

Nasa Kiwe: Tradition, Resistance, Dwelling and Belief
The Symbolic Construction of Indigenous Territory in a Contemporary Southwestern
Colombia Reservation.

María Patricia Farfán Sopó.

Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering
McGill University Montreal, Canada.

2023

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

© María Patricia Farfán Sopó 2023

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Résumé.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
Glossary and Abbreviations	xii
Map of Toribío <i>Resguardo</i> and <i>Yatzungas</i>	xiii
Introduction — <i>Nasa Kiwe: The Nasa-Paéz Sacred Territory</i>	1
Primary Approach.....	4
Nasa-Paéz People of Peace.....	11
CRIC and <i>Proyecto Nasa</i> : Fifty Years of Resistance.....	14
Weaving of Life: the Great Sacred House.....	20
<i>Nasa Kiwe</i> : the Construction of Collective Identity.....	24
Community Understanding.....	28
The Methodology.....	33
Contributions.....	40
Thesis Outline.....	43
Chapter 1 Dreams —Reaffirming Cultural Identity.....	48
1.1.From Colonial Conflict and <i>Caciques Nuevos</i> to Protest and New Beliefs. Doña Josefina Fixcué’s Testimony.....	50
1.2. Mountains, <i>Nasa Kiwe</i> and <i>Nasa Yat</i> : Slumbering’s of Peace. Marco Tulio Jascué’s Testimony.....	92
1.3. Beliefs and Tributes to <i>Nasa Kiwe</i> . Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué Testimony.....	118
Chapter 2 <i>Tulpa</i> - Hearth — Symbolism and Representations.....	145
2.1 Law of Origin and the Eternal Return. Soledad Martínez Cápi Testimony.....	147
2.2 The inhabitable Sacred Place: Symbolism and Boundaries. Ingrid Dayana León Testimony.....	180
2.3 Decolonizing Nasa-Paéz Identity and the Phenomena of Resilience. Australia Poto Julicué Testimony.....	214
Chapter 3 The Great House — Traditional Manifestations: Voices for Descendants.	253
3.1 Resistance, Tradition and Art. Gonzalo Rivera’s Testimony.....	255
3.2 <i>Nasa Kiwe</i> House of Weavers. Carmelina Yule Testimony.....	286
3.3 The Great Imagined House: Weaving Resistance. Eyder Willson Úll Ascué Testimony.....	323
Chapter 4 — Conclusions.....	362
Bibliography	368
Interviews and <i>Mingas</i>.....	390

Abstract

This dissertation examines the symbolic construction of the Nasa-Paéz Indigenous territory “*Nasa Kiwe*” through traditional research practices of defending and inhabiting their contemporary *resguardo* (Indigenous Communal land). Architecture is a crucial part of this process. Inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe* is widely recognized as an activity of giving and receiving, concepts that are linked to community habitation in which giving has not only an economic function but is also tied to ritual. In most cases, inhabiting *Nasa-Kiwe* consists of activities related to planting, *umya*’ or weaving, traditional teaching, building *Nasa Yat* or *Yatzungas* – traditional houses – or organizing *mingas* – community meetings – of cultural and political resistance.

This study focuses on the different processes of resilience that contribute to the struggle of becoming an Indigenous community recognized as a “people of peace” in a violent territory. These processes align with the mission of the political movement *proyecto Nasa*, through which the community has undertaken the foundational task of protecting Indigenous culture and territory.

I explore the concept of *Nasa Kiwe*, understood as the great house, where the development of the Nasa-Paéz’s cultural principles define their relationship with, and appropriation of, their territory. Beliefs, rituals, traditions and the voice of elders and women give permanence and stability to ancestral culture in its contemporary form.

This research reveals how, through the architecture of the traditional house, the Nasa-Paéz inscribe, in material form, their ancestral knowledge. Each feature evokes the sacredness of, and respect for, Indigenous territory and culture, connecting and congregating community in a union of dweller and dwelling-together within *Nasa Kiwe*. Finally, through the activities and architecture brought to light by this research, one can see evidence of how to lead a respectful process of Indigenous vindication that violence and cultural oppression have long denied.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine la construction symbolique du territoire Indigène Nasa-Paéz "*Nasa Kiwe*" à travers les pratiques de recherche traditionnelles de défense et d'habitation contemporaine de leur *resguardo* (terre communautaire Indigène). L'architecture est un élément crucial du processus. Habiter *Nasa Kiwe* est largement reconnu comme une activité consistant à donner et à recevoir, des concepts liés à l'habitation communautaire dans laquelle le don n'a pas seulement une fonction économique mais est également lié à un rituel. Dans la plupart des cas, ces activités sont liées à des actions comme la plantation, le tissage, l'enseignement traditionnel, la construction de *Nasa Yat* ou de *Yatzungas* - maisons traditionnelles - ou l'organisation de *mingas* - réunions communautaires - de résistance culturelle et politique.

Cette étude se concentre sur différents mécanismes de résilience qui contribuent à la lutte pour devenir une communauté Indigène reconnue comme un "peuple de paix" dans un territoire violent. La mission première du mouvement politique *proyecto Nasa*, est de protéger la culture et le territoire Indigènes.

J'explore le concept de *Nasa Kiwe*, compris comme la grande maison, où le développement des principes culturels des Nasa-Paéz définit leur relation avec, ainsi que l'appropriation qu'ils font de leur territoire. Les croyances, les rituels, les traditions et la voix des anciens et des femmes donnent une permanence et une stabilité à la culture ancestrale dans sa forme contemporaine.

Cette étude révèle comment la maison traditionnelle devient l'élément architectural matériel servant aux Nasa-Paéz à inscrire leur savoir ancestral. Chaque caractéristique évoque le caractère sacré et le respect du territoire et de la culture Indigène, reliant et rassemblant la communauté dans une union entre l'habitant et l'habitation au sein de *Nasa Kiwe*. Enfin, à travers les activités et l'architecture mises en lumière par cette étude, il est possible de voir comment mener un processus respectueux de revendication autochtone que la violence et l'oppression culturelle ont longtemps interdit.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance, kindness and support of my supervisor Ricardo L. Castro, Associate Professor (Post-Retirement) at the School of Architecture at McGill University. Professor Castro introduced me to the wonders of the sacred in the Indigenous cultures of Colombia. I am thankful to the members of my supervisory committee: Robert Mellin, José R. Jouve-Martín and David Theodore for their constant support and inspiring advice. José R. Jouve-Martín opened the path to this investigation with the Indigenous communities in southern Colombia, and who invited me to explore the work of Joanne Rappaport - whom I had the honor of meeting in Bogotá. I would like to thank McGill University for the support and collaboration during the development of this thesis.

Special thanks to the CECIDIC, to the project *Proyecto Piloto Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*, as well as to the Alcaldía y Secretaría de Planeación de Toribío, the Association of Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca ACIN *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*, Tejido de Justicia and Armonía and Tejido de la Mujer who authorized my presence and managed the permissions that allowed me to make my investigation possible under the guidelines of the Nasa-Paéz. All my gratitude to Former Toribío mayors Ezequiel Vitonás, Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué and Florencio Mestizo Musicué Coordinador from ACIN Tejido de Justicia y Armonía. Thanks to Father Ezio Guadalupe Roattino, Alcibíades Escué, Australia Poto Julicué, Josefina Fixcué, Carmelina Yule, Soledad Martínez Cápi, Mayra Aida Finscué, Marco Tulio Jascué, Luis Antonio Poto, and Luis Fernando Poscué Juli for sharing their experiences.

Thanks to Gonzalo Rivera for sharing his knowledge and allowing me to walk the paths of Nasa-Paéz traditional education. Thank you to professor Marcos Yule Yatacué, the pedagogical coordinator in Santander de Quilichao of the university UAIIN for his wise words and for introducing me to the Nasa-Paéz's own literature through his wonderful texts. Thanks to the elders Mariano Pilcué, Elizerio Vitonás, Mariano Pilcué and Máximo Pavi for sharing their ancestral knowledge. Thanks to my colleague Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué who taught me about Nasa-Paéz architecture and its symbology as peaceful resistance. All my admiration goes to women leaders for highlighting the culture of Nasa-Paéz through the symbology of *umya* ' as an act of weaving community, and my special gratitude to my friend Ingrid Dayana León who, with her joy and spontaneity, made my stays in the CECIDIC even more pleasant. Thanks to Nasa-Kiwe for allowing me to walk their paths and create special bonds.

I am also thankful for the kind assistance I received during my archival research in Popayán: Lina María Amaya and Gloria Alicia Chanduví and the community and staff of the archives and

libraries of Toribío, San Francisco, Tacueyó, Santander de Quilichao, Caloto, Santo Domingo, San Francisco, El Flayo, Huellas, Nuevo Toéz, Caldonó, Lopez, Loma Linda, Togoima, San Andrés de Pisimbalá, Jambaló, Mosoco and Inzá. Also, thanks to professors Gilma Mosquera and Harold Martinez of the Universidad del Valle in Cali.

My utmost sincere gratitude to the Universidad Piloto de Colombia who have always been supportive of my academic development and without whose sustenance this project would not have been possible. Thanks to the Ecohabitat Research group of the Architecture School at the Universidad Piloto de Colombia and the whole team who at different points became part of this project: Ivan Erazo, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz, Maria Camila Coronado, Aaron Brakke and Carlos I. Rueda, who was the person who motivated me to continue my doctorate studies. Thanks to my colleagues in Montreal: Tania Gutierrez, Valentina Davila, Magdalena Milosz, Gonzalo Muñoz, Aniel Guxholli and Dustin Valen. Thanks to the McGill University for allowing me to discover my roots, my territory.

Thanks to Lawrence Bird who treated my work with respect, editing this work with extreme patience and always making precise suggestions, and to Robert Sutcliffe for his support and insightful linguistic suggestions.

My special gratitude to the Avella family who adopted me as a daughter in Montreal. I have no words to express my gratitude to my parents and my sister who have always supported me in all aspects of my life, motivating me to always keep going. Thank you for their constant support.

To my sons Sebastian and Nicolas who I love with all my heart, I dedicate this thesis to them. I hope that this journey which the three of us have taken together serves you as an example for the future: with dedication and perseverance, you always reach the goal.

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1, Map of Toribío <i>resguardos</i> and <i>Yatzungas</i> . Sofía Montaña. “Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Paéz: Reserva Kiwe. Degree work”. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2021.....	xiii
Fig. 1.2, <i>Chiva</i> with students from the CECIDIC in front of the home of the elder Elizerio Vitonás in Santo Domingo <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	52
Fig. 1.3, Royal path connecting the Tacueyó and Paéz <i>resguardo</i> in Tierradentro. Photo by author.....	57
Fig. 1.4, Parish of San Juan Bautista (archdiocese of Popayán) Toribío, Cauca. Photo by author.....	64
Fig. 1.5, <i>Hacienda</i> coffee house in Toribío. Photo by author.....	75
Fig. 1.6, Representation of the <i>caciques nuevos</i> in a mural at the CECIDIC created by the students, which symbolizes the union of the Nasa-Paéz people around the hearth. Photo by author.....	82
Fig. 1.7, Representation of the chief Juan Tama in a mural at the Mosoco Paéz Indigenous <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	86
Fig. 1.8, Huila Tierradentro <i>resguardo</i> – Paéz sacred lake. Photo by author.....	95
Fig. 1.9, Paéz sacred lake. Tierradentro, Cauca. Photo by author.....	95
Fig. 1.10, Shows an exemplary Koskunguena scene of harmony between dwellers and dwelling at Teyuna <i>Ciudad Perdida</i> . Photo by author.....	99
Fig. 1.11, Depicts a mural in the Toribío <i>resguardo</i> representing the ancestral territory <i>Cxhab Wala Kiwe</i> vision coming from the new chiefs, and contemporary leaders. Photo by author.....	101
Fig. 1.12, Representation of the arrow and rhomboid shape as <i>chumbe</i> weaving in the CECIDIC dorms. Photo by author.....	105
Fig. 1.13, The <i>Yatzunga</i> at Huellas <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	110
Fig. 1.14, Image of Father Álvaro Ulcué at the CECIDIC. Photo by author.....	112
Fig. 1.15, CECIDIC Image of Father Álvaro Ulcué united with Nasa Kiwe. Photo by author.....	113
Fig. 1.16, <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> traditional education project and its interpretation of two houses and spiral as <i>Nasa Kiwe</i> . Photo by author.....	124
Fig. 1.17, Mural in Santander de Quilichao representing the <i>Nasa Yat</i> as a place for congregation and place of origin. Photo by author.....	127
Fig. 1.18, The hearth connects the different worlds of the Nasa-Paéz community. Photo by author.....	131
Fig. 1.19, Catholic chapel Inzá – Tierradentro. Photo by author.....	137
Fig. 1.20, <i>Saakhelu</i> Ritual in Tacueyó. Photo by author.....	141
Fig. 1.21, <i>Saakhelu</i> and <i>Yatzunga</i> in Tacueyó <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	143
Fig. 2.1, Traditional <i>Bahareque</i> house in Tierradentro. Photo by author.....	150
Fig. 2.2, Nuevo Toéz <i>resguardo</i> houses. Photo by author.....	151
Fig. 2.3, Design proposal following Nasa-Paéz beliefs – spiral and law of origin pattern. Andrés Romero. <i>Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2018.....	154
Fig. 2.4, <i>Yatzunga</i> façades and design proposal following Nasa-Paéz beliefs: spiral pattern – law of origin. Andrés Romero. <i>Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2018.....	155
Fig. 2.5, Mural representation in Toribío of the Nasa-Paéz ritual of burial of the navel. Photo by author.....	157

Fig. 2.6, Snake head next to a <i>Yatzunga</i> at CECIDIC. It symbolizes the elder's wisdom present in communal houses. Photo by author.....	164
Fig. 2.7, Hearth and three trunk spiral in a <i>Yatzunga</i> at CECIDIC. Photo by author.....	166
Fig. 2.8, Representation of the coiled snake in the spiral movement in the contemporary <i>tull</i> . Photo by author.....	167
Fig. 2.9, Snake in motion drawing in Las Palmeras- López traditional school. Photo by author.....	169
Fig. 2.10, Located along the path between Toribío and San Francisco, the mural represents a snake in movement. Its body is associated with the <i>chumbes</i> . Photo by author.....	171
Fig. 2.11, Women walking and weaving as part of the <i>Saakhelu</i> ritual in the Tacueyó <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	173
Fig. 2.12, <i>Chumbes</i> and <i>mochilas</i> from the house of weavers in Toribío Saturday's market. Photo by author.....	175
Fig. 2.13, Elder in the midst of the harmonization ritual of <i>Khabu</i> or <i>Tama</i> and with <i>chumbes</i> in Santander de Quilichao mural. Photo by author.....	177
Fig. 2.14, The great house interpretation in a communal house: the symbolic construction of territory. Photo by author.....	178
Fig. 2.15, Kogi <i>bohío</i> of elder Atanasio in Taironaka. Drawing by author.....	187
Fig. 2.16, Reconstruction of elder Pavi <i>Nasa Yat</i> in San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Drawing by author.....	188
Fig. 2.17, <i>Yatzunga</i> at the CECIDIC San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Drawing by author.....	188
Fig. 2.18, <i>Mingas</i> for reflection in one of the <i>Yatzungas</i> of the CECIDIC. Photo by author.....	193
Fig. 2.19, Rectangular <i>Yatzunga</i> . CECIDIC San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> 2019. Drawing by author.....	196
Fig. 2.20, <i>Bohío</i> Kogi of elder Atanasio. Taironaka. Photo by author.....	197
Fig. 2.21, <i>Maloca</i> Kogi. <i>Pueblito Chairama</i> . Photo by author.....	198
Fig. 2.22, <i>Nasa Yat</i> (rectangular) and <i>Yatzunga</i> (circular) models made by students from the Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> Project at San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	200
Fig. 2.23, Hypogeum in <i>Parque Arqueológico de Tierradentro</i> . Inzá Cauca. Photo by author.....	202
Fig. 2.24, Community member from Loma Linda analyzing the <i>Yatzunga</i> proposal. Photo by author.....	203
Fig. 2.25, <i>Minga</i> in Loma Linda <i>Yatzunga</i> project. Photo by author.....	204
Fig. 2.26, <i>Yatzunga</i> at CECIDIC. The condor on the top symbolize the 'spirits' presence. Photo by author.....	208
Fig. 2.27, <i>Vereda López chambas</i> and timber bridges as territorial borders. Photo by author.....	210
Fig. 2.28, Fiscué at her farm <i>chambas</i> - trenches. <i>Vereda López</i> . Photo by author.....	211
Fig. 2.29, Construction of <i>Yatzunga</i> as part of the traditional education at the Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> project. Photo by author.....	217
Fig. 2.30, Construction of a contemporary <i>Yatzunga</i> at the Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> project. Photo by author.....	218
Fig. 2.31, Decolonizing architecture to host traditional education at Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> Project. Photo by author.....	221
Fig. 2.32, Elder Pavi, <i>kapiyazas</i> and students at the Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> . Photo by author.....	222
Fig. 2.33, <i>Mochilas</i> woven by students as part of the academic program at the Wasak <i>Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> . Photo by author.....	223

Fig. 2.34, Design project developed as a decolonized structure in contemporary Putumayo <i>resguardo</i> . Diana Ortiz. “Parque Paisajístico Cultural Yai.” Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia 2021-2022.....	227
Fig. 2.35, Mosoco non-traditional house after the earthquake of June 4, 1994. Photo by author.....	230
Fig. 2.36, <i>Yatzunga</i> and <i>Tulpa</i> . Nuevo Toéz <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	232
Fig. 2.37, Mayra Aida Fiscué in her traditional <i>Nasa Yat</i> in the upper part of López. Photo by author.....	238
Fig. 2.38, North façade of the Fiscué family house in the lower part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.....	239
Fig. 2.39, <i>Yat</i> of the Fiscué family in the upper part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.....	240
Fig. 2.40, Addition of the Fiscué family house in the lower part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.....	242
Fig. 2.41, Illustration showing Nasa-Paéz youth inviting to participate in <i>minga</i> to promote traditional education. VII regional <i>minga</i> “Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial”, CRIC, 2021.....	246
Fig. 2.42, Illustration showing Nasa-Paéz elders and youth promoting the political and territorial decolonization. VII regional <i>minga</i> “Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial”, CRIC, 2021.....	247
Fig. 2.43, Non-Indigenous architecture at Nuevo Toéz <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	248
Fig. 2.44, Rituals in the <i>tulpa</i> as symbology of the construction of territory thorough decolonizing practices. Photo by author.....	251
Fig. 3.1, <i>Sek Ate Kiwe</i> : the sun, the moon and territory, CECIDIC mural. Photo by author.....	259
Fig. 3.2, <i>Real Audiencia de Quito</i> Titles: Tacueyó, Toribío and San Francisco 1700-1770. Photo by author.....	261
Fig. 3.3, Two-storey house in Toribío between the urban centre and rural areas. Photo by author.....	264
Fig. 3.4, Two-storey house in the Toribío urban centre. Photo by author.....	264
Fig. 3.5, Caloto central square and town hall, following Spanish colonial models of architecture and urban structure. Photo by author.....	268
Fig. 3.6, Mural representing Indigenous woman leader holding the staff of command at the Town Hall of Toribío. Photo by author.....	271
Fig. 3.7, Indigenous guard and <i>cacique</i> Quintin Lame mural in Tacueyó. Photo by author.....	272
Fig. 3.8, CECIDIC mural on one of the dorm walls. Photo by author.....	273
Fig. 3.9, Nasa-Paéz tradition as expressed through façades of urban houses at Toribío. Photo by author.....	275
Fig. 3.10, Design proposal following Nasa-Paéz weaving patterns. Sofía Montaña. <i>Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.....	281
Fig. 3.11, Urban proposal following weaving patterns. Sofía Montaña. <i>Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.....	282
Fig. 3.12, Mural façades as part of design projects. Sofía Montaña. <i>Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.....	283
Fig. 3.13a & 3.13b, 2015 and 2020 Toribío town hall façade. Photo by Tomás Bolaños.....	285

