. Halifax, N.S.; London; New York: Fernwood Pub.; PlutoPress.
- Parpart, J. (1995). Post-modernism, Gender and Development. In J. S. Crush (Ed.), *Power of Development*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Parpart, J., and Veltmeyer, H. (2011). The Evolution of an Idea: Critical Development Studies. In H. Veltmeyer (Ed.), *The Critical Development Studies Handbook: Tools for Change*. Halifax, N.S.; London; New York: Fernwood Pub. ; PlutoPress.
- Peace Direct (2014). Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES). Colombia. *Insightonconflict*. Retrieved September 01, 2014, from
- Peace Brigades International (2010). «Con los megaproyectos llega la militarización y nos obliga a desplazarnos de nuestros territorios». *Boletín especial. Peace Brigades International Colombia*, 14, 3.
- Pécaut, D. (1976). Reflexiones sobre el fenómeno de la Violencia. *Ideología y Sociedad* 19, 9.
- Pécaut, D. (1999). Los desplazados : un problema social y político. *Análisis Político*, 18(2), 14.
- Peeters, H., and Charier, P. (1999). Contributions à une théorie du dispositif. *Hermès*, 25, 8.
- Perez-Aguilera, D. A., and Figueroa-Helland, L. E. (2011). Beyond Acculturation: Political “Change”, Indigenous Knowledges, and Intercultural Higher-Education in Mexico. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 9(2), 268-296.
- Pineda Camacho, R. (2000). *Holocausto en el Amazonas: una historia social de la Casa Arana*. Santafé de Bogotá: Planeta Colombiana Editorial.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology: A Primer on Research Paradigms and Philosophy of Science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 126-136.
- Prefeitura de Tabatinga (2009). Tabatinga. Nossa cidade na Internet para o mundo ver. . Retrieved March 20th 2011, from <http://www.portaltabatinga.com.br/nossacidade.htm>
- Prefeitura Municipal de Benjamin Constant (2013). Nossa Cidade. Retrieved May 22th, 2013, from http://www.benjaminconstant-am.com.br/novo_site/index.php?exibir=secoes&ID=52
- Preuss, K. T. (1994). *Religión y mitología de los uitotos: recopilación de textos y observaciones efectuadas en una tribu indígena de Colombia, Suramérica*. Bogotá: Editorial Universidad Nacional, Corporación Colombiana para la Amazonia, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología.
- Quijano, A. (2007). El "movimiento indígena", la democracia y las cuestiones pendientes en

- América Latina. In C. A. Jáuregui and M. Moraña (Eds.), *Colonialidad y crítica en América Latina: bases para un debate* (pp. 299-336). Puebla, México: Universidad de las Américas Puebla.
- Ramos Lopes, Constantino (2005). What is a Museum For? The Magüta Museum for the Ticuna People, Amazonas, Brazil. *Public Archaeology*. 4, 183-186.
- Ramos, A. R. (1998). *Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Ramos, A. R. (2002). Cutting through State and Clans. In K. B. Warren and J. E. Jackson (Eds.), *Indigenous movements, self-representation, and the State in Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ramos, H. A. (2010). *El Ritual Tikuna de la Pelazón en la Comunidad de Arara, Sur del Trapecio Amazónico. Una Aproximación Etnográfica*. (Master's Degree in Amazonian Studies), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Amazonia, Leticia.
- Red Cross, I. C. (1949). Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Retrieved from: <http://www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/380>
- Red Cross, I. C. (1998). Guiding principles on internal displacement. *International Review of the Red Cross* (324).
- Restrepo Uribe, V.E. (2006). *Programa familias guardabosques*. Bogotá.
- Riaño Alcalá, P. (2000). Recuerdos metodológicos: El taller y la investigación etnográfica. *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*, 5(10), 25.
- Rodríguez Garavito, C. A., and Arenas, L. C. (2005). Indigenous Rights, Transnational Activism, and Legal Mobilization: The Struggle of the U'wa People in Colombia. In C. A. Rodríguez Garavito and B. d. S. Santos (Eds.), *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality* (pp. 241-266). Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodríguez Garavito, C. A., and Santos, B. d. S. (2005). *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodríguez Garavito, C. d., Orduz Salinas, N., Boada, S., Rubiano, S., and Arias, F. (2010). *Pueblos indígenas y desplazamiento forzado. Evaluación del cumplimiento del Gobierno colombiano del auto 004 de la Corte Constitucional colombiana*. Bogotá: Programa de Justicia Global y Derechos Humanos. Universidad de los Andes
- Rodríguez, C. and Vanter Hammen, M.C. (1993). "Nosotros no sabíamos cuánto valía el muerto." elementos para el análisis de la historia económica de la explotación del caucho en el bajo río Caquetá y Mirití-Paraná, Amazonia colombiana. In: R. Pineda Camacho and B. Alzate Angel (Eds.). *Pasado y presente del Amazonas: su historia económica y social* (pp. 31- 54.). Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes. Departamento de Antropología. Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales.
- Rojas, C. (2001). *Civilización y violencia: la búsqueda de la identidad en la Colombia del siglo XIX*. Bogotá: Editorial Norma.
- Roughi, N. (2007). *L'identification organisationnelle en contexte interculturel : le cas de l'UNESCO*. (Master's degree in communication), Université de Montréal, Montréal.
- Rueda Barrios, O. (2006). *Diagnóstico de comunicación participativa en el Magdalena Medio. "Vamos a construir un techo común con la casa de todos"*. Bucaramanga: Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana de Bucaramanga, Corporación de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio.