Fig. 3.14, Interior of the <i>Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe</i> House. Photo by author.....	288
Fig. 3.15, Interior of the “ <i>Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca</i> ” house and traditional loom with a <i>Chumbe</i> in the process of creation. Photo by author.....	289
Fig. 3.16, Illustration in the interior of the “ <i>Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca</i> ” house showing an invitation to celebrate the international Indigenous Women day. Photo by author.....	291
Fig. 3.17, Mural inside Toribío Townhall in which the loom represents different traditional dynamics within the Toribío <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	293
Fig. 3.18, Mural in Toribío representing the woman and <i>chumbes</i> as carriers of wisdom and protectors of the Nasa-Paéz political structure. Photo by author.....	297
Fig. 3.19, Representation of the spiral on the <i>mochilas</i> and in the <i>tull</i> in the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> pilot project, showing cultural and territorial expansion in the San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	301
Fig. 3.20, Design proposal following the spiral pattern of the Nasa-Paéz law of origin. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. <i>Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.....	302
Fig. 3.21, Design proposal following the spiral pattern of the Nasa-Paéz law of origin. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. <i>Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.....	303
Fig. 3.22, weaving in the form of <i>Chumbe</i> in the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> , symbol of the Nasa-Paéz cultural and territorial expansion. Photo by author.....	305
Fig. 3.23, Carmelina Yule explaining the symbology of the figures and colors of the <i>chumbe</i> in the house of “ <i>Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca</i> .” Photo by author.....	307
Fig. 3.24, <i>Mochila</i> with the image of Father Ulcué “ <i>Nasa Pal</i> ” referring to the unifying vision of the <i>proyecto Nasa</i> in the house of “ <i>Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca</i> .” Photo by author.....	312
Fig. 3.25, <i>Hilando Pensamiento</i> CRIC project Mural. CRIC 2021.....	314
Fig. 3.26, Image in the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> pilot project, which shows weaving the <i>mochila</i> as an element for protection against violence in the <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	316
Fig. 3.27, Traditional weaving in the <i>Huellas resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	320
Fig. 3.28, Image of the <i>Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa</i> in the Toribío town hall by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.....	324
Fig. 3.29, Image of the architectural Project <i>Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa</i> in the Toribío town hall by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.....	325
Fig. 3.30, Two-story <i>Yatzunga</i> of Juan Tama in Santo Domingo by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.....	326
Fig. 3.31, Traditional house of the Ul Ascué family in San Francisco. Photo by author.....	327
Fig. 3.32, Second house of the Ul Ascué family in San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	327
Fig. 3.33, Great house for the <i>minga</i> and <i>Yatzunga</i> in Tacueyó. Photo by author.....	329
Fig. 3.34, Prototype of <i>Nasa Yat</i> at the entrance to the Tacueyó <i>resguardo</i> to promote and make visible traditional architecture. Photo by author.....	332
Fig. 3.35, <i>Mingas</i> as part of tradition and ritual. Photo by author.....	334
Fig. 3.36, Blowing ritual or <i>puthya</i> ’ in the house of harmonization or <i>Kfxizenxi</i> ’ <i>Yat</i> . Photo by author.....	336
Fig. 3.37, Author participating in a ritual of harmonization at the entry to the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> . Photo by Tomás Bolaños.....	338
Fig. 3.38, <i>Yatzunga</i> for welcoming in the <i>Saakhelu</i> of Tacueyó. Photo by author.....	339

Fig. 3.39. Ritual of extinguishing the hearth fire or <i>Ipx Fxixxanxi</i> - <i>Çxhab Wala Kiwe</i> in the San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	342
Fig. 3.40, Ritual for lighting the new hearth in the San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	343
Fig. 3.41, Welcome at the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> . Photo by author.....	346
Fig. 3.42, Welcoming and moving around the <i>Yatzungas</i> at the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees</i> . Photo by author.....	347
Fig. 3.43, Interpretation by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué of the great house through an imagined architecture.....	350
Fig. 3.44, Urban design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. <i>Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.	352
Fig. 3.45, <i>Nasa Yat</i> Design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. <i>Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.....	353
Fig. 3.46, Design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter between Nasa-Paéz and Muellamues Indigenous Communities. María Aldana, Melissa Moreno and Tomás Rodríguez. <i>Equipamiento Comunal Etnoturístico Productivo para la Comunidad Indígena Muellamues</i> . Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.....	354
Fig. 3.47, Hearth of the house in <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> San Francisco <i>resguardo</i> . Photo by author.....	357
Fig. 3.48, Political hearth and rift in <i>Saakhelu Thakwe Yu'</i> . Photo by author.....	357
Fig. 3.49, Women's <i>minga</i> to build a <i>Yat</i> in the Tacueyó <i>resguardo</i>	359
Fig. 4.1, Interpretation of elder Máximo Pavi's paternal house in the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> . Photo by author.....	364
Fig. 4.2, Interpretation of the <i>Nasa Yat</i> in the <i>Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx</i> by elder Máximo Pavi. Photo by author.....	365

Glossary

Chumbe: Woven Ribbon
Cxhab Wala Kiwe: Territory of the Great People
Caciques Nuevos: Colonial Chiefs
Kapiyaza: Traditional Professor
Khabu or Tama: Stick or Staff of command
Ksxa'w İkhwe'sx Yat: House of the Spirits.
Manto de Mama Kiwe: Weaving of Mother Earth
Maama'Kiwe, Mama Kiwe or Uma Kiwe: Mother Earth
Minga: Community Meeting
Movimiento Armado Indígena Quintín Lame: Quintin Lame Armed Indigenous Movement
Nasa: People of Peace
Nasa Kiwe: Nasa Territory - Great House
Nasa Yat: Family House
Nasa Yuwe: Nasa Language
Parcialidades: Indigenous settlements
Plan de Vida Nasa Nuestros Sueños Kwesx Ksxa'wtx: Our Dreams Nasa Life Plan
Proyecto Nasa: Nasa Political Project of Life
Proyecto Piloto Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees: Traditional Center for Education Pilot Project
Proyecto Tejidos de Vida : Weaving of Life Project
Puthya': Blowing Ritual
Resguardo: Indigenous Communal land
Taw: Woven Ribbon
Thê'wala: Elder
T'iwe N'hi' Yu'i Nasayak: Origin of the Earth and Man Myth
Tull: Sacred Orchard
Tulpa: Hearth
Uma: First Female
Umya': Weaving
Yat: Traditional House
Yat Wala: Great House
Yatzunga: Traditional Community House

Abbreviations

ACIN: Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca.
CECIDIC: Center for Education, Training and Research for the Integral Development of the Community.
CECIDIC 2015: Nasa Research Guidelines.
CRIC: Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca.
ELN: Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional - Guerrilla Organization
FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Guerrilla Organization
ICAHN: Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History.
ONIC: National Indigenous Organization of Colombia.
PEBI: Bilingual and Intercultural Education Program.
PEC: Communitarian Learning Project.
SEIP: Traditional Indigenous Education System
UAIIN: Universidad Autónoma, Indígena e Intercultural.

Map of Toribío *Resguardos* and *Yatzungas*



Fig. 1.1 Map of Toribío *resguardo* and Yatzungas. Sofía Montaño. “Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe. Degree work”. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2021.

Recognizing that Colombia has cultural and ethnic wealth, why do we continue to cling as Indigenous peoples to a model of thought and research like the western one, which ignores the other? As native peoples with knowledge, cultural practices, territory and organizational structures, we believe that we can energize and structure research processes that contain as references Indigenous thought and feeling.¹

¹ Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación: Guía para Estructurar y Desarrollar Procesos Investigativos en el Territorio Nasa de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco* (Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015), 11. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Reconociendo que Colombia tiene una riqueza cultural y étnica ¿por qué seguimos aferrándonos como pueblos indígenas a un modelo de pensamiento e investigación como el occidental que desconoce al otro? como pueblos originarios que tenemos saberes, prácticas culturales, territorio y estructuras organizativas, consideramos que podemos dinamizar y estructurar procesos investigativos que contengan como referentes el pensar y el sentir Indígena.”

Introduction — *Nasa Kiwe* the Nasa-Paéz Sacred Territory

Ricardo L. Castro's chapter "Sounding the Path: Dwelling and Dreaming" explores how the spatial practices of the sacred and their relationship to territory allow "aboriginals (to) bring the land into existence."² His writing helped me understand the importance of the analysis of two opposing realities: ancestral and western. My dissertation grew from these concerns and the recognition that the two worlds needed to coexist in the same territory. This motivated me to focus my studies on the Nasa-Paéz Indigenous community of the Toribío reservation, and to use the word "*resguardo*" in the body of the text, since this is the way in which Indigenous communal and territorial lands are recognized in the Colombian political context.³

A model created by Indigenous people for Indigenous people, the demands made by the Nasa-Paéz community have aimed to be sustainable and replicable for other communities. These people, like the Nasa-Paéz, have sought independence through resistance on diverse fronts: the political, social and cultural.

The municipalities of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco are part of the Nasa-Paéz contemporary southwestern Colombia *resguardo* (department of Cauca), which is located in the central Andean mountain range (Fig.1.1). There, the geography of tropical jungle and *páramo* (a high-mountain biome specific to the northern Andes), permit a territorial and cultural connection between the lower lands of the Putumayo region and the Andes.

According to Nasa-Paéz beliefs, in this territory the Nasa-Paéz were born as a people – children of the water, the stars, the mountains – through the efforts of the *caciques coloniales* or

² Ricardo L. Castro, "Sounding the Path: Dwelling and Dreaming". *Chora 3: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*. Edited by Alberto Pérez Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1999), 27.

³ Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5-7.

caciques nuevos (new chiefs).⁴ With their legacy of resistance against Colonial institutions in the eighteenth century,⁵ they promoted a united community through consolidation of the *resguardos*, a methodology representing their own beliefs and policies.

The legacy of the *caciques nuevos* was revived in the early twentieth century and gave birth to the *Movimiento Indígena Quintín Lame* (Quintín Lame Indigenous Movement). The *Movimiento* stemmed from the need for control and defense of Indigenous territory and culture and later served as a platform for organized resistance to Colombian governmental control.⁶

As a result of the constant search for Indigenous defense and vindication and their struggles to consolidate and recover ancestral territories, in 1971 the *Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca)⁷ was founded, which strengthened their political and cultural strategies.

Subsequently, CRIC policies for Indigenous vindication promoted the *Proyecto Nasa* – a Nasa Political Project developed in 1980 by the first Indigenous Catholic priest in Colombia, Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué in Toribío.⁸ It consists of a sacred, autonomous, and participative territory called *Nasa Kiwe*, in which “*Nasa* expresses the different ways in which life is expressed and *kiwe*

⁴ Equipo Nacional del Plan de Salvaguarda, *Baka'cxte'pa, Nasnasa Nees Yuwa' Diagnostico, Fundamentos y Líneas de Acción Para la Construcción del Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa* (Bogotá: Corporación Ensayos para la Promoción de la Cultura Política, 2013), 24. For more information see: Edgar Naranjo. *La Concepción Cultural y Política del Territorio en el Pensamiento del Movimiento Indígena del Cauca, Visto Desde el Discurso de Quintín Lame*. Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca, 2009.

⁵ Santiago Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial: el Proceso de Configuración del Territorio Páez en las Gobernaciones de Popayán y Neiva Durante el Período Colonial* (PhD diss., Universidad de los Andes, 2014), 30.

⁶ Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa: La Construcción del Plan de Vida de un Pueblo que Sueña* (Bogotá: PNUD, 2005), 46. For more information see: Agencia de la ONU Para los Refugiados. *60 Años Comunidades Indígenas*. ACNUR. 2011.

⁷ Brett Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement in Southwestern Colombia: Land Violence, and Ethnic Identity* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2015), 157-159.

⁸ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*. For more information see: Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC. *Puntos de Cambio en el Programa de Lucha*. CRIC. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/estructuraorganizativa/plataforma-de-lucha/>. Accessed 16 May 2019.

the territory where life is lived.”⁹ *Nasa Kiwe* – the Nasa-Paéz territory – is governed through a community “*life project*” also called the “*tejido de vida*” or “weaving of life.”¹⁰

This dissertation, “*Nasa Kiwe: Tradition, Resistance, Dwelling and Belief The Symbolic Construction of Indigenous Territory in a Contemporary Southwestern Colombia Reservation*”, analyzes the influence of the *caciques nuevos* on the policies of the contemporary *resguardo* – from creation of the CRIC to the present. It aims to understand, from both traditional and academic perspectives, the beliefs with which the Nasa-Paéz relate to and consolidate a contemporary sacred territory –*Nasa Kiwe*– recognized as the *Yat Wala*, or “great house.”¹¹

The dissertation accommodates the perspective of the Nasa-Paéz themselves: their policies and their understanding of how research is to be carried out in the context of Indigenous territory. It respects the political and cultural organization of *Nasa Kiwe*, and proposes a research structure based on tradition and ancestral knowledge in accordance with the guidelines for research set out by the Nasa-Paéz community.¹²

This methodology involves recognition of a spiritual world and beliefs, dialogue with the community and authorities of the *resguardos*, guidance and accompaniment by the *Thê’walas* (elders), and participation in the *mingas de pensamiento* (community meetings for reflection). These elements fall under the aegis of the CECIDIC and “*Catedra Nasa UNESCO*” (UNESCO Nasa Chair), which aims to strengthen knowledge of Nasa-Paéz history and culture and to share it with other Indigenous communities.¹³

⁹ Ibid., 68. My Translation. The original in Spanish: “*nasa expresa las diferentes formas en que se expresa la vida y kiwe el territorio donde vive la vida.*”

¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

¹¹ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011), 155.

¹² CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 24.

¹³ UNESCO, “Chair in Community Processes, Established in 1998 at The Casa Indígena, Municipality of Toribío (Colombia)”, <http://www.unesco.org/en/university-twinning-and-networking/access-by-region/latin-america-and-the-caribbean/colombia/unesco-chair-in-community-processes-113/>. Accessed on July 26, 2020. For more information on Indigenous conflict see: Jon Landaburu. *Palabras Para Desarmar. Una Aproximación Crítica al Vocabulario del Reconocimiento Cultural en Colombia*. Ministerio de Cultura, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2002.

This research, written in English, occasionally uses words in Spanish and *Nasa Yuwe* (the Nasa-Paéz language) to demonstrate and support the community's efforts to recover their language and foster familiarity with the concepts and symbols of great significance for them. The symbolic construction of the territory as a form of peaceful resistance ironically takes place in a territory in constant conflict, a result of the presence of ELN and FARC dissident guerrillas and violence incited by the unfettered growth of illicit crops managed by the drug traffickers.

Finally, 2021 was a year of celebration for the Nasa-Paéz. It commemorated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CRIC, whose objective was to consolidate ancestral culture and territory. The ongoing struggles and demonstrations in pursuit of a society enabling the return of Indigenous peoples to their territories and their ideals is one aspect of the ethos and ideology of the Indigenous movement. That movement continues to weave pathways of wisdom and resistance with the commitment to revitalize organizational policies for defense of life and territory:

We will continue on the tireless path to defend life in the framework of the principles and mandates that have been woven into different Indigenous congresses and *mingas de pensamiento* (community meetings for reflection). We will continue the collective construction of Indigenous life, through resistance against the system of domination. The struggle continues until the sun is extinguished.¹⁴

This dissertation joins in the celebration by shedding light on cultural processes that enable Indigenous peoples, and the community in general, to seek its place in a social structure that has hitherto ignored it. The research confirms that struggle and resistance are undertaken by the Nasa-Paéz on behalf of all Indigenous peoples.

¹⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: "Continuaremos este difícil procesos defendiendo los mandatos principales que se han tejido en los diferentes congresos y mingas de pensamiento. Continuaremos la construcción comunitaria de la vida indígena por medio de la resistencia contra el sistema que nos ha dominado. La lucha continúa hasta que el sol se apague." Pablo Tatay, Cuarta Minga de Pensamiento (Zoom), Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca CRIC y Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural UAIIN. March 30, 2021.

Primary Approach

“Landscape on the edge or limits of an endless city: Architecture, Landscape and Environment in the Definition of Boundaries for Bogotá, Colombia.” This was the tentative title with which my dissertation project began in 2014. It began with a general idea about, and discussion of, the limitless condition of the modern-to-contemporary city of Bogotá and the prospect of making a significant contribution to current studies on the Latin American metropolis and its milieu.

I initially proposed a project based on a diversity of landscape concepts (including social and cultural dimensions) poetically considered, to focus on qualitative experiential problems of large-scale residential environments. Bogotá was chosen as a case study due to its geography, namely its *altiplano* context. Situated in the Andes, in a magnificent highland plateau at 2.630 m above sea level, the city is defined by the contrast between the elevated but flat savannah surface and the magnificent *Cerros de Bogotá*.¹⁵

In addition it was the historicity of this territory and my own experience – having lived my whole life in a capital city surrounded by mountains, which makes one singularly perceptive of its landscape – that most led me to want to study such a complex territory that bearing traces of human actions that have impacted it both negatively and positively. At that moment, I thought of narrowing down my case study to the problem of Bogotá’s edge(s) along the mountains to the East, from the perspective of its makeshift development characterized by urban informality.

The communities to be studied were former peasants (subsistence farmers) and Indigenous people, displaced because of violence in the countryside. During my first year of studies, I analyzed informal housing and development in particular, and extended my literature review to other Andean

¹⁵ Enrique Peñalosa and CIFA - Uniandes. *Cerros de Bogotá* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2000). For more information see: Pérgolis, Juan Carlos. “El Deseo de Modernidad en la Bogotá Republicana, un Ejercicio Sobre Comunicación y Ciudad”. *Revista de Arquitectura*, 13 (2011): 4-12; Diana Wiesner. *Los Caminos de Los Cerros*. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2007.

countries. I decided to emphasize the phenomenon of Colombian Indigenous territorial occupation, as former inhabitants.¹⁶

From the perspective of urban-edge analysis, I saw the need to study community relationships related to ancestries, belonging on, and appropriating, the territory. I realized that a wider scope of analysis was required beyond simple territorial occupation, which would require understanding ancestral connections between dwellers and dwellings.¹⁷ I continued my study and literature review, focusing on the traditional culture of the Andean mountains, analyzing the presence and reciprocal relationship that mountains have for ancestral communities in connection with the notion of dwelling.

I then began to consider not only current cultural practices related to territory and its conception but also, and very importantly, past such traditional practices, and their evolution over time. At that point, I selected several contemporary Indigenous Andean communities as reference.

I analyzed Indigenous communities located in mid-to-high mountainous territory. They were: the Muisca community from the Sesquile and the Cundi-Boyacense highland plateau *resguardos*; the Indigenous communities from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, namely Kogi and Arhuacos, approached through the Chairama, Nabusimake, Koskunguena and Teyuna – Ciudad Perdida (Lost City); and, finally, of great importance for this dissertation, the Nasa-Paéz community in the Huellas, Tierradentro, Caldonó and Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco *resguardo*.

¹⁶ Juan Pablo Duque Cañas, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado. A Propósito de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012); Carlos Niño Murcia, *Territorio Chamánico Una Mirada Desde la Arquitectura a la Manera Indígena de Construir y Ocupar el Territorio* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2015); Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in The Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Efraín Jaramillo, *Los Indígenas Colombianos y El Estado: Desafíos Ideológicos y Políticos de la Multiculturalidad*. IWGIA, 2011.

¹⁷ See: Jair Zapata, *Espacio y Territorio Sagrado. Lógica del Ordenamiento Territorial Indígena* (Medellín: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2010), 13; Juan Friede, *El Indio en Lucha por La Tierra* (Popayán: Punta de Lanza, 1976), 27; Juan Friede, *Los Andaki 1538-1947: Historia de la Aculturación de una tribu selvática*. Fondo de cultura económica, 1953; Raúl Arango, and Enrique Sánchez. *Los Pueblos Indígenas de Colombia en el Umbral del Nuevo Milenio: Población, Cultura y Territorio: Base Para el Fortalecimiento Social y Económico de los Pueblos Indígenas*. Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2004.

An initial approach to the Muisca view of territorial occupation was through their communal house or *cusmuy*. A study of the *cusmuy* revealed how important the architecture of the sacred house is as a cultural element in Indigenous communities, promising insights into mythology and ritual in relation to political and social structure.¹⁸ In the Sesquilé Indigenous land division or *parcialidad*,¹⁹ I also analyzed the way in which new Indigenous generations are currently recovering their almost extinct tradition by sharing and learning from Kogi and Arhuacos communities who have managed to maintain their own culture along with a closer connection with their origins.

The patterns of inhabitation in Sesquilé are peasantry-based. Due to its proximity to Bogotá, the community lost most of its culture: traditional architecture and language. In an enormous effort for cultural revitalization, the community has re-established the communal house.²⁰ That recovery drew on the experience of *mamos* or elders from the Kogi and Arhuaco communities as part of a project for cultural vindication. The modern Muisca rituals enable generative processes to renew the culture and beliefs; it provides a new Indigenous vision for what it means to be a contemporary Muisca.

As the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta communities were considered the ‘older brothers’ (those highest in the cultural hierarchy and endowed with ancestral wisdom), I was motivated to explore them as a matter of necessity. Their understanding of the world, cultural practices and architecture have become an example for other surviving Indigenous communities.²¹

¹⁸ Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 69; see also: Juan Pablo Duque Cañas, “¿Es lo Sagrado un Argumento de Jurisdicción Territorial?”. *Conference Presented at Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar Los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

¹⁹ Segundo Bernal Villa, “Aspectos de la Cultura Paéz. Mitología y Cuentos de la Parcialidad de Calderas, Tierradentro,” *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, no. 1 (1953).

²⁰ Donna Gerds, Indigenous Linguists: Bringing Research Into Language Revitalization. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 83, No. 4, (2017): 607–617.

²¹ Castro, “Sounding the Path”, 25-44. For more information see: Diana Bocarejo. “Indigenizando “lo Blanco”: Conversaciones con Arhuacos y Koguis de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta”. *Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, (2002): 3-44.

Through a literature review focused on Indigenous culture and its relationship with policies and architecture, Juan Pablo Duque Cañas explored how the “symbolic implications of the sacred and its relationship to myth and ritual enable the evolution of a non-language that describes the Indigenous universe.”²² This symbolism helps one understand the importance of the analysis of the ancestral and Western realities. According to those considerations and the need to coexist in the same territory, the ancestral view argues that traditional policies must be part of national policies.

Despite its cultural and political limits, the *resguardo* is part of a national territorial structure that surrounds them and which must be understood as a whole, in which the two positions are respected, even though each wants to expand its territories and dominate the other. Similarly, Carlos Niño Murcia describes how “Indigenous society is governed by established principles regarding all of life and thought, in myth and its relationship with the cosmos.”²³ These circumstances lead Indigenous organizations immersed in a culture that is different from their own to go through significant adaptations within their own cultural systems.

Through several field research trips to *Ciudad Perdida*, *Nabusimake* and *Chairama*, and by personally approaching elders, I was able to understand the Indigenous peoples’ struggles to survive between two different realities, the same realities that Duque mentions as “society’s difficulty in accepting Indigenous people as equal but different.”²⁴ At that point, the high level of consolidation, adaptation and cultural appropriation of those Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta communities, who are nationally and internationally recognized for preserving their traditional culture in an exemplary way

²² Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 64. My Translation. The original in Spanish: “implicaciones simbólicas de lo sagrado y su vínculo con el mito y el rito permiten la evolución de un no lenguaje que caracteriza el universo Indígena.” For more on architecture and phenomenology see: David Abram. *The Spell of The Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. Vintage Books, 1996; Jeff Malpas. *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

²³ Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 151. My Translation. The Original in Spanish: “La sociedad Indígena está regida por principios establecidos, como todo su vida y pensamiento, en el mito y la relación que este traza con el cosmos.” For more information on Indigenous society, see: Erick Marín. *Cosmogonía y Rito en la Vivienda Wayuu*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2014; Jorge Orozco. *Mitos y Leyendas Testimonios de la Cultura Páez*. Lenguaje y textos, 8, (1996): 321-329.

²⁴ Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 117.

for other communities, became evident to me. Enjoying such recognition, they have been a subject of study by several academic disciplines and traditional areas of knowledge, including their ancestral wisdom, worldview and spiritual vision.

The research thus made becomes a reference, a valid scholarly source and a guideline for cultural recovery projects with other Indigenous communities in Colombia. The Kogi and Arhuacos are communities open to exchange with other cultures but closed in their practices, which are centered on their beliefs and interpretation of indigeneity. Their cultural practices and beliefs are translated into “enchanted paths,” which Castro refers to as “silent enchanted witnesses of past and present human dwellings”²⁵ in which territorial preservation, vernacular architecture and tradition allow them to sustain their authenticity as an Indigenous people.

I therefore geared my research toward recognizing cultural identity and territorial appropriation in their relationship with tradition and beliefs. As a result, my research progressively moved from a focus on the urban periphery to the appreciation and appropriation of Indigenous land and culture, and how their beliefs consolidate the notion of territory itself.

I developed a panoramic overview of Andean Indigenous territory, the subject of an initial committee review. It was suggested to focus on a single territory suitable for the study of current processes of cultural recovery.

Given its sociocultural heterogeneity, I decided to approach the Nasa-Paéz community in the northern territory of Cauca – Colombia, given their political and cultural situation due to long-lasting conflict from Colonial times until the present. These conflicts have evolved into resistance processes, protests and struggles for land and culture. It was not easy to conduct field research in a recognized and disputed territory.

²⁵ Castro, “Sounding the Path”, 28.

Most of the attention focused on the Nasa-Paéz has concentrated on political dimensions associated with their inevitable involvement in the ongoing armed conflict in Colombia.²⁶ Such concerns ignore this community's cultural attributes: their origins, beliefs and singular meaning of territory and architecture as great house.

I decided to begin by exploring the historical development on a regional scale. I sought to understand Indigenous traditions in the nearby regions of Putumayo, Huila and Cauca, and how their communities, now highland cultures, strengthened themselves: how, in Colonial times, resilient and united, they claimed their own territory from the Spanish Crown, ultimately in search of political recognition and preservation of their identity.²⁷

With the creation of the CRIC new socio-political and cultural structures became pillars of self-proclamation. They not only served to consolidate ancestral territories, but also created a model for new organizational structures of use to contemporary Indigenous communities throughout Colombia.²⁸

In this way, the Nasa-Paéz consolidated their autonomy from Colonial to present times. Today, the Nasa-Paéz organize and lead actions in defense of their rights and cultural preservation. They have become a point of reference for guiding other political organizations that bring together Indigenous peoples and provide support for their rights, giving birth through the CRIC to a movement of cultural vindication in an autonomous and singular territory: the *Nasa Kiwe*. This movement started as a local force but progressed towards a national Indigenous movement in Colombia.

²⁶ Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement*; Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1830-1936* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).

²⁷ Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, *Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos. De las tierras de los indigenas de los pueblos de Tacueyó, Toribío i Sn Fco Espedidos en los años 1700 – i- 1770* (Quito: Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, Archivo General de la Nación, 1866). For more on colonial titles see: Academia Nacional de Historia. "Caloto (1)". *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades. Academia Nacional de Historia*, 13, no. 145, 1920; Sarah H Beckjord. *Territories of History: Humanism, Rhetoric, and the Historical Imagination in the Early Chronicles of Spanish America*. Penn State Press, 2007.

²⁸ For the founding of the CRIC see: Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement*, 157–159.

Nasa-Paéz People of Peace

Nasa, or the people of peace as the Paéz community has come to be known, refers to the *caciques nuevos*’ legacy and contemporary understanding of territory: *Nasa-Paéz Nasa Kiwe*: peaceful people in a peaceful territory. The literature on this community, from the earliest Spanish chronicles until the end of the twentieth century, refers to them as Paeces. From the moment when these communities fell under Spanish Colonial rule, Paeces was the name given to them; but, due to the historical Hispanic connotations of the word Paéz which means lice bearing,²⁹ with which the community naturally does not identify, today they call themselves, and prefer to be referred to as “Nasa.”

In this dissertation, I could have chosen to use the word Paéz in correspondence with the term recognized by the National Political Constitution of Colombia. Legally, the denomination “Nasa” is not recognized by Colombian legislation. I have instead decided to adopt the composite term Nasa-Paéz after consulting the Indigenous authorities of the Toribío *resguardo*, and some colleagues at the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia ICAHN (the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History).

By adopting this composite denomination, I refer not only to an ancestral people but also to the Nasa-Paéz’s history and desire to be recognized (in a way other than by reference to their justified belligerence) with a name expressing key aspects of their identity, their political struggle, and societal interest in being a people in harmony with their territory, despite violent circumstances. Therefore, except for historical references, I will be using the term Nasa-Paéz when referencing recent publications and my own contributions and commentaries.

²⁹ Andrés Eduardo Sandoval, *La Guardia Indígena Nasa y el Arte de la Resistencia Pacífica* (Bogotá: Editorial CÓDICE, 2008), 41.

The contemporary Nasa-Paéz are an Indigenous community occupying the Central Andean mountain range in the southern region of Colombia. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, their territory was inhabited by Indigenous peoples like the Pubenense, Guyumús, Yalconas, Wila, Togoima, Tunibío and Tacueyoes, among others.

During the Colonial period, several communities from the lowlands of Putumayo and Amazonia emigrated to the Andes. A new territorial configuration gave birth to new settlements, mixing their cultures in the subsequently created *resguardos*.³⁰ The Paéz are largely recognized for having been able to fight for and keep their territorial occupation with greater determination than any other community in Colombia. They are therefore highly respected and organized.³¹

Reconstructing the Paéz society of the early sixteenth century is difficult, as written historical and cultural records are practically nonexistent. Formal studies tend to focus on the seventeenth century and beyond. Colonial institutions and missionary chronicles mention the Paéz character on subjects related to social, political and administrative aspects of the community.³² The difficulty in understanding the post-conquest history of the Paéz is compounded by their perceived belligerent nature.

Prior to the Spanish arrival, the Paéz were involved in various conflicts with their neighbors; they were considered a militarily oriented war-based society, which made them feared by neighboring settlements. Their neighbors the Pijaos were themselves well-known in the surrounding territories for their cannibalistic habits. Fear did not prevent the Paéz from defending and, in some cases, expanding in a manner similar to the Pijaos.³³

³⁰ Bernal Villa, "Aspectos de la Cultura Paéz", 281. See also: David Patrick Cahill and Blanca Tovías (Ed). *New World, First Nations: Native Peoples of Meso America and the Andes Under Colonial Rule*. Sussex Academic Press, 2006.

³¹ Ministerio de Cultura, *Nasa (Paéz) La Gente del Agua* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010), 4.

³² Orlando Fals Borda, *Fray Pedro de Aguado, El Cronista Olvidado de Colombia y Venezuela* (Cali: Editorial Franciscana de Colombia, 1956). See also: Orlando Fals Borda, *Una Sociología Sentipensante para América Latina*. Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2016.

³³ Juan Carlos Piñacué Achicué and Elías Sevilla Casas, *Los Nasa de Tierradentro y las Huellas Arqueológicas, Primera Aproximación* (Cali: Universidad del Valle-CIDSE, 2007), 22; Álvaro Félix Bolaños, *Barbarie y*

When the Spanish conquistadors first arrived, the different Indigenous communities lived near one another. This situation permitted a certain connectivity between Indigenous peoples despite their differences. Important chiefdoms were established in the central Andean mountain range: by the Paéz north of the river Paéz, the Suyn in the Mora river basin, and the Abirama south of the river Paéz.³⁴ The Paéz were bordered on the west by the Guámbianos and Kokonukos, and on the south by the Guanacas, with whom despite differences for territorial control, they were able to maintain good relationships through exchanges and matrimonial alliances. Nowadays, differences due to access to the land persist only with the Guámbianos or Nasa-Misak, although not as significantly as in the Colonial past.³⁵

By 1701, the Spanish still had not been able to colonize the Paéz domains, until the process of creation of the *resguardos* through the jurisdictional delimitation of Tierradentro, which took place for the most part during the eighteenth century.³⁶ At that same time, the extinction of the Pijaos was already looming. Most of the Pijao territories were therefore inhabited by the Paéz, and were defended as their own against the Spanish and Guámbianos, who were deployed against the other communities of Tierradentro.³⁷ Some of the literature identifies the Paéz as a group of Caribbean origin like the Pijaos.³⁸ More recent studies, however, have found historiographical and mythical

Canibalismo en la Retórica Colonial: Los Indios Pijaos de Fray Pedro Simón (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial Cerec, 1994), 12.

³⁴ Daniel Ricardo Martínez Bernal, “Caminando Hacia la Satyagraha. Comunidad, Lucha y Kweet Fxindxi en los NASA (1971-2015)” (PhD diss., Universidad de Granada, 2016), 165.

³⁵ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Conflicto Nasa-Misak: Cordura y Sabiduría Entre Pueblos Tendrán que Estar por Encima de Oportunismos* (Popayán: CRIC, 2018).

³⁶ Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*, 30.

³⁷ Joanne Rappaport, “Tierra Páez: La Etnohistoria de la Defensa Territorial Entre los Paeces de Tierradentro” (PhD diss., Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales, Banco de la República, 1982), 104. For more information on Tierradentro see: Carl Henrik Langebaek. and Alejandro Dever. “Arqueología Regional en Tierradentro, Cauca, Colombia”. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2009, pp. 323-367; CRIC. *Etnohistoria*. Cauca: CRIC, 1992.

³⁸ Carlos Cuervo, *Estudios Arqueológicos y Etnográficos Americanos. Prehistoria y Viajes Americanos* (Madrid: Editorial América, 1920), 269. For more on Andean archeological and ethnography studies see: Carlos Cuervo. *Estudios arqueológicos y etnográficos Tomo II*. Murcia: Editorial América, 1921. Mary Strong. *Art, Nature, and Religion in the Central Andes: Themes and Variations From Prehistory to the Present*. University of Texas Press, 2012.

evidence indicating a former Putumayo (lowland) origin, with subsequent migration to the Tierradentro region.³⁹

After the Pijaos became extinct, perceptions of the Paeces, by association, were generally associated with the Pijaos, with negative connotations. This negativity was internalized in their own selves: the feeling of being a restive yet subdued community.⁴⁰

Their sense of territoriality and social recognition –as part of their character but also in their ideals as a strong Indigenous community– were decisive in the constitution of the Colonial *resguardos* by the *caciques nuevos* and the consequent creation of the CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa*.

CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa*: Fifty Years of Resistance

On February 24, 1971, in Toribío the community launched the CRIC;⁴¹ its leaders publicly denounced the outrages perpetrated against Indigenous people. In the wake of this large assembly, the persecutions began; many Indigenous people were detained or arrested, while others disappeared.

The rise of communist politicians in the region provoked a backlash: an era of repression and violence. In Toribío, the atmosphere of repression produced a clandestine environment, because of the fear of being publicly recognized as organizers and followers of the CRIC. Thus, evolving from active participation by Indigenous peoples in the consolidation of the territory during the Colonial period, political movements came to be forged to make it possible to publicly denounce outrages perpetrated by the landowners against the Indigenous community.

³⁹ Rappaport, “Tierra Páez,” 71.

⁴⁰ Piñacué and Sevilla, *Los Nasa de Tierradentro*, 22. For more information see: Herinaldy Gómez, and Carlos Ariel Ruiz. *Los Paeces: Gente Territorio. Metáfora que Perdura*. Fundación para la Comunicación Popular, 1997.

⁴¹ Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement*, 157.

While the desire for a politics to unite and defend the needs of Indigenous peoples was widespread among the Nasa-Paéz, it provoked confrontations between the Colombian government and the community, who began to be stigmatized for going against national policy guidelines. The second most important meeting in the history of the CRIC took place on September 6, 1971, in the town of La Susana, in which the Colonial political legacy of the *caciques nuevos* made a strong reappearance.⁴² The mandates of the *caciques nuevos* had been revived by the Quintín Lame movement, and was again later by Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué; it once again forcefully reappeared through the CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa*.

In the 18th century Juan Tama – *cacique nuevo* and leader, also known as the chief of Vitoncó and Pitayó – became a legend because of stories of his supernatural origin. He was called “son of the stars”, which affirmed his relationship with, and role as a connector between, the terrestrial and spiritual worlds.⁴³ The process that the Juan Tama chief carried out through a formal petition for consolidation of the Paéz *resguardos* is unique, because it was the Spanish Crown itself and its delegates in the viceroyalties that organized the boundaries of the *resguardos*.

In 1700 at the Royal Court of Quito, Juan Tama consolidated the new Paéz territory using Colonial deeds, employing the policy to further the defense and autonomy of the territory.⁴⁴ Juan Tama became the first chief to reclaim what belonged to the Indigenous peoples, their culture and territory, thus establishing and guiding the policies and beliefs of the contemporary Nasa-Paéz.

From then on, the deeds, legacy and mythology of chief Juan Tama have been revived by the community, CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa*, are passed on from generation to generation around the

⁴² Ibid., 160-161.

⁴³ Archivo General de La Nación, *Resguardo Indígena de Vitoncó, Municipio de Belalcázar, Departamento de Cauca, Sección Republica, Fondo Ministerio de Gobierno, Caja 2, Carpeta 1, Folio 038* (Bogotá: Archivo General de la Nación, 1883).

⁴⁴ Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, *Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos. De las tierras de los indigenas de los pueblos de Tacueyó, Toribío i Sn Fco Espedidos en los años 1700 – i- 1770* (Quito: Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, Archivo General de la Nación, 1866); Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 35 – 36.

“*tulpa*” or hearth of the house.⁴⁵ His story has given rise to the oral tradition and mandates with which the Nasa-Paéz currently identify: “We Nasas must not fight among ourselves, because we share the same law and the same blood; we must not hand over territory to usurpers, we must defend the territory with our lives if necessary; the Nasa will never be conquered and will not mix our blood.”⁴⁶

Therefore, the Nasa-Paéz political movement in modern history is based on the guidelines of the *caciques nuevos*, specifically the legacy of chief Juan Tama, and reconsidered by Manuel Quintín Lame, an Indigenous peasant who began a nonviolent ethnic-political movement aimed at attaining territorial and cultural control of their community. The Indigenous vision of territory is part of the integration of the community, which identifies its culture and territory as a unit that deserves to be established politically.⁴⁷

Quintín Lame was born into an Indigenous family on the *hacienda* la Polindara, near the departmental capital of Popayán. His parents were small farmers who must pay rent on their land to landlords, therefore he himself experienced the injustices to which the Indigenous peoples were subjected and the way in which their territories were increasingly stolen by the landowners who were part of the national elite.⁴⁸ His movement sought new regulations in the representation of the *resguardos* and the creation of the small land divisions.⁴⁹

Indeed, what began as a pacifist movement to reclaim the rights of Indigenous peoples, became a rebellion that led to one of the most violent episodes in Colombian history, the rebellion of November 1916. Quintín Lame’s provocative discourse placed him in a movement outside of the law

⁴⁵ Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi “La Metamorfosis de la Vida”* (Toribío Cauca: Cabildo Etnoeducativo Proyecto Nasa, 2010), 54.