- Ruiz, I. (2013). The Economics of Forced Migration. *Journal of Development Studies*, 49(6), 12.
- Ruiz, N. Y. (2011). El desplazamiento forzado en Colombia: una revisión histórica y demográfica *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, 26(1), 37.
- Rutheford, K. R. (2009). The Transnational Effort for Disability Rights: the Marriage of Disability Rights to Human Rights. In N. Shawki and M. Cox (Eds.), *Negotiating Sovereignty and Human Rights Actors and Issues in Contemporary Human Rights Politics* (pp. 199-214). Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Salcedo, J. (2013). Migration and Violence: "Lessons from Colombia for the Americas." A workshop of the Transatlantic Forum on Migration and Integration and the Refugee Research Network (TFMI). *Refuge* 29(1), 6.
- Sánchez, G., and Meertens, D. (1983). *Bandoleros, gamonales y campesinos. El caso de la Violencia en Colombia*. Bogotá.
- Sánchez, J. A. (2004). La encrucijada afrocolombiana. Autonomía y territorio en medio de la guerra y la barbarie. *Documentos Codhes. Chocó: agua y fuego* 1, 4.
- Santos, B. d. S. (1997). Por uma concepção multicultural dos direitos humanos *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*(48), 22.
- Santos, B. d. S. (2002a). *Toward a New Legal Common Sense: Law, Globalization, and Emancipation*. London: Butterworths LexisNexis.
- Santos, B. d. S. (2002b). Toward a Multicultural Conception of Human Rights. In B. E. Hernández-Truyol (Ed.), *Moral Imperialism: a Critical Anthology* (pp. 39-60). New York: New York University Press.
- Santos, B. d. S., and Rodríguez Garavito, C. A. (2005). Law, politics, and the subaltern in counter-hegemonic globalization. In C. A. Rodríguez Garavito and B. d. S. Santos (Eds.). *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality* (pp. 1-26). Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Santos-Granero. (2002). Boundaries are Made to Be Crossed: The Magic and Politics of the Longlasting Amazon/Andes Divide. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 9 24.
- Sastry, N. (2014). The Location of Displaced New Orleans Residents in the Year After Hurricane Katrina. *Demography* 51(3), 22.
- Scheurich, J. J., and Young, M. D. (1997). Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased?. *Educational Researcher*, 6(4), 13.
- Schroeder, M. (2013). "Value Theory", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/value-theory/>>.
- Sen, A., Rabasco, E., and Toharia, L. (2000). *Desarrollo y libertad*. [Barcelona]: Planeta.
- SENA (2011). El SENA Objetivo y funciones. Retrieved March 20th, 2011, from <http://www.sena.edu.co/Portal/EH+SENA/Objetivo+y+funciones>
- Servaes, J. (2008). *Communication for Development and Social Change*. New Delhi, India; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications. From <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10272454>
- Servaes, J., and Lie, R. (2008). Media Globalization through Localization. In J. Servaes (Ed.), *Communication for Development and Social Change* (pp. 58-67). New Delhi, India; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Shi-xu. (2012). Understanding Contemporary Chinese Political Communication a Historico-Intercultural Analysis and Assessment of its Discourse of Human Rights. *Journal of Language and Politics* 11(1), 18.

- Sidze, E. M. (2006). *Facteurs sociodémographiques associés à l'accès à l'Internet et son utilisation dans les milieux de l'enseignement et de la recherche au Cameroun*. (M. Sc. Information), Université de Montréal.
- Slack, J. D. (1996). The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies. In S. Hall, D. Morley and K.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (pp. 112-130). London; New York: Routledge.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London; New York; Dunedin, N.Z.; New York: Zed Books; University of Otago Press; Distributed in the USA exclusively by St. Martin's Press.
- Smith, L. T. (2005). On Tricky Ground: Researching the Native in the Age of Uncertainty. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 85-107). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Smith, M. (2009). Social Movements and Judicial Empowerment: Courts, Public Policy, and Lesbian and Gay Organizing in Canada. In J. Miron (Ed.), *A history of human rights in Canada: essential issues* (pp. 220-243). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- SNAIPD (2010). *Informe del gobierno nacional a la Corte Constitucional sobre la superación del estado de cosas inconstitucional declarado mediante la sentencia t-025 de 2004*
- Spivak, G. C. (1994). Can the subaltern speak? In P. Williams and L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory : A Reader* (pp. 66-11). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (1999). ¿Puede hablar el sujeto subalterno? Retrieved from <http://www.sedici.unlp.edu.ar?id=ARG-UNLP-ART-0000000484> La Plata: Servicio de Difusión de la Creación Intelectual. Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina).
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Stanfield, M. E. (1998). *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees: Violence, Slavery, and Empire in Northwest Amazonia, 1850-1933*. Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press.
- Stavenhagen, R. (2002). Los derechos indígenas. Algunos problemas conceptuales. In C. V. Zambrano (Ed.), *Etnopolíticas y racismo: conflictividad y desafíos interculturales en América Latina*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales.
- Stavenhagen, R. (2011). Making the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Work: the Challenges Ahead. In S. Allen and A. Xanthaki (Eds.), *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Pub.
- Stoco, S. (2011). Museu ticuna em Benjamin Constant recebe verba federal. Retrieved from: . [http://www.d24am.com/amazonia/parintins-cultura-arte/museu-ticuna-em-benjamin-constant-recebe-verba-federal/14043]. *D24am*.
- Stoiciu, G. (2011). La communication interculturelle comme champ d'études: histoire, carte et territoire. In C. Agbobi and G. Hsab (Eds.), *Communication internationale et communication interculturelle regards épistémologiques et espaces de pratique* (pp. 45-70). Québec [Que.]: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Suchet, S. (2002). "Totally Wild"? Colonising Discourses, Indigenous Knowledges and Managing Wildlife. *Australian Geographer*, 33(2), 141-157.
- Sudan Country Review (2011). Human Rights. *Sudan Country Review* 3.
- Survival International (2014). Brazilian Indigenous Leader Slams Amazon Mega-dams in Paris Protest. from <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10062>