⁴⁶ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan ambiental Agropecuario*, 37. My Translation. The original in Spanish: “No debemos pelearnos entre los Nasas, puesto que tenemos la misma ley y llevamos la misma sangre, no entregar el territorio a usurpadores, defender el territorio con la vida de ser necesario, los Nasa nunca serán vencidos y no mezclar nuestra sangre.”

⁴⁷ Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*. For more information on Quintín Lame see: Edgar Naranjo. *La Historia y Quintín Lame*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2009.

⁴⁸ Troyan, *Cauca’s Indigenous Movement*, 23.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

with subversive ideologies, leading it to be proclaimed as a guerrilla movement. Quintín Lame began a political process for land restitution that led to “a strong Indian resistant movement determined to defend the *resguardos*, a movement which continues active today.”⁵⁰

Later on, in 1975, Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué was appointed as the first Nasa-Paéz Indigenous priest in Toribío and the first Indigenous priest in Colombia. Before the arrival of Father Ulcué, the presence of evangelizing communities strictly prohibited use of traditional language and Indigenous customs. In 1978, Father Ulcué started an organization of young people, to teach them their culture and encourage them to work to recover Indigenous tradition based on CRIC guidelines; later he developed his peaceful project: the *Proyecto Nasa*.⁵¹

In the early 1980s, after a process of cultural appeals, the Nasa-Paéz community became stronger in aspects of politics and culture that other Indigenous communities sought to emulate; preparations were made in Toribío to replicate the same political dynamics in different Nasa-Paéz territories.

In the process of cultural vindication, Father Álvaro encouraged the Nasa-Paéz young people to look towards their past, to the *caciques nuevos* who had created the culture to which they belong through self-proclamation of the *resguardos* before the Spanish crown, in which, pursuant to Law 89 of 1890, “the lands of the *resguardos* are the property of the entire Indigenous community and may not be sold”.⁵² Any sale of these territories is invalid, which is why, in accordance with the *Proyecto*

⁵⁰ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, 20. For more information on Quintín Lame see: Monica Espinosa Arango. “El Indio Lobo, Manuel Quintín en la Colombia Moderna”. *Rev. Colombiana de Antropología*, 39. No. 1 (2003): 139-172; Myriam Espinosa. *Surgimiento y Andar Territorial del Quintín Lame*. Quito: Aby-Yala, 1996; Fabio Gómez. “Manuel Quintín Lame, en la Confluencia del Mito y de la Historia”. *Historia y Espacio*, 8, no. 38, (2012): 89-112; Fernando Romero. *Manuel Quintín Lame, Sabiduría y Saber Escolar*. Pereira: Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, 2005; Luis Vasco. “Quintín Lame, Resistencia y Liberación”. *Tabula Rasa*, 9, (2008): 371-383.

⁵¹ Bedredin Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal Hoy Nasa Pal Äcxh Ente. Semilla y Camino Fxiw Dxi`j Yakh* (Colombia: Instituto Para Misiones La Consolata, 2011), 163-164.

⁵² Congreso de Colombia. Ley 89 de 1890, *Por la Cual se Determina la Manera como deben ser Gobernados los Salvajes que Vayan Reduciéndose a la Vida Civilizada*.

Nasa, all incursions by the landowners on the borders of the reserve from the 1940s to the 1970s must be recovered.

Proyecto Nasa proposed a peaceful struggle to recover the culture and lands, aiming to impart the ancestral meaning of territory through traditional education and the strengthening of the communities in the territory of the great people the “*Cxhab Wala Kiwe*,”⁵³ through seven different projects known as “*Proyecto Tejidos de Vida*” (“Weaving of Life project”): “weaving of economic and environment, weaving of justice and harmony, weaving of the defense of life, weaving of communications and external relations, and the weaving of people and culture which promotes family identity and stresses the value of women in the Nasa-Paéz community through the weaving of traditional education, and weaving of women of the territory of the great people or *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*.”⁵⁴

The *Proyecto Nasa* promoted initiatives for cultural recovery, in which the greatness of the Nasa-Paéz was highlighted and the wisdom of their ancestors was validated as a strategy for the entire community to once again implement, confirming the past through the struggles of the Colonial chiefs and the contemporary leaders defending culture and territory.

The strategy facilitated an approach to the mythology and beliefs of the Nasa-Paéz and, without fear of political and social repression, once again promoted the legacy of the chief Juan Tama as a strategy for beginning a “new mythology” that would strengthen the community in defense of its territory and culture.⁵⁵

⁵³ *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* is located in the municipalities of Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, Buenos Aires, Timbío, Suarez, Toribío and Jambaló. Alfredo Campo, *Tejido Territorial Económico Ambiental. Caminando el Territorio. Consolidando Sueños* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2010), 1. For more information see: Alcaldía Municipal de Caloto. *Diagnóstico PBOT Municipal Caloto*. Caloto: Alcaldía Municipal, 2013.

⁵⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “*tejido económico ambiental, tejido de justicia y armonía, tejido de defensa de la vida, tejido de comunicación y relaciones externa y el tejido pueblo y cultura.*” Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 105; Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 234.

⁵⁵ Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 400 – 402.

These demonstrations and the creation of the *Proyecto Nasa* that he promoted – in political meetings or *mingas* that had to be held clandestinely – and which included the teaching and understanding of Indigenous legislation, land restoration and culture through mobilizations, led to the murder of Father Ulcué on November 10, 1984.⁵⁶

Ironically, in this context of struggle and after the murder of Ulcué, the CRIC and the *Proyecto Nasa* were strengthened through new forms of peaceful resistance. A case in point was the creation of the CECIDIC Traditional Center for Education, Training and Research for Comprehensive Development of the Community (*Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad CECIDIC*) and Communitarian Learning Project (*Proyecto Educativo Comunitario PEC*) to be the best means to disseminate their ideals through traditional education.

The needs of the community provided the basis for traditional Nasa-Paéz education; revindicating after fifty years of resistance their culture and customs and re-establishing optimal self-governance of territory based on a model of peace with *Mama Kiwe*.⁵⁷ Consequently, the *Proyecto Nasa* developed the “*Plan de Salvaguardia Nasa*”⁵⁸ that seeks to prevent future reappearance of the violation of Indigenous rights, making it possible to live in the Nasa-Paéz territory based on the notion of living in harmony and balance in the great sacred house.

Weaving of Life: the Great Sacred House

⁵⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁵⁷ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 102. For more on Indigenous education, see: McGill University. *Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education*. Montreal: McGill University, 2017; National Indian Brotherhood, Canada. Indian, and Northern Affairs. *Indian Control Of Indian Education*. National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; John Paul, et al. "Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey and Mi'kmaw Control Over Mi'kmaw Education: Using The Master's Tools To Dismantle the Master's House". *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. New York, NY: Springer, (2017): 309 - 328.

⁵⁸ Angelmiro Valencia and Alejandro Casamachín, *Baka'cxte'pa Uma Kiwete Nasnasa Nees Yuwa Eena Etapa Formulación Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa* (Cauca: Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa Proyecto Nasa, 2014), 6.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were constant confrontations between Indigenous peoples and the Colombian army due to demonstrations in support of land recovery in the lower regions of the mountain range. As part of these Indigenous land claims, old *haciendas* were “invaded” because they had been part of Colonial *parcialidades* or Indigenous settlements, from which they had been “appropriated” by landowners. After confrontations at the *hacienda* la Emperatriz and a protest at *hacienda* María del Piendamó, in 1999 through intervention of the CRIC, the “Declaration of Social and Cultural Emergency” was signed with the National Government. The process of Indigenous resistance and developing autonomy continued with the political *mingas* of 2003 and 2008.⁵⁹

Despite agreements with the National Government and differences with insurgent members of the *disidencias* *Fuerza Armada Revolucionaria de Colombia* (FARC dissidents), *Ejercito de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) guerrillas and other insurgent groups, the Nasa-Paéz territory has been the scene of continuous strife. The violence has generated self-defense groups and massacres, such as those of El Nilo and El Naya, in which the Indigenous population has been the most affected.⁶⁰

In contrast, the ideology of the contemporary Nasa-Paéz, which focuses on inhabiting their territory in harmony, generated distinct pacifist movements aimed at maintaining an impartial relationship with the different illegal armed groups that cohabited in Cauca. The creation of the Nasa-Paéz Indigenous guard was one response to the violence, with the aim of promoting a safe territory of resistance without arms.⁶¹

At the end of the 1980s, the Nasa-Paéz decided to take part in national politics with their own representatives and without depending on the traditional parties. In 1994, for the first time they

⁵⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 18.

⁶⁰ Corte Constitucional Republica de Colombia, *Accion de tutela para solicitar restitución de tierras de las comunidades y pueblos indígenas*, Sentencia T-255-16, <https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/relatoria/2016/T-255-16.htm>. For more information on NAYA see: Myriam Jimeno, et al. *Kitek Kiwe Reasentamiento de NAYA, Nuestra Memoria*. Bogotá: Centro de Estudios Sociales Universidad Nacional De Colombia, 2011.

⁶¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 219.

elected their own candidate for mayor of Toribío through an Indigenous political party that would enable them to develop their own policies with greater freedom and favoring the *resguardos* through the “*Plan de Vida Nasa Nuestros Sueños Kwesx Ksxa ’wtx*” (*Kwesx Ksxa ’wtx* Our Dreams Nasa Life Plan).⁶² This involved programs for traditional education and socio-political initiatives to build their own territory, based on their beliefs, which would contemplate their identity and struggle for a peaceful land that would enable organization for community work to achieve territorial, economic, political and educational autonomy.⁶³

That same year saw the creation of the ACIN, *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* (Indigenous Councils Association of North Cauca Territory of the Great People), consisting of seven community projects developed through community meetings for reflection: *Proyecto Nasa*, from the Indigenous Councils of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco (1980); *Proyecto Jambaló* (1987); *Paéz Unity Council Project* of Miranda (1990); *Comprehensive Project of the Councils of Huellas, Caloto and Nuevo Toéz* (1990); *Cxhacxha Wala Fuerza Grande Project* of the Indigenous Council of Corinto (1991); *Yu’Lucx Hijos del Agua Project* of the Indigenous Councils of Munchique los Tigres, Canoas (1991); and the *Sa’t Finxi Kiwe Territory Project* by the Indigenous Councils of Guadualito, Las Delicias, La Concepcion, Pueblo Nuevo Ceral, Cerros Tijeras and Alto Naya (2002).⁶⁴

Furthermore, at the *Minga-Congress* of Caldonó in 2005, a return to Colonial mythology was proposed for the first time. The congress proposed establishment and organization of the Nasa-Paéz *Nasa-Kiwe* territory conceived as “The great sacred house,”⁶⁵ a comprehensive life space inhabited by all spiritual and earthly beings.

⁶² Ibid., 235 – 236.

⁶³ For Indigenous education, see: Davida Bentham, et al. "Sustainability Education In First Nations Schools: A Multi-Site Study And Implications For Education Policy". *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 191, (2019): 22-42

⁶⁴ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 104.

⁶⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi ’zenxi*, 91.

The aim was to render the concept of territory highly visible, making it integral to the process of recovering tradition and culture through the Nasa-Paéz belief system.⁶⁶ The principles of unity, resistance, reciprocity, respect, territoriality, autonomy, harmony and equilibrium were focused on respect for the great house, thus initiating a new perspective in the unarmed struggle in the Nasa-Paéz territory.⁶⁷

Similarly, the 2009 CRIC 23rd Regional Indigenous *Minga*-Congress of Cauca addressed not only cultural inequalities, violence, armed conflict, the presence of illicit crops and drug trafficking, but also the cultural, social and political consolidation of the Nasa-Paéz through their *mingas de resistencia* (community meetings of resistance). It was decided to reinforce the “weaving of life” projects by means of the Sistema Educativo Indígena Propio SEIP (Traditional Indigenous Education System), revitalizing language and culture through the teaching of mythology, beliefs and vernacular practices for construction of territory – in particular architecture.⁶⁸ Political strategies continue to be promoted with the aim of recovering territories and expanding *resguardos*.⁶⁹

Despite this, from 2016 to 2022, the *resguardo* of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco has witnessed an increase in illicit crops in its territory, leading to the presence of drug traffickers and illegal groups seeking to control the “business.” Despite the violence that this has brought to the territory, and the murders of Indigenous leaders in the region, the Nasa-Paéz continue to work in *mingas* for reflection, *mingas* of resistance and community projects.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ For Indigenous reconciliation and recovering territory, see: Arthur Manuel, & Derrickson, R. *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation Commission. “Truth And Reconciliation Commission: Calls To Action”. *Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, 2015.

⁶⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 155.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 299 – 300.

⁶⁹ For “Sistema General de Transferencias” see: Yule and Vitonás, 301 – 302.

⁷⁰ ACIN, “Autoridades Indígenas Exponen ante la CIDH el Exterminio Físico y Cultural de los Pueblos ” accessed July 26, 2020, <https://nasaacin.org/autoridades-indigenas-exponen-ante-la-cidh-el-exterminio-fisico-y-cultural-de-los-pueblos/>

One such effort is the “weaving of life” *Proyecto Nasa* known as “Toribío Walking in Unity for Territorial Peace” Municipal Development Plan.⁷¹ This plan aims to preserve tradition and culture through beliefs and the promotion of shared pedagogical strategies; these develop diverse protective and cultural practices in pursuit of communal wellbeing.⁷²

Progress in the weaving of life is promulgated in four areas –family, community, government and territory. Nasa-Paéz *Nasa-Kiwe* territory is intended to be developed through pacifist policies to create traditional community spaces such as the *mingas* and *tulpas de pensamiento* (hearth of the house for reflection), and traditional spaces of vernacular architecture like the “*Nasa Yat*,” the Nasa-Paéz traditional house, and “*Yatzungas*” the traditional communal houses.⁷³

The weaving of life and the cultural strengthening the Nasa-Paéz promote are focused on the vision of territory as a great sacred house, the *Nasa Yat*, with at its centre the hearth. Similarly, the *tull* – a contemporary place of cultivation within the *resguardo* – is at the center of *Nasa Kiwe*. Thus is shaped the symbolic construction of Nasa-Paéz territory.⁷⁴

The contribution of the *Proyecto Nasa* and the way the community perceived their symbolism and beliefs, can be seen clearly not only in the proposal for a social and cultural construction of Indigenous territory, but also the use of Indigenous Nasa-Paéz own research guidelines: “The

⁷¹ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Informe de Gestión 2016-2018 Toribío Caminando en Unidad por la Paz Territorial. Alcibíades Escué Musicué Municipal Mayor 2016-2019* (Toribío Cauca, 2019).

⁷² Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 154 – 155; Juanita Iglesias, and Mauricio Quintero. “Toribío, Ejemplo de Gobierno Comunitario”. *El Mundo*, 03 de junio de 2007.

⁷³ Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos, *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios en el Diseño y Construcción de la Nasa Yat, Cauca-Colombia* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca. 2013); Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 91, 114. Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca ACIN. *Proyecto de Vivienda Nasa Comunidades Indígenas Zona Norte del Cauca*. Cauca: ACIN, 2014. For more on architecture and its relationship with territory and theory see: John Dixon Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture*. MIT Press, 1997.

⁷⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 54, 91. For more on house interpretation see: Amos Rapoport. *House Form and Culture*. London: Prentice Hall, 1969.

CECIDIC 2015 Research Guide.”⁷⁵ The CECIDIC 2015 proposes a methodology consistent with the vision and attitudes of the Nasa-Paéz, guidelines that are followed in this study.

Nasa Kiwe: The Construction of Collective Identity

The construction of the territory in the Indigenous world is conditioned by the relationships between dwelling and dwellers: “that conception derives from the way of constructing the architecture and territory. It is the culture [...],”⁷⁶ as described by Niño Murcia, shaping the resulting experience on representation of the word. This territory created by the Indigenous peoples is developed based on the social and political organization and their beliefs, making what Niño Murcia calls a “shamanic geography,”⁷⁷ in which tradition – understood as architecture and its symbology – enables the creation of this ongoing world.

The different notions of territory are determined in *Nasa Kiwe*. The Nasa-Paéz configuration of territory based on chiefdoms and strengthened by cultural diversity, due to alliances in Colonial times with lowland Indigenous communities and later reunification with Andean communities, demonstrates a resilient and strong society that has long been working together as a united and powerful community to vindicate their autonomy through Nasa-Paéz own policies. Duque refers to this as “*organización operativa*” (active organization), which led to “the legal rights reclaimed in documents that are needed in order to put such rights into practice.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación: Guía para Estructurar y Desarrollar Procesos Investigativos en el Territorio Nasa de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco* (Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015), 16 – 17.

⁷⁶ Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 23.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁸ Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 170. For more on Indigenous claims see: Roberto Arturo Restrepo Arcila, (Ed). *Sabiduría, Poder y Comprensión: América se Repiensa Desde sus Orígenes*. Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2002; Wendell Bennett, and Bird, Junius. *Andean Culture History No. 15*. American Museum of Natural History, 1964; Adolfo Chaparro. “Una Hipótesis Sobre la Formación de Estado en los Andes Colombianos”. *Nómadas*, 25, (2006): 70 - 85. Stefano Verese, et al. *Selva Vida, de la Destrucción de la Amazonia al Paradigma de la Regeneración*. Ciudad de México: Programa Universitario México Nación Multicultural UNAM, 2013.

Furthermore, the Nasa-Paéz have led the formation of a large political, social movement that has served as an example for other Indigenous communities in Colombia and South America, that has promoted the restitution of rights and lands through resistance and given rise to organizations legally recognized in the Colombian political context. The defense of and respect paid to territory by the Nasa-Paéz is exemplary. Of particular significance, if we are to arrive at an understanding of the Nasa-Paéz attitude toward territory, are their mythological constructs and the correlations they apply between beliefs and earthly conviviality. These take place today in a territory which is adamantly defended and preserved by its inhabitants.

As mentioned earlier, the *Nasa Kiwe* in the Nasa-Paéz of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco *resguardo* is a territory whose political and cultural differentiations make it unique compared to other Indigenous communities. The historical presence of important members of the community who guided the organization of the *resguardo* has made it one of the most important references for political resistance, social organization and the preservation of memory through territorial defense and respect.

On the other hand, a significant part of the Nasa-Paéz culture is rooted in the concept of territory not only as mother earth, but also as a great house. This is clearly expressed in the act of cultivating itself: planting the seed, stewardship of crops, and finally, their harvesting.⁷⁹ All of this forms part of a cycle, which is distinctly represented in one of the most important social and political Nasa-Paéz symbols: a spiral of wisdom or law of origin⁸⁰ (represented and recognized as connector with territory), where beliefs and wisdom begin in the house –the *Yat*– but end in the territory itself.

Hence, *Kiwe*, or *Nasa Kiwe*, the word for the concept of contemporary Nasa-Paéz territory, is also referred to as the great house. With this word the Nasa-Paéz acknowledge the birth of an

⁷⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 164.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 102.

ancestral nation, one that has been linked to wisdom, respect and admiration for the land.⁸¹ Such qualities have allowed the Nasa-Paéz to be reborn and evolve in an Andean environment different from any other. It is a territory conceived as the origin of a new culture, thus deserving protection, but also recovery of their ancestral lands: the *haciendas* and Putumayo lowlands.

It is important to emphasize the unflagging resistance that was necessary on the part of the Nasa-Paéz to maintain a process of cultural and territorial restitution. The notion of the great sacred house as territory, the spiral, and the law of origin constitute a unity that occupies a central role in their lives. Through them, Indigenous society “organizes everything that exists and ensures the permanence of the world.”⁸²

Indeed, *Nasa Kiwe* offers a rich opportunity to understand the overlapping and often complex relationships present in a different context between permanence, identity, memory, heritage and culture.⁸³ The meaning of *Nasa Kiwe* seen as a great house, is sustained through cultural resistance. This is evident, for instance, in territorial interventions such as land protection, traditional education, *resguardo* expansion, and restitution of the *Nasa Yat*.

The prominence given to *Nasa Kiwe* and the key role the mountain has played as “sacred territory” for Indigenous communities illustrate the Nasa-Paéz notions of ancestral wisdom, their respect for and defense of territory, and their understanding of these *loci* as privileged natural places where culture and tradition are revered.⁸⁴ For the Nasa-Paéz, *Nasa Kiwe* is a vivid realization of what

⁸¹ Kwet Wala Dxüus, *Somos el Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, Piedra Grande Casa Sagrada de los Nasa* (Pradera Valle del Cauca: OIM, 2007), 6. For more information see: Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca – CRC. *Documento de Análisis Socio Ambiental del Departamento del Cauca: Como Elemento para Identificación de Lineamientos para Ajuste de Instrumentos de Planificación*. Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca – CRC, 2009.

⁸² Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 137.

⁸³ Robert Mellin, *Tilting: House Launching, Slide Hauling, Potato Trenching, and Other Tales from a Newfoundland Fishing Village* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003).

⁸⁴ Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 137.

territory means: *Maama'Kiwe* or mother earth, which symbolizes every single element and is represented in the community's coexistence in *Nasa Kiwe*.⁸⁵

The Nasa-Paéz became aware that, despite facing conditions of submission and adversity, they had to preserve their culture and ancestral knowledge by means of oral tradition, architecture, territorial preservation and expansion. This has led to the emergence of political and social movements led by Nasa-Paéz leaders in response to governmental inequalities. The processes of resistance allowed the community to generate participatory processes in search of political and cultural independence.

In this sense, the interest of the National Government to recover ancestral culture through mythology and beliefs has been null. The Indigenous authorities are the ones who have developed the policies and *mingas* for territorial and cultural recovery, through whose implementation tradition and identity are starting to formulate a new mythological and territorial future. As Niño Murcia points out, Indigenous organization depended heavily on “myths to understand and administer the territory in which they live, an explanation of the cosmos that determines their thinking and life, both in their relationship with nature as well as in the community.”⁸⁶ The construction of collective identity is reflected in different ways in the organizations in which the Nasa-Paéz construct *Nasa Kiwe*, clearly showing how the contemporary *resguardos* rebuilds its traditional forms of governance.

It can be established that Nasa Paéz construction of collective identity is raised by a “shamanic geography” in which the legacy of the *caciques nuevos* continues to be built through *Nasa Kiwe*. Catherine LeGrand's interpretation of Colombian frontier expansion is still visible in the contemporary *resguardos*, in which the frontier and political divisions provide a “democratic

⁸⁵ Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, Piedra Grande Casa Sagrada de los Nasa, 9.

⁸⁶ Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 46 – 47. My translation. The original in Spanish: “El mito es un discurso social para comprender y manejar el entorno en que viven, una explicación del cosmos que determina su pensamiento y su vida, tanto en su relación con la naturaleza como en la comunidad.”

alternative to the rigid latifundia system,”⁸⁷ that system of land tenure which must not be allowed to limit the creation and restitution of Indigenous territory. Needs must be recognized: for historic reparation, and for strengthening the identity of the Nasa-Paéz through an active organization.”⁸⁸

Community Understanding

In the context of Nasa-Paéz territorial understanding, this dissertation analyzes important historical moments during the Colony and the earlier Republic that help consolidate contemporary territorial conception. Appreciating this, we can understand the historical dynamics of protest achieved through the new mythology, beliefs, and their relationship to the territory in the context of Nasa-Paéz “continuing resistance.”⁸⁹

The reverence of *Nasa Kiwe* clearly demonstrates how Nasa-Paéz and territory have a reciprocal relationship. The meaning of *Kiwe*, which as Westerners we may correlate with land, might be understood in the unified context of the Nasa-Paéz “sense of the universe.”⁹⁰ It serves as the basis for the highly influential body of contemporary beliefs and rituals regarding territorial defense and harmonious dwelling, represented in the relationship between the *Nasa Kiwe* and the *Nasa Yat*. Throughout this dissertation, mythology and present rituals will be addressed in the search for an understanding of the reciprocity existing between the sentient dweller and *Nasa Kiwe* – great house as a dwelling.

This dissertation focuses on the Nasa-Paéz understanding of territory – based on the premises of the *Proyecto Nasa* – and its relationship to their beliefs. Throughout this analysis, I attempt to provide a new interpretation of the place that defense, dwelling and protection of land occupy in the

⁸⁷ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, xv.

⁸⁸ Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*, 170.

⁸⁹ Gow, *Countering Development*, 14.

⁹⁰ Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, Piedra Grande Casa Sagrada de los Nasa, 10.

Nasa-Paéz community, particularly as they appear in the concept of *Nasa Kiwe* (the Nasa-Paéz territory and “great house” encompassing their broader territory), and the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga* (the Nasa-Paéz traditional house), understood as political and cultural places.

My dissertation examines Nasa-Paéz traditional guidelines by analyzing contemporary policies and narratives of territorial consolidation, cultural practices, architecture and beliefs of the *resguardos* that establishes Nasa-Paéz territory as the Nasa Paéz house. Under the guidance of Nasa-Paéz contemporary policies, new symbolic constructions of territory continue to be created.

Using field research, community approaches and literature review, I make connections between the description of territory in Colonial and contemporary policies, beliefs, architecture, and traditional education that depicted the Nasa-Paéz Indigenous community as strong and revolutionary. I argue that Colonial *resguardos* and Republican *haciendas* created new land divisions in an effort to place Indigenous territorial and cultural borders under control. In so doing, Nasa-Paéz traditional policies simultaneously embodied a new cultural project to turn Colonial and Republic repression into a contemporary symbolic construction of territory for the restitution of Indigenous rights.

My dissertation connects the legacy of the *caciques nuevos* to *resguardo* policies, the voice of elders and women and contemporary leaders.⁹¹ Through their legacy of vindicated Indigenous rights and cultural restitution, they empowered the current Nasa-Paéz culture. Their beliefs are translated in their weaving of life, which have been widely shared and applied by the current leadership of their *Proyecto Nasa*, ACIN and CRIC.⁹²

As part of the processes of territorial recovery and defense, Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué promoted the notion of traditional research. His approach was fundamental in restructuring their

⁹¹ Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*.

⁹² Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007); Víctor Bonilla, *Historia Política del Pueblo Nasa* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2015); José Aldemar Inseca, *Evaluación y Ajuste del Plan de Vida Comunitario del Resguardo Indígena Tóez 2016-2019 Autoridad Tradicional del Resguardo Indígena de Tóez Municipio de Caloto*. Resguardo Indígena Toes Municipio de Caloto, 2016; Víctor Bonilla. *Historia Política de los Paeces*. Colombia: Nuestras Ediciones, 1982.

entire educational environment. One outcome of this re-educational process was to foster a widespread need to be recognized as a peaceful community; as *Nasa*, meaning: “people of peace.” From a pacifist perspective, the traditional research gave rise to a new position of non-violence. This perspective was essential in consolidating a strategy for Indigenous traditional education, which was introduced in the Colombian National Constitution of 1991.⁹³

Such initiatives and further official political/constitutional inclusion materialized not only in traditional cultural and educational facilities, but also in traditional research and policies. Their new strategies of Indigenous cultural recovery, and their desire to generate processes of autochthonous research that respect Nasa-Paéz beliefs, involved not only the appropriation of collective processes of traditional knowledge-generation known as *mingas* and *tulpas* for reflection, but also the development of traditional Nasa-Paéz research guidelines.⁹⁴

The dissertation analyzes the historical situations that took place in the midst of constant violence. The Nasa-Paéz history and that violence have not only generated manifestations of resistance but have also given rise to independent community processes and policies. At the forefront of these are the *mingas* for reflection, which are perceived as manifestations of the boundaries set during the Colonial period to achieve contemporary territorial and cultural self-protection. The creation of the Colonial Paéz *resguardos*, with the *caciques nuevos*, administered by the Indigenous peoples itself, confirm that the territory did not disappear but was instead “transformed.”⁹⁵

Furthermore, land and culture policies promote territories of change as an ideal opportunity for comprehension of the redefinition of territory, not only from the point of view of its borders, but also on the basis of culture. LeGrand refers to this as frontier expansion, territorial development

⁹³ Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC, *Juntos Construimos un Mejor Futuro* (CECIDIC, 2017).

⁹⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*; Heriberto Galeano Trilleras, *Tulpa de Pensamiento* (FUP Fundación Universitaria de Popayán, 2016).

⁹⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 32 – 34;

through a “basic conflict of interest between self-provisional settler families and elite investor,”⁹⁶ through which rural conflicts would result in the modern understanding of territory as an element of cultural recovery. To understand the significance of *Nasa Kiwe*, it is necessary to reclaim a kind of cultural, political and territorial frontier that is more real and undiminished.

Apart from governmental policies and general perceptions, the conception of a different *frontier expansion* mostly deals with a particular socio-cultural organization, in which “development, like modernity, has an ambiguous relationship with culture,”⁹⁷ as David D. Gow affirms, referring to Indigenous Cauca culture and particular characteristics of violence. The Nasa-Paéz reality is instead a collective construction of frontiers; to that extent it distances itself from the “non-Indigenous” imagination and generates its own community proposals.

This form of contemporary protection and legitimation of the physical and cultural territory – affirmed through reference to tradition and through protest - demonstrates the existence of heterogeneity within the same nation. As identity overlaps with other identities, coexistence and conflict are generated at the same time.

Maintaining the communal dynamics within these territorial boundaries first set in the Colonial period, social, cultural and political practices are developed in the Nasa-Paéz *resguardos* which are understood as elements of continuity, consolidation and expansion and not as a ruptures. It was during my first visit to the Huellas reserve (in 2014) that the community expressed their desire to me to continue to consolidate and vindicate their culture in ways that prioritize their beliefs thorough the construction of a territory visualized as a Nasa-Paéz great house.

⁹⁶ LeGrand. *Frontier Expansion*, xvi.

⁹⁷ David D Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and The Moral Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 11. For more information see: David Gow. *Replanteando el Desarrollo, Modernidad Indígena e Imaginación Moral*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2010. Baldwin, Thomas. *Introduction, The World of Perception*, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (trans. Oliver Davis). Routledge, 2004, p. 7-33.

Witnessing the *minga* for reflection, congregating the community in a traditional *Yatzunga* – considered a sacred place – around the hearth and in the presence of their elders, women’s and community leaders, I saw the need to understand the relationships between Nasa-Paéz culture, territory, and architecture. The purpose of the dissertation then became clearer to me: to fill a gap in the literature on the Nasa-Paéz associated with contemporary traditional understanding of architecture, territory and beliefs. *Nasa Kiwe*, which is seen as a great house for all the Nasa-Paéz, encompasses the recovery of traditional education, culture and the *Nasa Yat*, and its relationship to the construction of a larger and similarly sacred entity: their territory.

The literature review confirmed the deficit already perceived and shared by the community. I found limited relevant references to the Nasa-Paéz, comprising mostly political, anthropological and archaeological works, and some content on inhabitation-related subjects.⁹⁸ These helped to provide context and stimulated discussion in this dissertation. When I turned to studying contemporary processes of Nasa-Paéz territorial occupation in relation to their vision of political and cultural context, the absence of traditional literature became even more evident.

Consequently, I could establish the importance of analysis of the processes of territorial and cultural defense and appropriation from different perspectives, where studies are focused on the territorial conception based on Indigenous principles, on the traditional Nasa-Paéz research methods and their own policies and beliefs.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Segundo Bernal Villa, “El Poblamiento Disperso Frente al Cambio Cultural Dirigido”, *América Indígena*, vol. 28 (1968); Álvaro Chávez Mendoza and Mauricio Puerta, *Vivienda Indígena y Prehispánica en Tierradentro y Agua Bonita* (Bogotá: Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales Banco de la República, 1981); Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa: La Construcción del Plan de Vida de un Pueblo que Sueña* (Bogotá: PNUD, 2005); Joanne Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition: The Ethnohistory of the Paéz of Tierradentro, Colombia” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982); Ximena Pachón, *Geografía Humana de Colombia-Región Andina Central 2* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1996); Bonilla, *Historia Política del Pueblo Nasa*; Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*; Troyan, *Cauca’s Indigenous Movement*; María Teresa Findji, *Territorio, Economía y Sociedad Páez* (Cali: CIDSE Universidad del Valle, 1985); Álvaro Chávez, “Vivienda Prehispánica en el Suroccidente de Colombia”. *Ponencia Presentada al 45 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*. Bogotá: Departamento de Antropología, 1985; Patricia Arias, *Del Arraigo a la Diáspora*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2009.

⁹⁹ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*. Duque, *Territorios Indígenas y Estado*; Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*.

The Methodology

The different conceptions that are centered around “*Kiwe*,” writes Joanne Rappaport, “give us a vision of how we can relate the different levels of territoriality to one another, the economic, religious and political means of legitimizing space and making it one's own.”¹⁰⁰ Declaring myself as a non-Indigenous researcher, and given the nature of my subject of study — an Indigenous community striving for their identity and contemporary territorial understanding, protection and expansion through *Nasa Kiwe* — my dissertation relies heavily on field work: respectfully working with the Nasa-Paéz directly, using techniques of oral history, recording testimonies, surveying cultural understanding through belief and *mingas*, and using the traditional Nasa-Paéz research guidelines.¹⁰¹ These are the basic techniques and primary sources.

In this regard, as a non-Indigenous researcher, I cultivated proximity and tried to gain familiarity and confidence, being aware of how important it is that the community not only trust the researcher but guides the research itself not only generating understanding but also recognition and acknowledgement of their society and attitudes. Ultimately, it is only through collaboration that the final results become beneficial for both parties.¹⁰²

Regarding secondary sources, I engaged in the research mostly through two types of literature: the first, which provided specific historical contextualization, and the second addressing

¹⁰⁰ Rappaport. *Territory and Tradition*. 37.

¹⁰¹ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*.

¹⁰² Darrell Addison Posey and Graham Dutfield, “¿Quién Visita las Comunidades, qué es lo que Busca y Por Qué?” in *Más Allá de la Propiedad Intelectual: Los Derechos de las Comunidades Indígenas y Locales a los Recursos Tradicionales* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999), 20-21; Darrell Addison Posey and, Graham Dutfield. “¿Pueden las Comunidades Crear su Propio Sistema para Proteger los Derechos a los Recursos Tradicionales?”. *Más Allá de la Propiedad Intelectual: Los Derechos de las Comunidades Indígenas y Locales a los Recursos Tradicionales*. (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999). 101-110.

Nasa-Paéz policies and beliefs in traditional terms. I shall begin by summarizing the historical perspective, in which I aimed to understand the origins and processes of consolidation of the *resguardos* in Spanish Colonial times. The *caciques nuevos* promoted and effectively demarcated borders of the *resguardos*, routing and delimitating them in a physical and ritualistic manner, and building a political and symbolic construction of the Nasa-Paéz's territory.¹⁰³

These historical processes opened the path to consolidating contemporary Nasa-Paéz culture and empowering their agency. The legacy of the *caciques nuevos* encouraged the people to continue to work for Indigenous causes and seek to defend their territory through protest that was violent at times; later in the history of the *República*, this process resulted in political reforms at the Colombian national level.¹⁰⁴ Such historical resilience, from Spanish Colonial times to modern Colombia, gave rise to several peasant and Indigenous movements and won contemporary recognition.¹⁰⁵

This preliminary (historical) approach to understanding the Nasa-Paéz is thus conducive to clarifying why and how a new contemporary mythology originated, based – perhaps curiously – on their introduction into history. Historical review opens up an understanding of why and how *Nasa Kiwe*, –conceived as a communal house– becomes the focus of Nasa-Paéz culture, and of this study as well. A historical literature review helps to trace the circumstances of the Nasa-Paéz, the changes they have undergone and, ultimately, the consolidation of their contemporary guiding principles. The second –traditional and cultural– approach is relevant for an understanding of the current configuration of their practices regarding, and the notion of, territory. In this sense, their current and persistent communitarian work in *mingas* encourages political and social consolidation.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ *Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe. Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos.*

¹⁰⁴ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*.

¹⁰⁵ Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement*.

¹⁰⁶ Galeano, *Tulpa de Pensamiento*; Sebastián Levalle and Luciana Levin “Cuando la Investigación se Vuelve Minga de Pensamientos, Los Pueblos Indígenas del Sur Colombiano y su Lucha por la Educación Propia.”, 2011, accessed August 18, 2017, <http://tejiendoterritorios.blogspot.com/2011/06/cuando-la-investigacion-se-vuelve-minga.html>. For more information see: Anders Breidlid. *Educación, Conocimientos Indígenas y Desarrollo en el Sur Global*. Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2016.

The traditional literature generated by the community through the Nasa-Paéz's own policies, beliefs and weaving of life also becomes relevant, since it has generated a new knowledge, a traditional one, which is taught as a "new mythology," a contemporary traditional Nasa-Paéz literature and education. Policies, rituals and beliefs form a foundation for autonomous agendas – *Proyecto Nasa*, – which then become part and parcel of their architecture, 'architecting' their dwelling in the world.¹⁰⁷

It is important to stress that in Colombia, prior to the Colombian National Constitution of 1991, Indigenous peoples were tied to policies that restricted their freedom of cultural expression, governance and autonomy. With the 1991 Constitution, Indigenous policies allowed communities like the Nasa-Paéz to look at their past and generate their own cultural pathways.¹⁰⁸

This dissertation followed the research guidelines established for *resguardos* within the Nasa-Paéz territory. The work thus respected *resguardos* culture and institutions, and was carried out in a manner that recognized the Indigenous community's desire for research to be based on Indigenous guiding principles and experiences, not on external political organizations or theories.

Although Indigenous principles have provided Nasa-Paéz with an alternative for reconstructing tradition, their most important legacy will be how such principles prepare them for their struggle to be recognized as a peaceful society with their own research and cultural distinctiveness.

Through traditional academic scholarship, they seek to understand their own culture, autonomy and notion of self-determination, in which community actions take precedence over individual needs.¹⁰⁹ In that sense, the foundation of this dissertation is the contemporary approaches

¹⁰⁷ Docentes Comunidad Nasa, *Nasa U'juxin Thegnxi, Leyendo la Vida Nasa. Serie Río de Letras* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014).

¹⁰⁸ Constitución Política de Colombia (1991) Artículo 7, 8, 10, 63, 68, 287. For more on Indigenous rights, see: United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. New York: United Nations, 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Darrell Addison Posey and Graham Dutfield. "¿Pueden las Comunidades Crear su Propio Sistema para Proteger los Derechos a los Recursos Tradicionales?" In *Más Allá de la Propiedad Intelectual: Los Derechos de las*

and guidelines set by the elders and Indigenous governors of the Nasa-Paéz community: it is based on the research processes they apply in their own territories.

The CECIDIC 2015 research guide proposes a research methodology consistent with the current beliefs of the Nasa-Paéz. This is an adaptive management-based methodology; that is, it responds to actual circumstances in the context of Nasa-Paéz culture and territory. Through this approach, strategies for study and analysis are developed in response to discoveries in the field, focusing on areas found to require investigation. On their side, the role of the non-Nasa-Paéz researcher, according to the CECIDIC 2015 research guide, should be understood as one who “must understand and interpret the law of origin, the structural vision of the spiritual and the world, the place of Nasa-Paéz on *Nasa Kiwe*, the spirits and the elder authorities that are present, the construction of life plans, and internal and external organization as proposed by the Indigenous movement.”¹¹⁰

Although significant attention has been given to their own Nasa-Paéz research in developing this dissertation, it has been contextualized with reference to historical records dating back to the Spanish colony, the early *República*, modern-day Colombia, and my own experience. Scientific research methods are frequently at odds with Indigenous thinking, which is why traditional research promoted by the Nasa-Paéz community does not follow this methodology. On the contrary, the community focuses on contemporary traditional policies and beliefs. It aims to generate reflections and proposals based on the community’s role as caretaker of the *resguardos*; that is to say, on Indigenous knowledge and heritage.