- Tobón, M. A. (2008). Cómo recibir a las personas armadas. La Gente de centro – kigipe urúki –, el conflicto armado y las violencias del pasado. In: A. I. Buitrago Garavito and E. M. Jiménez Rojas (Eds.), *Gente, tierra y agua en la Amazonia*. (Vol. 3, pp. 45-72). Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Amazonia. Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones IMANI. .
- Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Turner, T. (1997). Human Rights, Human Difference: Anthropology's Contribution to an Emancipatory Cultural Politics. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53 (1997), p. (3), 18.
- Turner, V. W. (1986). Reflexivity as Evolution in Thoreau's *Walden*. In V. W. Turner and E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp. 73-94). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Uitoto, Plan de Salvaguarda Étnica (2012). *MONIFUE KAÏ KOMUYA UAI. Formulación del plan de salvaguarda étnica de los hijos de la coca, tabaco y yuca dulce (primera fase). Documento de trabajo*. Leticia.
- United Nations (2000). *The Millennium Declaration*. New York: Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
- United Nations, G. A. (1948). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.
- United Nations, G. A. (1966a). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. New York: Retrieved from <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20999/volume-999-I-14668-English.pdf>.
- United Nations, G. A. (1966b). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>.
- United Nations, G. A. (2011). *United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development*. Geneva: United Nations.
- United Nations. G. A. (2013). *Overview of Forced Displacement*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/overviewofforceddisplacement.html>.
- Uruburu Gilède, S. (2012). Siguiendo al maestro: una evocación de la memoria histórica de la creación de comunidades religiosas en la región Amazónica. In F. Correa Rubio, J.-P. Chaumeil and R. Pineda (Eds.), *El aliento de la memoria. Antropología e historia en la Amazonia andina*. (pp. 391-430). Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Departamento de Antropología. Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos (IFEA). Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS).
- Uruburu Gilède, S. Herrera Arango, A.D. and Rodríguez Caballero, J.M. (2011). *Comunicación para la inclusión en lo público: articulación de iniciativas entre comunidades multiétnicas y pluriculturales: Amazonas, Colombia*. Bogotá: Universidad Santo Tomás, Facultad de Comunicación Social.
- USAID. (2013). Iniciativa para la conservación en la Amazonia andina. Retrieved September 20th, 2013, from <http://www.amazonia-andina.org/>
- Vargas Llosa, M. (2010). *El sueño del celta*. Doral, FL: Alfaguara.
- Voirol, O. (2005). Luttés pour la visibilité. Esquisse d'une problématique. *Réseaux*, 1(129-130), 30.

- Warren, K. B., and Jackson, J. E. (2002). *Indigenous Movements, Self-representation, and the State in Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Weber, M. (1995). Les relations communautaires ethniques. In M. Weber, E. Dampierre, J. De Freund and J. Chavy (Eds.), *Economie et société* (Vol. 2, pp. 124-144). Paris: Pocket.
- Wiebe, A., and Klassen, B. (2011). Colombia's Best Hope: While Guerrillas and Paramilitaries Grab Global Attention, Ordinary People are Taking Peace into their Own Hands. *Ploughshares Monitor* 32(2), 4.
- Wilkins, K. G. (2000). *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Williams, R. (2010). *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- World Bank (2012). *World Development Indicators 2012*. Retrieved from /z-wcorg/ database Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10555108>
- Zambrano, C. V. (2002). *Etnopolíticas y racismo: conflictividad y desafíos interculturales en América Latina*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales.
- Zárate Botía, C. (2008). *Silvícolas, siringueros y agentes estatales: el surgimiento de una sociedad transfronteriza en la Amazonia de Brasil, Perú y Colombia, 1880 – 1932*. Leticia: Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones (IMANI).