Comunidades Indígenas y Locales a los Recursos Tradicionales (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999), 109.

¹¹⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 34. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Se debe comprender e interpretar el mito de origen, la visión estructural de lo espiritual y del mundo, el lugar del Nasa en la tierra, los espíritus y las autoridades terrenales presentes, la construcción de los planes de vida, organización interna y externa que plantea el movimiento indígena.” See: Margaret Kovach. *Indigenous Methodologies : Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2009.

As an ancestral community, Nasa-Paéz feels, lives, protects and defends the territory. The conceptions that are centered around *Kiwe*, writes Rappaport “unite the economic realm with the politico-ideological realm,”¹¹¹ thus, *Nasa Kiwe* also approaches research from the standpoint of daily life, in relation to the community, in which historical events from the establishment of the new chiefs to contemporary political programs, traditional education and protest consolidate not only a territory but the preservation of Indigenous culture. In the specific case of the Nasa-Paéz, the research methodology evolved in response to the cultural relationship with the spiritual world of *Nasa Kiwe*.

Traditional Nasa-Paéz research methodology indicates a path: it serves as a guide, containing cultural and organizational recommendations of use in developing research projects into the Indigenous *resguardos*. It pursues the revindication of cultural knowledge in contemporary research projects, forms of knowledge which “have been negated by the majority of external experiences that have carried out research in this territory.”¹¹² Therefore, the methodology used in this research has been linked to the CECIDIC 2015, traditional guidelines and *mingas*.

In my particular case, Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga authorized me to have access to Indigenous territory in 2014. As the mayor of Toribío, Vitonás was interested in the educational proposal that would help to organize the academic and architectural part of the reserve with traditional projects supported by the mayor’s office. That is how I arrived in Toribío, a region that I never before had known and where I never imagined that I would work.

In the early meetings at the mayor’s office, Vitonás requested that, if given authorization to carry out research in the *resguardos*, I should follow certain guidelines for the research processes, taking into account the knowledge and modern-day practices of the Nasa-Paéz people.¹¹³ This process should include, as the organizational framework of its research, the development of *mingas*; these

¹¹¹ Joanne Rappaport. *Territory and Tradition*, 37.

¹¹² CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 5. My translation. The original in Spanish: “han sido negados por la mayoría de experiencias externas que han realizado investigación en este territorio.”

¹¹³ Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by Author, *Minga* Toribío Cauca, February 7, 2014.

would enable community participation in the project. These community events, held with governmental authorities headed by Vitonás, community members, governors, Indigenous guards and elders, helped to guide my academic process. The purpose was to gain first-hand experience of the reality within the *resguardo* to enable me to gain understanding of the Nasa-Paéz culture and contemporary manifestations. Taking the above into account, research in *Nasa Kiwe* should involve the beliefs, rituals and respect for the culture and territory.

As quoted in the research guide, Nasa-Paéz research “begins when we try to interpret or seek answers to the questions posed by the spiritual world. The research is present when we are empty of knowledge, when nature tries to tell us something; then we seek knowledge.”¹¹⁴ The interpretation of research based on daily life is expressed in Nasa-Paéz symbols: a spiral of wisdom or law of origin, represented and recognized as connector with territory through the weaving of life.¹¹⁵

Nasa-Paéz research is interpreted and composed of five elements. The first element is the dream or vision, in which spirits communicate a message to be interpreted; the second is interpretation of the message based on ancestral knowledge; the third is the use of traditional plants to *harmonize* (as tributes) and to ask and obtain authorization from the spirits to intervene in *Nasa Kiwe*; the fourth is to consult and accept the guidance of the elder; and the last is to follow the recommendations of the elder.¹¹⁶

Traditional interpretation takes place at the place and time of the research. It draws on the Nasa-Paéz vision of the research in dreams, and takes place in specific spaces: research through

¹¹⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 15. My Translation. The original in Spanish: “inicia cuando tratamos de interpretar o buscar respuestas a las inquietudes que nos plantea el mundo espiritual. La investigación esta presente cuando estamos vacíos en el conocimiento, cuando la naturaleza trata de comunicarnos algo; entonces buscamos el conocimiento.”

¹¹⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 102.

¹¹⁶ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 16.

dreams, from the hearth, and research from the *Yatzunga*.¹¹⁷ The structure of this dissertation is based on this traditional interpretation of research; that is, focused on a “participative methodology.”¹¹⁸

From 2014 to 2019 Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, former Mayor of Toribío, Diego Hernán Capote Cabrera, former Secretary of Municipal Planning of Toribío, and Florencio Mestizo, Coordinator of Justice for the *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca* ACIN (Association of Indigenous Councils of North Cauca) authorized my presence to carry out research exclusively under the Nasa-Paéz parameters in the *resguardo* of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco (Appendices 1, 2 & 3).

They delegated the accompaniment, guidance and recommendations in this dissertation to Máximo Pavi, elder of the traditional center for education of the *Proyecto Piloto Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* pilot Project, architect Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Toribío’s former planning secretary and current Indigenous governor of San Francisco, and Gonzalo Rivera, an Indigenous leader from Huellas *resguardo* and professor at the CECIDIC, Ingrid Dayan León, Indigenous leader from Belalcázar Tierradentro and Academic Secretary at the CECIDIC, and Luis Antonio Poto, a leader and community member from the San Francisco *resguardo* to guide my investigation process according to the interpretation of research based on daily life.¹¹⁹

Authorization and constant accompaniment by the above-mentioned people, and following the Research Ethics Board Office (REB) regulations and approvals required by McGill University, enabled me to openly and freely wander about in *Nasa-Kiwe*, take part in the daily life of the community and important events such as *mingas* and rituals, interacting spontaneously and respectfully without formalizing the visits in the form of interviews or formal surveys (even though

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 19 – 22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁹ Diego Hernan Capote. Authorization Letter Secretaría de Planeación Municipal de Toribío, November 20, 2015; Florencio Mestizo. Authorization Letter Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca – ACIN CXHAB WALA KIWE. October 7, 2019; Wuilson Ul. *Documento Tejido de Salud*. Toribio: Alcaldía de Toribio, 2016.

they allowed me to take photos and videos with prior authorization, they did not authorize the use of surveys or forms).

This “autonomy” in the field research facilitated a marvelous proximity, to which few people outside of the *resguardos* are authorized to gain access. Just as the spiral of the law of origin passes through the territory, walking, weaving, talking, and interacting with the community enabled me to obtain knowledge that is not evident even in the traditional literature. In this dissertation the interpretation of the research from daily life and through participative methodology is expressed in terms of the five elements reflecting how the Nasa-Paéz want to be recognized.

Contributions

My closeness to the community over several years of listening, understanding and working with them is a relevant source of knowledge and provides an objective framework. This form of scholarly research complements empirical analysis to provide a more complete picture of the situations, while recognizing the necessary contribution of this Indigenous community to a more holistic understanding. The place and people in the Nasa-Paéz *resguardos* have played an important part in the historical processes of protest and vindication of Indigenous rights in Colombia. For that reason, a methodology was required that is comprehensive of Indigeneity, in full recognition of the historical and cultural context.

I would like to stress that this community in particular is already producing research of their own, and moving towards what one could call an understanding of their own governance. If a dialogue is to be achieved between the forms and means of research of the Nasa-Paéz and western academia, it must be through an appreciation of the fundamental notions and values expressed by the community. I expect my research to contribute in part to that goal, and also to share with the

academic world the potential of the Nasa-Paéz in matters of peaceful territorial decolonization that encompasses tradition, place, architecture, and belief despite violent circumstances.

The strengthening of dialogues between the diverse subjects that inhabit *Nasa Kiwe* and their projects of cultural and territorial expansion must take into account past dynamics of interculturality. This dissertation has reviewed with special attention Nasa-Paéz traditional literature conveying beliefs and policies, as an approach for facing a reality of conflict. This sort of material has assisted in guiding the Nasa-Paéz towards strengthening their culture and developing models of governance and inhabitation of the land for future Indigenous generations to follow.

Such is the case of the mythical tales of the *caciques nuevos*, which reveal a ritualistic amalgam of practices of quotidian inhabitation: from the *Yat* (house) to the *Nasa Kiwe* (as a territory and great house).¹²⁰ Ultimately, these are all architectural phenomena. In this regard, questions of relationship between dweller and dwelling, beliefs, rituals and design proposals in a territory with sacred connotations become particularly relevant subject matter for my research.

For instance, my study contributes to an understanding of the importance of different forms of representation and description of *Nasa Kiwe*. These articulate how territory and dwelling participate in the larger project of decolonization: in terms of policies, materials, forms, symbolism, and rituals born out of the *Nasa Yat*, and which extend to *Nasa Kiwe*. In particular, I contribute original research into overlooked aspects of these phenomena by connecting Nasa-Paéz models of vindication and recovery of territory to active communal participation in *mingas*, contemporary ritual, and traditional architecture.

This dissertation make visible how the architecture of the *Nasa Yat* is not only a physical extension and articulation of *Nasa Kiwe*, but also how the *Nasa Yat* becomes an iconic construction providing for community reunion (in *mingas*) under one roof, in a dwelling symbolizing the women

¹²⁰ Docentes Comunidad Nasa, *Nasa U'junxin Thegnxi*.

strengthening and consolidation of a nonviolent community. My study highlights the way in which the relationships that arise in *Nasa Kiwe* and in the *Nasa Yat* generate a new culture respecting heritage and demonstrating the quotidian relationship between dwelling and dwellers. In this relationship, in which identity embodies the action of community-building, the intention is that the Nasa-Paéz be recognized for their peaceful cultural vindication.

This study highlights the important influence of the *caciques nuevos* whose travails established the Colonial Indigenous *resguardos*, in spite of their political and cultural situation. The Toribío *resguardo* has played an important role in the development of policies not only at the national level but also in the context of all of South America. I emphasize how the experience and best practices of the Nasa-Paéz are their contribution to an exchange with other Indigenous communities in the region, whose aim is the broader consolidation of Indigenous culture.

Throughout this study, I contribute to an Indigenous narrative that includes the struggle to restore an autonomous territory, as reflected in contemporary disputes to defend not only the territory but also to reinforce traditional culture through research into oral tradition, rituals, and architecture. Such investigations are guided by the elders, women's as well as through the collective participation of the community in general. As traditional research is a process that is born, nurtured and developed within the community; the *minga* permit the community's needs to be understood in the terms of their own research, and developed in the context of their traditional education.

These procedures, respected in this dissertation, meet the objectives stipulated by contemporary policies for research on the *resguardos*. The Nasa-Paéz research policy strengthens the community's contribution to knowledge, offsetting the reality in which Indigenous wisdom is neglected in favor of what has been defined in the Western tradition as rational thinking.¹²¹

¹²¹ Levalle and Levin, *Cuando la Investigación se Vuelve Minga de Pensamientos*; Jairo Tocancipá-Falla. "Gow, David y Diego Jaramillo Salgado. 2013. En Minga por el Cauca: el Gobierno de Floro Tunubalá (2001-2003)". *Antipoda Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, no.21, 2015, pp. 189–196. EBSCOhost, doi:10.7440/antipoda21.2015.09. Accessed on July 4, 2019.

This dissertation aims to help prevent the voice of the community from disappearing by making it part of the research and respectfully connecting external agents.¹²² This is achieved through testimonies that reflect the experience of dwelling in *Nasa Kiwe*, with all that that entails. I have sought to convey both the content and manner of oral tradition, and in particular the words of elders, and contemporary leaders, so that the new practices that I experienced, and which are not yet consolidated in writing, can be made known, shared and referenced in future research. This study also highlights the important influence of the work of women in the different “weavings of life.”

Finally, my study contributes to the analysis of how, after 50 years of struggle and resistance, the *Proyecto Nasa* remains more relevant than ever and has facilitated the resurgence of parallel processes that nourish and seek the same objective that gave rise to the pacifist project. That objective is the creation and inhabitation of a territory in which, in the face of conflict, the Nasa-Paéz can seek their desired reality – the reality of revitalizing *Nasa Kiwe*.

Developed under the supervision of the Indigenous Governors and the elders of the three *resguardos* of Toribío, San Francisco and Tacueyó, along with *Proyecto Nasa* and the CECIDIC, this study promoted the organization and generation of traditional knowledge through collaborative community research processes and new architectural-ritualistic proposals, contributing to a renewed connection between new generations of Nasa-Paéz and the history of their ancestors.

Thesis Outline

The four chapters of this thesis are woven around the Nasa-Paéz notion of *Nasa Kiwe*. They explore some of the contexts in which that notion has been brought into play, considering its Colonial mythological origins, historical development, place in policies of contemporary Indigenous social and

¹²² A collaborative design project between Piloto de Colombia University School of Architecture and Toribío Town Council has been developed since 2013 through the Ecohabitat research group and non-Indigenous Students.

political organization, and role in the development of a renewed community. It is in these contexts that a new consciousness of the Indigenous situation arises, drawing on their own tradition in a historically violent territory to develop contemporary practices for protecting Nasa-Paéz culture through peaceful activism.

In each of these chapters I examine a series of traditional representations and policies that have helped established and preserve Nasa-Paéz Indigenous identity. Each chapter was developed in the context of the elements of Nasa-Paéz research interpretation already discussed.¹²³ Consistent with the principle of carrying out research through daily life and *minga* activities, each chapter of this thesis begins with a testimony from an Indigenous member gathered in a community meeting or field research. This introduction is intended to provide a synthesis and reflection on events, historical circumstances, and ongoing situations. Each chapter is subdivided into sections that allow for a better understanding of historical processes and the contemporary configuration of cultural, social, political, and territorial recovery.

Chapter one, motivated by the idea of research through dreams, analyzes aspects of meaning territory held and holds for Nasa-Paéz Colonial institutions. The chapter considers this in the context of the historical establishment of the *resguardos*, subsequent protests and conflicts, and the participation and legacy of the *caciques nuevos*, particularly chief Juan Tama. The importance of the new chiefs (as well as of contemporary leaders) is an essential subject of this research. In the context of research into dreams, it enables communication with ancestors through the elders; their legacy guides the future of the Nasa-Paéz and helps ensure the preservation of traditional knowledge.¹²⁴

The chapter also considers how, starting at the beginning of 20th century, political principles of social protest and cultural resistance sought to vindicate the people through the legacy of important

¹²³ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 16, 19 – 22. See also: Jeanette Kloosterman. *Identidad Indígena Entre Romanticismo y Realidad*. Amsterdam: Thela Thesis, 1997.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

subsequent Indigenous leaders; these include Manuel Quintín Lame and, later in the 20th century, Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué and the *Proyecto Nasa*. The chapter examines the significance and representation of mountains and territory as *Nasa Kiwe*, and their association with symbolism, beliefs, rituals and policies. Additionally, the causes and consequences of Nasa-Paéz displacement, violence and conflicts provide evidence of their rootedness in territory and their vigorous efforts, in face of constant struggle, to recover the territory from which they were evicted.

Chapter two is inspired by the vision of research from the hearth. It discusses how, in the context of *mingas* and conversations around the hearth, the community obtains knowledge from the elders and from women. This prioritizes the voice of elders and women in the hearth and sustains oral tradition as a form of Indigenous resistance to external forces.¹²⁵ The Nasa-Paéz law of origin is represented and recognized as connector with territory through the weaving of life, constructing a territory that is once sacred and mundane.¹²⁶ The symbology of *Nasa Kiwe*, understood as a great house, becomes a form of adaptation to recurring natural and violent displacements in the history of the Nasa-Paéz people.

With the hearth as touchstone, this section describes the development and creation of cultural processes to recover the autonomy of this Indigenous people on different fronts. These include the transference of ancestral wisdom, and the recovery of territory through political, ritual, and academic processes. Traditional education programs that include ritual, art and mythology are important tools for visualizing and realizing Nasa-Paéz resilience.

The experience of inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe*, in particular through community work (*minga*), is analyzed in the context of cultural legacies thus transmitted. This chapter will also reveal how community organizations construct territory through the *Yat*, as a means of maintaining control over

¹²⁵ Ibid., 19 – 20.

¹²⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 102.

Nasa Kiwe. The chapter will demonstrate that architecture promotes the vindication of Indigenous culture through cultural policies that seek to keep their traditions alive.

Chapter three, joining together the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research, analyzes how cultural, social and political elements are developed by the Nasa-Paéz community out of the concept of the “*Yat*.”¹²⁷ In this chapter, culture is preserved through transmission of beliefs and through the promotion of communal pedagogical processes that nurture an awareness of the importance of fostering Indigenous autonomy.

Traditional architecture and art play an important role in the promotion of Indigenous identity, traditional education and cultural practices through contemporary rituals played out in the new *resguardos*. An example of this is art in the form of murals bearing traditional imagery that reflects the relationship between territory, belief and resilience. Such works contribute to the development of peaceful resistance safeguarding Nasa-Paéz identity.

The empowerment of women and their participation in the act of *umya*’ or weaving – and through that, in cultural, social, and political activities – provides evidence of their meaningful role in the contemporary *resguardos*.¹²⁸ The symbology of weaving, understood as a development and expansion of *Nasa Kiwe*, is an important cultural component to understand the resilience of Nasa-Paéz women and their role in the community.

Different typologies of traditional houses are also analyzed in this chapter to show the relationship between the conception of the “great house” for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research and place for encounter. The symbolic construction of territory through *mingas*, builders of community and territory, and the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, evidence a new proposal for ritualistic weaving of encounter. This entails interpretation of *Nasa Kiwe* as an imagined house and its inhabitation.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 21 – 22.

¹²⁸ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 234.

The fourth and final chapter concludes the dissertation by connecting the main threads established in the previous chapters. It is a premise of this research that the respect, defense, and devotion professed by the Nasa-Paéz for their territory generates a new *Nasa Kiwe*, which ensures the continuity of beliefs through the legacy of the *caciques nuevos*, contemporary leaders, policies and the community itself.

Chapter 1 Dreams — Reaffirming Cultural Identity

Chapter one, devoted to the idea of “research through dreams”, analyzes the meaning *Nasa Kiwe* holds for the Nasa-Paéz, and its relationship with Colonial and Republican institutions. Placing the practices of the community in the context of the historical establishment of the *resguardos* and subsequent conflicts, including the involvement and legacy of the *caciques nuevos* - particularly chief Juan Tama - I intend to demonstrate how the approach to research referred to as “research through dreams” is tied to historical events, and how the legacy of the past is interpreted in the policies of the contemporary *resguardo*.

According to Nasa-Paéz guidelines, “research through dreams” refers to an approach to research informed by broad communication between the territory, beliefs and its inhabitants. Such research, adopting an interconnected vision, empowers community activities in the *resguardos*, and implies a specific interpretation of the relationship of the past to the present. Current events are understood in the context of historical ones; contemporary dynamics and strategies are always framed in terms of past experiences, and the legacy of the past is deployed to serve contemporary circumstances.¹²⁹

In this dissertation, the legacy of chief Juan Tama and *caciques nuevos* is the starting point of “research through dreams.” According to the Nasa-Paéz, dreams are connectors between the spiritual and earthly worlds, and it was through that connection – recognized in practices today that draw on the symbolic practices of the past – that the dream of the *caciques nuevos* to establish an autonomous territory for the Nasa-Paéz is becoming a reality today in the autonomous consolidation of the *resguardos*.

¹²⁹ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 20.

The vision of research through dreams was taken up again at the beginning of the 20th century, through the legacy of important Indigenous leaders such as chief Manuel Quintín Lame and, in the second half of the 20th century, with Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué, who created and promoted *Proyecto Nasa*. *Proyecto Nasa* is the political program inaugurated to realize the dreams of the Nasa-Paéz: their cultural, political and territorial consolidation.

Although the development of strategies to recover *resguardo* culture and lands are the political face of a new movement of resistance, I would argue that the concept of identity that has evolved to construct this also results in the creation of a new tradition, one engendering not only peaceful ritualistic and academic spaces, but also opportunities for new, equally important, interpretations of territory. This new interpretation of territory or *Nasa Kiwe* generated a different perception of dwelling and defense in a space viewed as sacred by the Nasa-Paéz: the great house.

That is why active participation by the community through *mingas* is viewed as an important component of research through dreams. Dreams encourage a new community posture by means of their history and new processes of political and cultural revindication. These merge as a new peaceful methodology strengthening the culture through practices, ritual and tributes contributing to the reclaiming of a tradition and the recovery of the Nasa-Paéz society.

1.1 From Colonial Conflict and *Caciques Nuevos* to Protest and New Beliefs.

Doña Josefina Fixcué's Testimony

We used to climb the mountain and do tributes to the spirits. I remember leaving our hut, where we lived with my parents and three brothers, and going for long walks through the jungle above the lake. There we walked in peace, left food for the spirits, and always went home in tranquility. I remember back then there was nothing around us; no one lived nearby. There were other Indians somewhere farther away but not nearby [...].

Later, while wandering around, we began to come across people I had never seen before; they were not Indians like us, they were different, with different clothing; they came in groups, in families with many people. We knew that this had happened before, that whites had come [to our lands] because one heard stories and accounts, but we hadn't seen them around here before [...]. Then those newcomers opened paths with machetes and gathered together with their families, and finally took over land which until then had been ours.

[...] They stayed, quietly in the beginning, and we lived together in peace. They used to arrive with mules and many trunks. A long time passed and we saw more and more paths being opened and more and more outsiders.¹³⁰

It's not easy to travel through Nasa-Paéz territory. Not only because of its Andean topography, but because of the violence. In August of 2016, I for the first time had the opportunity to walk around the territory in the higher part of Tacueyó, passing through the villages of Santo Domingo and López, in the direction of the Paéz lake during which I met Josefina Fixcué, while I was returning to Toribío.

On past occasions, I had gone as far as the Santo Domingo village to take part in some *mingas* that

¹³⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish: "En lo alto íbamos a hacer con mis hermanos y mis papás pagamentos a los espíritus. Yo me acuerdo que salíamos de nuestra choza en donde solo vivíamos mis papás y mis tres hermanos y caminábamos largo por el monte hacia arriba de la laguna. Caminábamos tranquilos por allá, dejábamos comida a los espíritus y regresábamos siempre tranquilos. Es esa época yo recuerdo que no había nada cerca de nosotros no vivía nadie cerca. Habían otros Indios por allá pero no cerca [...]. De un momento a otro yo andaba por ahí y se comenzaba a ver algunas gentes que nunca antes había visto, no eran Indios como nosotros, eran diferentes con otros vestidos, venían en grupos, en familias venían amuchas personas. Eso sabíamos que había pasado cuando habían llegado los blancos eso se oía porque uno oía historias y eso se contaba, pero no se habían visto por acá [...]. Luego las gentes que venían abrían caminos con machetes y así se juntaban algunas familias y ahí se quedaban en las tierras que antes eran de nosotros. [...] Se quedaban y eran tranquilos en ese momento no pasaba nada todos vivíamos en paz. Ellos llegaban en mulas y con muchos baúles. Así paso mucho tiempo cada vez se veían más caminos y más gente de afuera." Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

elder Elizerio Vitonás Tálaga had organized with his brother, Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, who was then the mayor of Toribío.

I particularly remember a *minga* in Santo Domingo in May of 2015, in front of Elizerio's house, where I became aware of the meaning of dwelling in *Nasa Kiwe*.¹³¹ Elizerio, who led the meeting along with other members of the council, Indigenous governors and leaders, made a speech focusing on how to make the community more united through their own productive projects, such as expansion of coffee crops, enlargement of trout production in Juan Tama - Santo Domingo *resguardos*, and a larger *Yatzunga* for the community, (to use instead of Elizerio's house, where community meetings had been held up to that moment).

To arrive at the home of the elder Elizerio, one must follow a path that leads from Santo Domingo to the village of López. The paths that connect the different villages within the *resguardos* are of difficult access and in very poor condition. Some existed during the Pre-Colonial period, while others were created during the Colonial time: those known as royal paths. Still others were created, as mentioned in the Fixcué's testimony, with the growing population of settlers in the region; these consolidated the network of paths that continue to be preserved and used today.

As previously stated, the *minga* in the home of the elder Elizerio was unusual; while people conversed about different matters that were relevant for the community, I saw how the people passed in front, some walking, others on horseback or on motorcycles. At one point, the calm of the meeting was interrupted by the sound of a motor vehicle that repeatedly sounded its horn; it seemed to be coming closer and closer. It was a *chiva* (or traditional open air bus) full of children returning home from their school day at the CECIDIC; they were on their way to be dropped off at the different villages. This traditional bus was full of Indigenous students; they were singing and most of them

¹³¹ Elizerio Vitonás, Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. May 22, 2015.

carried the staff of command, known as the *khabu or tama*, which identifies them as Indigenous guardians of *Nasa Kiwe* (Fig. 1.2).

The *chiva* came to a stop in front of the home of the elder. While some of the students go off, those who remained on board sang to the rhythm of the music –which seemed to sound louder than the motor of the bus– and made signs of greeting with their hands. The *minga* paused and all of the participants at the meeting, along with the students, greeted each other.

Moments later, a small truck passed carrying members of an armed group – in this territory in the north of Cauca and specifically in this zone, there are fronts of the ELN, FARC dissidents and other illegal groups, which have fought over this territory to gain territorial control over the drug traffic.



Fig. 1.2, *Chiva* with students from the CECIDIC in front of the home of the elder Elizerio Vitonás in Santo Domingo *resguardo*. Photo by author.

They stood in the back of the truck in their uniforms, carrying their weapons and calmly conversing among themselves. Seconds later, the truck continued on its way and the *minga* resumed. At that moment, I started to think about the difficulties of living in this territory. Violence, no matter when, how or by whom, has always been present.

I understood how, despite this being a territory that could be considered off limits for the “non” Nasa-Paéz – because to enter it, one must have authorization from a member of the Indigenous council – it is a territory in which different political, social and cultural realities are interwoven as though they were different paths. These disparate realities coexist, each with their respective rules, far from National Governmental control. Upon seeing the *chiva* and the truck traveling these difficult paths, I understood that the history of the Nasa-Paéz is perceived differently when you have direct contact with the community, because that is the only way to understand the reality that surrounds them.

In the field research trip to the Paéz lake, I met Marco Antonio Jascué, an Indigenous guard, who accompanied me on the way back to Toribío and introduced me to his mother, Josefina Fixcué, in the Santo Domingo *resguardo*.

Josefina Fixcué’s testimony and my own experience in the *minga* of elder Elizerio serve as the point of departure for this chapter as they illustrate how a territory formerly inhabited according to ancestral Indigenous tradition changed as it was traversed and progressively inhabited by foreigners, from Colonial times to the present.

In time, those paths became a network leading to the urban centers, provoking new modes of social and cultural organization and bringing a new structure. To understand those territorial and socio-cultural developments, we need to examine further the historical changes in the occupation of territory and practices of dwelling resulting from the arrival of settlers, the development of *haciendas*,

and violence in Indigenous territory, and the resulting profound impact on the Nasa-Paéz and their territory in both Colonial times and later in the Republic of Colombia.

The Beginning of the Nasa-Paéz Territorial Configuration

[...] there is no need to highlight the role that the Pijaos play in these accounts. The imprint of this brave people is still fresh in the memory of the *Calderunos*, people of Calderas, the characteristics of their sustained fighting with them, [and] the fear of the Pijao name [...] they appear like phenomena, like animals, with colossal force and proportions throwing fire from their armpits. They are in fact legendary characters that travel beyond the boundaries of legend into the realm of myth, not only because of their symbolism but also their dramatic nature and sociological and cultural function.”¹³²

From this quotation, the conditions of Indigenous communities and their appropriation of the territory through their culture and beliefs can easily be inferred. Prior to the Spanish arrival, Indigenous communities enjoyed complete control over their lands. The territory was divided into inhabited areas consisting of Indigenous chiefhoods, cultivated lands and sacred places (or places of cult). Paéz history identifies three important chiefhoods during the late sixteenth century: Mesa de Paéz in the northern part of the Moras River; Suyn in the lower Moras River; and Abirama, south of the above-mentioned areas and also of the Paéz River. They also had chiefs on the western slopes of the mountain range, where the Tunibío chiefhood with chief Coyaima was prevalent.¹³³

Multiple paths were woven between these divisions, which were essential to the connectivity of the population, extending to more remote areas: from the Andes to the lowlands of the former

¹³² As quoted in Bernal Villa, “Aspectos de la Cultura Páez,” 291. My translation. The original text in Spanish follows: “[...] no hace falta resaltar el papel que los Pijaos juegan en estos relatos. El recuerdo de este aguerrido pueblo está fresco aún en la memoria de los calderunos, patentes las características de la lucha sostenida con ellos, vivo el temor que despertaba el nombre Pijao. Ante la mentalidad calderuna aparecen como fenómenos, como animales, de proporciones y fuerzas descomunales que sacaban la candela de sus axilas. Constituyen de hecho personajes legendarios que traspasan las fronteras de la leyenda para invadir el territorio del mito no sólo por su simbolismo, sino por su dramatismo, su marco sociológico y su función cultural.”

¹³³ Luis Fernando Velazco Penagos, *Políticas Públicas y Desarrollo Local: Análisis de la Política Pública de Desarrollo Local en el Municipio Indígena de Toribío-Cauca 1994-2010* (Quito: Flacso Ecuador, 2010).

Putumayo, Caquetá and Amazonas. It is noteworthy that the Spanish Crown was most interested in those routes that would serve economic exploitation, which suited their fundamental interests. Upon passage of legislation, paths directly or indirectly furthering this purpose were put under the Crown's protection.¹³⁴

Those already-colonized paths traversed the highlands of the Andean mountains, passing important lakes and nearby places considered sacred by Indigenous communities. Those places, which held considerable spiritual meaning, were hidden from the colonizers to the greatest extent possible. But to the disgrace of the Paéz, this region became part of an obligatory route, initially for the conquistadors and then for the colonizers. Although this zone served to connect the most important political and administrative Colonial centres of South America, the most significant were the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada and the Royal Audience of Quito.¹³⁵

These new incursions provoked particular resistance from the Nasa-Paéz, in comparison with other less-frequented territories. Royal paths transit and the abrupt drop in the Indigenous population forced the Crown to draft special *resguardo* legislation. The royal paths, in addition to connecting different regions during the Colonial period, enabled the movement of entire Indigenous communities within the new limits of the *resguardos* and *haciendas*. According to LeGrand, "The demand for foodstuffs generated by new towns and by the mining camps soon gave rise to regional markets for agricultural produce. Some of the agricultural needs of the Spanish settlements were supplied by the Indian communities, known as *resguardos*;"¹³⁶ in general terms, these rural assignments devised by

¹³⁴ María Luisa Pérez González, "Los Caminos Reales de América en la Legislación y en la Historia", *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, no. 1 (2001): 39.

¹³⁵ For more on the viceroyalty names during the Colonial period (sixteenth century and onward), which ranges from the Viceroyalty of Santa Fe, New Kingdom of Granada and Tierra Firme, to the Viceroyalty of Santafé de Bogotá or New Granada, which indicates the territories that are within the limits of the Audiencias of Santafé and Quito, see: Marta Herrera Ángel, "Las Divisiones Político-administrativas del Virreinato de la Nueva Granada a Finales del Período Colonial", *Historia Crítica*, no. 22 (2001): 76.

¹³⁶ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, 2. For more on Cauca political and economic situation see: Catalina Caro Galvis. "Minería en el Norte del Cauca Indígena. Prácticas Territoriales y Transformaciones Socio espaciales en los Resguardos Indígenas Nasa del Municipio de Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, Colombia". *Perspectivas Ambientales* (2014): 253-282.

the Colonial institutions forced the Indigenous population to move, in some cases slightly relocating settlements, but often displacing them entirely to distant locations and with other communities different from their own.

The Andean mountains with their snow-capped peaks are the source of innumerable lakes that, during the Colonial period and even today, are considered sacred places. The continuous use of the royal paths exposed sites that had been used exclusively for rituals and ceremonies, up to that point; this, with the displacement of people along these paths, provoked a new distribution of what were considered places of inhabitation, and sacred territories. For instance, in August of 2016, I traveled along the former royal path that connects the *resguardos* of Tacueyó and Paéz in Tierradentro, crossing the Andean central mountain range. At the highest part along the Paéz lake, there is a place with sacred connotations for the Nasa-Paéz and to which one may only gain access with authorization from the two previously mentioned *resguardos* (Fig. 1.3).

It is important to note that, despite the relocations to sacred places, the *resguardos* became the sources of labor for the *haciendas*, where the Indigenous peoples were the backbone for creation of the Colonial economy based on expansion of the royal paths. As a matter of fact, the establishment of towns for settlers with their respective socio-cultural practices, and the corresponding economic exploitation of the land in the form of *haciendas*, created a dualistic society and model of territorial occupation.



Fig. 1.3, Royal path connecting the Tacueyó and Paéz *resguardos* in Tierradentro. This path leads to the Paéz, sacred lake. Photo by author.

This socio-cultural condition serves as the point of departure for this dissertation in establishing a link to the past of the contemporary Nasa-Paéz, with regard to dwelling, place, and territory. The *resguardos* that the Nasa-Paéz inhabit today originate from a model instituted in the mid-17th century, in the region then known as Nuevo Reino de Granada, and later consolidated based on the modern *resguardo* instituted by nineteenth century legislation.

According to Joanne Rappaport, the *resguardo* were supposed to be a transition from a repressive and intolerant way of treating Indigenous communities to a fairer and formalized social and political institution.¹³⁷ But the social and political institution that Rappaport points to was never

¹³⁷ Rappaport, "Territory and Tradition", 275; Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 43.

actually achieved. In the Tierradentro region, then inhabited by the Paéz, consolidation of the *resguardo* was not easy, as Indigenous people strenuously resisted the political structures of colonization.

The action taken by the chief Gaitana against the Spanish incursions indicates a point of inflection in the behaviour of pre-Columbian chiefs, in response to Spanish conquest and colonization.¹³⁸ Gaitana was a strong female chief whose memoir arose as part of the mythological preamble of the new chiefs. Gaitana is well recognized throughout Colombian national territory due to her famous uprising against the Spaniards.

Chronicles narrate such battles against Indigenous peoples highlighting, among other things, their sanguine spirit and fierce and indefatigable defensive nature. Furthermore, the Paéz were mistaken for cannibals due to their alliance with the Pijaos, an alliance based only on common defensive interests. Only after the defeat of Sebastián de Belalcázar in the famous Peñón de Tálaga battle, in 1540, did the Spaniards come to understand that it was not through war that they could dominate the Paéz.¹³⁹

The already-subjugated Indigenous communities paid tribute to the Spanish Crown, as part of the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada and Quito. The submission of the region progressed, accompanied by an intense process of evangelization that ignored Indigenous culture and beliefs. It was not until the end of the seventeenth century that the Spaniards managed to dominate the native population with the consolidation of *resguardo*, and with the aid of the Catholic Church. Indigenous resistance to Christianity was taken as a serious offense against Christianization and evangelism.

¹³⁸ See Juan De Castellanos, *Elegías de Varones Ilustres de Indias* (Madrid: M. Rivandeneira Impresor Editor, 1857).

¹³⁹ Álvaro Félix Bolaños, *Barbarie y Canibalismo en la Retórica Colonial: Los Indios Pijaos de Fray Pedro Simón* (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial Cerec, 1994), 36.

This situation gave rise to a strong defensive struggle by the Indigenous communities. Only with the passing of time did they accept the new faith as a survival strategy.¹⁴⁰ Evangelizing missions then began to appear, coming from different religious communities, with one main objective: to save the souls of the Indigenous people through religion, and most importantly, to reorganize and pacify them through “anti-idolatry campaigns.”¹⁴¹

Thanks to their skill as warriors, the Paéz were in some cases recruited by the Spanish army to help subjugate other communities; or simply taken to work in the newly founded towns and *haciendas*. New strategies were developed for distributing Indigenous lands, labour and production; these sought to maintain an active Spanish population in the new territories. The political system of trusted lands was one such strategy, in which Indigenous dignity and culture was completely ignored.

The trusted lands enabled a small number of Spaniards to control and administer a large number of Indigenous.¹⁴² Trusted lands were created to enable the colonizers to legitimize the use of human labour, employing Indigenous workers so that the colonizers could be assured of enough resources for their own wealth and to pay tribute to the Spanish Crown. In order to centralize the institutions of the Crown, it became necessary, in addition to the tributes, to found entirely new towns. These were therefore the requirements the evangelizing missions laid down for the definition of new urban and territorial patterns.

As previously mentioned, an important assignment of the missions was to situate a larger number of Indigenous communities in more accessible places, to indoctrinate them with the Christian faith and to control them. Pre-Hispanic settlements were often inconvenient for the Europeans due to their remote locations and inaccessibility. The Spanish insisted not only on conversion of the natives

¹⁴⁰ Santiago Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*.

¹⁴¹ Juan Carlos Garavaglia and Juan Marchena Fernández, *América Latina de los Orígenes a la Independencia* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), 236.

¹⁴² Marco Palacio and Frank Safford, *Historia de Colombia: País Fragmentado, Sociedad Dividida* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2002), 53-54.

to Christianity, but also on the right to profit from the wealth of the new continent through “Laws of the Indies.”¹⁴³ Mandates from the trusted lands to obtain gold, forced natives to relocate to other regions to fulfill the requirements of their landowners.

Neither land nor religion was enough tribute to satisfy the Spanish. This situation led Indigenous communities to disperse and venture into different territories that were originally not theirs. As a result of such disintegration and attempt at cultural annihilation, the Paéz accepted promoted their own *resguardo* system through alliances between the different chiefdoms. These would later become recognized as new chiefs.¹⁴⁴ Thus consolidated, the new chief also resisted evangelizing missions.

But what would encourage a more organized resistance by the Indigenous peoples against colonizers? The answer, I believe, is tied to what territory means for the Nasa-Paéz. The new chief inspired the symbolic construction of territory, a practice that certainly helps Indigenous communities to “also organize themselves to obtain optimal control over the different chiefdoms,”¹⁴⁵ as described by Santiago Paredes in shaping Indigenous Colonial organization. Juan Tama, chief of Vitoncó and Pitayó, the chief Gueyomuse of the Togoima region, and chief Quilo and Sicos from the towns of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco, all called for the delimitation of their territories.

Elder Elizerio Vitonás, who has been leading cultural restitution projects and has developed research processes based on research into dreams centered on the guidelines of the *resguardo*, has proposed Colonial history as a model for contemporary projects aiming to consolidate not only territory but also culture: “Tama, together with Quilo and Sicos, traveled to Quito to organize our

¹⁴³ Silvio Zavala, *La Filosofía Política en la Conquista de América* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972), 37.

¹⁴⁴ Equipo Nacional del Plan de Salvaguarda, *Baka'cxte'pa, Nasnasa Nees Yuwa' Diagnostico, Fundamentos y Líneas de Acción Para la Construcción del Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa* (Bogotá: Corporación Ensayos para la Promoción de la Cultura Política, 2013), 24.

¹⁴⁵ Santiago Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*, 20; Santiago Paredes, “Resguardos, Expansión Territorial y Modos de Habitar Entre Los Nasa (Paéz) Coloniales”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

resguardo; we have to continue their legacy.”¹⁴⁶ It is meaningful in this regard that the new chief also gave birth to a new “dream” mythology that would be essential to an Indigenous concept of a much more structured mode of contemporary resistance, distanced from Colonial structures of domination that included Catholic religious indoctrination as an overarching strategy.¹⁴⁷

Such distancing from Colonial practices makes clear how that historical moment gave birth to a culturally strong society, cognizant of robust ancestral foundations, which reclaims and incorporates that meaningful past into the concept of contemporary frameworks for an assertive defense of territory and preservation of culture.

Paths of the Colonial Institutions

The political and administrative structure of trusted lands, imposed further isolation on the Indigenous communities already controlled by the Spaniards.¹⁴⁸ Leon Zamosc describes how the Colonial institution of trusted lands and payment labours encouraged the exercise of political authority in an effort to shape a new territorial consolidation: “In Colombia, as in most Latin American countries, the formation of the *haciendas* and the peasantry was a long process that can be traced back to the evolution of the Colonial agrarian regime. In the Nuevo Reino de Granada (1564-1718), the original systems of Indian exploitation were *encomienda* and *concierto*,”.¹⁴⁹ One might view the new autonomy as a form of retribution against the chiefhoods: the autonomous territories were legitimized

¹⁴⁶ My translation. The original in Spanish says: “Tama con Quilo y Sicos fueron hasta Quito para organizar nuestro resguardo, nosotros debemos continuar sus pasos.” Elizerio Vitonás, Interview by author, *Minga Santo Domingo* – Cauca. May 22, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ The *encomienda* was the basic institution in the Spanish settlements. Palacio and Safford, *Historia de Colombia*, 53-54. For more information see: Marcela Quiroga. “La Encomienda Entre los Pueblos de la Provincia Páez en el Siglo XVII”. *Fronteras De La Historia*, 15, no. 1, (2010): 85–107.

¹⁴⁹ Leon Zamosc, *The Agrarian Question and The Peasant Movement in Colombia: Struggles of the National Peasant Association, 1967-1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.

by the new law, yet fully controlled by Colonial regulations which prohibited commercial use or sale of the land.

As mentioned earlier, the *resguardo* sometimes coincided with ancestral territory; in other cases, populations were moved to other regions, often already occupied by different Indigenous communities. The trusted lands and subsequent payment labours practices were present in *resguardo* during the Colonial period; however, it is unclear to what extent the land division practices of *encomenderos* persisted during the beginning of the Republic. Bernal mentions the so-called land divisions, as a reference to what land and territory mean for *encomenderos* and Indigenous peoples: “[...] each division offers perceptibly differentiable shades, even in terms of mythology and language.”¹⁵⁰

Be that as it may, it appears that territory, conceived in this way, is a structural element of the Nasa-Paéz. It allows their culture to be rooted and to draw from the territory the fundamental elements needed for survival, while they were at risk and while their shared community and identity were partly suppressed for “cheap Indian labour.”¹⁵¹ Colonial institutions, beginning with the *resguardo*, have contributed to a political definition of what (for the Colombian government) territory and its divisions mean today, an opposite view that Bernal affirms when he refers to land divisions as political and cultural territory.

However, such a government definition does not lead us to the original meaning that the Nasa-Paéz ascribed to the land they occupy. The state-conceived notion of land does not fully consider the participation of the inhabiting being, nor does it take into account the surrounding context which that is the most important element that I found when conducting research, particularly on the western slope of the Andean central mountain range.

¹⁵⁰ As quoted in Bernal, “Aspectos de la Cultura Páez”, 287. My translation. The original in Spanish: “[...] cada parcialidad ofrece matices diferenciativos perceptibles hasta en la mitología y la lengua.”

¹⁵¹ Benjamin Keen and Mark Wasserman, *A Short History of Latin America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 77.

Territorial limits are imposed through abstract, geographical means. This is how former and current policies somehow ‘christen’ a type of territory, bestowing a boundary and a definition, but arbitrarily and inappropriately. A case in point is the *resguardo*, created to give some autonomy to Indigenous communities, yet without taking Indigenous views and beliefs into consideration.

This is an important point to consider, as there is a clear connection with the notion of land which, under *resguardo* policies, acquires nuanced connotations. This all-encompassing notion of territory is not addressed effectively by modern policies premised on an abstract notion of land and its boundaries. Similarly, beliefs are not addressed by the state-imposed notion of territory, which differs widely from that of the contemporary *Nasa Kiwe*: “The research enables us to approach the spiritual world and nature, share the dynamics of the organizational political process, the forms for the exercise of authority and the cultural practices [...]”.¹⁵²

According to Zamosc, the territorial organization and tribute were a way to organize the labour force payments in trusted lands in new communities following Spanish urban development through land grants.¹⁵³ The urban development of the *resguardo* followed patterns similar to those of the Spanish reticular plan and land leases. The development of Colonial ordinances to the native population, and the urban plans of government officials based on the combination of a reticular outline, the central square, the division of street blocks, and the church, were viewed as the beginning of the new social and political structure.¹⁵⁴ The establishment of Indigenous *resguardos* and new peasant populations was developed through settlers mobilizations that evolved into a “process of frontier expansion.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 19. “La investigación nos permite acercarnos al mundo espiritual y de la naturaleza, compartir las dinámicas del proceso político organizativo, las formas de ejercicio de autoridad y las prácticas culturales [...]”.

¹⁵³ Zamosc, *The Agrarian Question*, 9.

¹⁵⁴ Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*, 155-156.

¹⁵⁵ LeGrand. *Frontier Expansion*, 19.

These were the newcomers to which Fixcué refers in her testimony. Peasants arrived in the Nasa-Paéz territory from diverse regions of Colombia, mostly from Antioquia, in search of land to cultivate without regard for boundaries or political recognition as *resguardos*.¹⁵⁶ This geographical movement facilitated the growth of villages that over time would expand and give way to villages and municipalities, which often corresponded to settlements originally occupied by Indigenous peoples.

The population would then be consolidated and organized around a plaza, where the political and religious center was located, framed by the church and the mayor's office (Fig. 1.4). The settlers participated in the movements of peasants and Indigenous peoples in the formation of new territories and *resguardos*.



Fig. 1.4, Parish of San Juan Bautista (archdiocese of Popayán) Toribío, Cauca. Photo by author.

¹⁵⁶ Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, *Minga Santo Domingo* – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

Settlers are considered “different” from the Nasa-Paéz. Even in current times, when asked about the different people inhabiting their territory, the Nasa-Paéz point out the location of settlers in the *resguardo*, with whom they keep good relationships, maintaining their differences without derogatory connotations. As Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué points out: “we have a long history of sharing the same territory in good terms, but there are differences in the meaning that the land has for them compared to what it is for us”.¹⁵⁷

The Indigenous notion of territory as a dwelling place of spiritual connectivity was displaced by the new European idea of centralizing spiritual presence in the church and the central square. On the consolidation of the territory and the role of settlers, LeGrand emphasized the importance of land development where “*caseríos*, then, emerged primarily as marketing and religious centers.”¹⁵⁸ This gave continuity to newly-founded settlements, just as the Catholic missions did during Colonial times, where churches in the middle of each *resguardo* symbolized the new order embodied in the foundation of the settlement.

Even if ancestral construction materials continued in use, building form and lifestyle were affected by the incorporation of new cultural patterns and designs foreign to Indigenous communities. Many *resguardos* were located in places formerly inhabited by the Indigenous communities, and most new construction, especially churches, took place on sacred ancestral sites.

On the other hand, in response to Colonial institutions and the role of contemporary settlers as invaders, Indigenous leaders have certainly become social leaders, promoting cultural and territorial restitution policies. Their function is reflected in an improved sense of belonging to an Indigenous culture and recuperating ancestral lands.

¹⁵⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Llevamos una larga historia compartiendo el mismo territorio en buenos términos, pero existen diferencias en el significado que la tierra tiene para ellos y para nosotros”. Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, El Flayo – Toribío – Cauca. July 7, 2018.

¹⁵⁸ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, 28.

A case in point is the work done at the CECIDIC, a place which has welcomed me for years, a point of entry in my visits to Toribío and where I take part in the different *mingas* performed in diverse *resguardos* all over *Nasa Kiwe*. An increased number of Indigenous leaders and at times settlers participating in different communitarian projects is also evident.

Yet it was only with the need to recover the meaning of the ancestral configuration of territory through the *Nasa Kiwe* and *Yat*, that ancestral patterns became a point of reference in the land division. As contemporary *resguardos* developed Nasa-Paéz community came to be redefined, not erased, through the incorporation of a square in new communal settlements. In this context, the square is an element of urban and social reunification and a site for rituals of different kinds: from small to large *mingas* in which all Nasa-Paéz *resguardos* take part.

I confirmed this at a *minga* at the Huellas *resguardo*, where the community council established the relevance of performing, and participating in, the various contemporary rituals in communal places including squares or *Yatzungas*. These ceremonies include the *Saakhelu*,¹⁵⁹ which is held every year and is dedicated to the spirits of agriculture and staff of command ritual, among others.¹⁶⁰ During this events, the Colonial square is transformed into a place for *minga*, a gathering space meaningful for the new *resguardos*.

The paths of the Colonial institutions have an expanded role consistent with the increased sense of community that characterizes the contemporary *resguardo*. One could say that such new, hybrid public places serve to promote a unique culture which is inclusive for both Indigenous members and settlers. They incorporate learning from historical situations along with ritual and political activities on the *resguardo*, as stipulated in the research into dreams.

¹⁵⁹ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Gran Ritual Sagrado Saakhelu Kiwe Kame* (Popayán: CRIC, 2018).

¹⁶⁰ *Minga*, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

Haciendas, Land and Cultivation Rights

Another definitive aspect of the *resguardo* as dwelling place is cultivation. In Pre-Hispanic times, the Indigenous mountain dwellers cultivated a variety of agricultural products that they exchanged with neighbouring settlements as suited the needs of each community. When the Colonial *resguardo* was established, freedom of vertical movement on the mountain was limited by the paths traced by the colonizers; native inhabitants were restricted to the *resguardo* boundaries, and the arrival of the settlers in lands near the *resguardo* led to cultivation of their own crops for other foreigners through the *haciendas*. For the Nasa-Paéz, the concept of *hacienda* generates multiple discordances due to its difference from the notion of *Nasa Kiwe*.

The devotion that the Nasa-Paéz held to the notion of territory is expressed in the distinction made between the old cultivated lands, understood as *haciendas*, and a new place for cultivating within the *resguardo* that has become known recently as the *tull*. This generated a different perception of beliefs in which man and nature shared what had been previously an exclusively sacred territory, namely, the high mountainsides. The dwelling of the Nasa-Paéz in a territory that was simultaneously agricultural and sacred yielded a new type of sacred place, the *tull*. There the community worked the land and inherited its wisdom from the voices of the elders.

It is important to emphasize that the Nasa-Paéz originally inhabited the lowlands and climbed the mountains only for their spiritual ceremonies. After the conquest and subsequent colonization, because of the Colonial displacement of the population, the highlands came to be utilized for both habitation and rituals. It is here that the new sacred sites have been generated and are represented in the contemporary *Nasa Kiwe* through the *Nasa Yat*, the *Yatzunga* and *tull*. The contemporary *tull* that

developed as part of farm holdings could be located either within the limits of the *resguardo* or outside, by renting lands from surrounding *haciendas*.¹⁶¹

Most of the acquired rights – dating back from Colonial titles – within the *resguardo* land were, and continue to be, in use.¹⁶² The *resguardo* land is communal, because in this way it can be worked for the benefit of the community as a whole; land divisions are dedicated for community safeguarding. Part of today's communal activities focus on teaching appropriate uses of the land and the ancestral and contemporary meaning of *Kiwe* for the common wealth. Rights to land divisions are controlled by Indigenous leaders, who work in collaboration with the different Indigenous councils.

Therefore, the number of settlers increased in rural areas, where they acquired neighboring lands from the *resguardos* and pressured Indigenous peoples to pay tribute and work for them in the *haciendas*. These *haciendas* appeared as a result of the arrival of settlers, and this close proximity is the reason for those disputed territories reclaimed by the Indigenous people: “Most of this non-*resguardo* land is confined to the mestizo area, but within the Indigenous area itself there are several *terratenientes* [...]”, as described by Rappaport, shaping the resulting experience with land division.¹⁶³

The introduction of coffee to the Toribío *resguardo* in the late 1800s by families from Antioquia resulted in violence and destitution of Indigenous people's land.¹⁶⁴ During my field research, I could attest to the ongoing inhabitation by a large number of families from Antioquia in

¹⁶¹ For more on territorial division and the early *haciendas* in 1731 with the Indian towns of Yanaconas, Olleras, Toribío, Puracé, Coconuco, Calibío, Guambía, Tunía, Carrillos, Paniquitá, Hacienda de Novirao and others, under the then governor of Popayan, Don Pablo Hidalgo, see: Tulio Rojas, *Una Mirada al Habla Nasa Yuwe de Novirao* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2011), 20; UNICEF. *Enseñanza y Revitalización de la Lengua Nasa Yuwe*. Cauca: UNICEF, 2002; Franz Faust, “La Cosmovisión de los Coconucos y los Yanaconas en su Arquitectura”. *Boletín de Antropología Universidad de Antioquia*, 18, Num. 35, (2004): 350-360.

¹⁶² About the *resguardo* system and the way the Spanish Crown maintained territorial control through *Titulos Colonials*, see: Daniel Ricardo Martínez Bernal, “Caminando Hacia la Satyagraha. Comunidad, Lucha y Kweet Fxindxi en los NASA (1971-2015)” (PhD diss., Universidad de Granada, 2016), 166.

¹⁶³ Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 48.

¹⁶⁴ Álvaro Valencia, et al., *La Recuperación de Tierras del Resguardo de Tacueyó y de la Zona Norte. Cátedra Nasa Unesco. Nasa Uus Kayatxisa. Segunda Etapa* (Popayán: ACIN, 2001), 12.

the *Nasa Kiwe resguardo*. They work in different agricultural activities and some are connected to illegal crops. Here is Fixcué's down memory lane:

We used to live peacefully with the family, my parents and my three brothers in a hut near here between Santo Domingo and Tacueyó. Then I saw someone who came from the well-dressed families, with mules carrying some of their things. They came here and built houses. My father started working with them but they treated him badly. [...] there was no food anymore because there was no land for us to cultivate, everything had already been taken by those people until one day they threw us out[...] they killed my father and burned our ranch [...] I was just a girl, I would have been about eight years old, and I remember that day very well. I hid in the bushes for weeks so they would not kill me.¹⁶⁵

As we have seen, *Nasa Kiwe* as dwelling and place of cultivation is a physical means for the Nasa-Paéz to construct their territory while striving to maintain control of the *resguardo* from settlers. Although a variety of interests motivated *resguardo* actions to take care of ancestral land so as to constitute a fortified territory, the Nasa-Paéz also insist on expanding the *resguardo* borders and recuperating *haciendas* lands, as Fixcué mentioned regarding former Indigenous territories.¹⁶⁶

Political action by Indigenous leaders and elders aims to recover territory by emphasizing the meaning of *Nasa Kiwe* through the vision of research into dreams, and all that it entails: "soil, space, land, territory and polity."¹⁶⁷ The work by the Toribío mayoralty in conjunction with Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Toribío's former planning secretary, is evidence of this: "Thanks to the policy

¹⁶⁵ My translation, the original in Spanish: "Nosotros vivíamos con la familia tranquilos mis papas y mis tres hermanos en una choza acá cerca entre Santo Domingo y Tacueyó. Luego veía uno que venían familias bien vestidas y con mulas traían un poco de cosas. Ellos llegaron acá y construyeron sus casas. Mi papá comenzó a trabajar con ellos pero lo trataban mal. [...]ya no había comida porque ya no había tierra para sembrar nosotros, todo era ya de esa gente hasta que nos sacaron un día [...] a mi papá lo mataron y nos quemaron el rancho [...] yo era niña, tendría por hay ocho años y me acuerdo bien de ese día, yo me escondí entre los matorrales por semanas para que no me mataran." Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

¹⁶⁶ Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Joanne Rappaport, "Territory and Tradition", 33.

implemented by the councils, it was possible to generate cultural movements closely tied to those the chiefs instituted under their command.”¹⁶⁸

Consequently, the historical analysis of the Colonial Institutions and the relationship of the new chiefs with territory and culture, has become an important part of contemporary “dreams”. Their policies and legacy forged processes of social, cultural and political resistance, as well as projects for land recovery from *haciendas*, as central to the *resguardo*. Evidently, these processes of cultural vindication, which include the adoption of ancestral practices and the insistence on rights and beliefs regarding territory and cultivation, are an opportunity to safeguard traditional culture.

It is also clear, however, that the community itself must promote and contribute to contemporary beliefs and socio-cultural resilience and agency, if they are to carry out the work necessary to build a solid *Nasa Kiwe*. Finally, Alcibiades Escué emphasized the importance of education and legacy in shaping the new policies, arguing that “the rescue of traditional territorial construction is an important element for rescuing Nasa-Paéz culture”¹⁶⁹

The Late Colony, Independence and Protest

The late colony was a time of political crisis within the Spanish government. The institutions regulated by the Spanish Crown began to decay and the local governors, most of them *criollos*, started demanding change for both their own immediate benefit and in pursuit of independence from Spanish supremacy. Already in the nineteenth century, the Indigenous peoples were joined into the

¹⁶⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Gracias a las políticas implementadas de los cabildos fue posible generar el movimiento cultural liderado por los caciques.” Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. February 14, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ During this *minga*, Alcibiades Escué stressed the importance of proposing to build the traditional territory as an important part of their own education. Alcibiades Escué, Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. October 10, 2016.

new governmental structure, which was not strong enough on its own to undergo the changes made necessary for independence.

Jesús María Otero describes an instance of this: “Chief Agustín Calambás, a direct descendant of *Don Juan Tama y Calambás*, joined the pro-independence forces [...].”¹⁷⁰ This was the result not only of a *criollo* initiative to enlist Indigenous help, but also the strategy and drive of an authentic Indigenous rebellion to finally liberate itself from the Colonial regime, and obtain support and respect from the *criollos* consistent with past achievements.

The meaning that the *resguardo* holds for the Nasa-Paéz differs from that of other Indigenous communities in today’s Colombia. The Paéz established the *resguardo* themselves.¹⁷¹ The documents, which declare the creation of the Toribío *resguardo* in the 18th century under chief Juan Tama de la Estrella, and the Tacueyó *resguardo* under chief Manuel de Quilos y Sicos, reaffirmed the ancestral origins of the land that the Paéz were already occupying and recognized their Indigenous right to use and preserve that land for themselves and their descendants, as expressed in “The Title of the Five Towns of Juan Tama.”¹⁷²

Colonial titles consulted in the city of Popayán show the chiefs’ active participation in creating and protecting a demarcated territory. In my field research at the Popayán archives, Lina María Amaya, director of the Historical Archive at the Universidad del Cauca, told me that two of the archive’s greatest treasures were the “Testament of the Marquis of San Miguel de la Vega” and the “Constitution of the Colonial *Resguardos* of Cauca and Nariño.”¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ As quoted in Jesús María Otero (Ed), *Monografía Histórica de Silvia* (Popayán: Ed. Departamento del Cauca, 1968), 69. My translation. The original in Spanish: “El Cacique Agustín Calambás, descendiente en línea recta de Don Juan Tama y Calambás, se vinculo a las fuerzas independentistas [...]” See also: Julia Pascué and Naranjo, Gloria. *La Independencia en Retrospectiva NASA*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2010.

¹⁷¹ About *resguardo* recognition by Felipe II in 1532, see: Daniel Ricardo Martínez Bernal, “Caminando Hacia la Satyagraha”, 166.

¹⁷² William Antonio Pilcué Valbuena, *Hacer Camino Entre las Educaciones (De La Escuela Convencional a la Escuela Comunitaria). Aprendizaje y Conocimiento en las Ciencias Sociales e Historia en el Municipio de Toribío (Resguardo de San Francisco, Tacueyó y Toribío)* (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2015), 7; Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. *Juan Tama de la Estrella*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2015.

¹⁷³ Lina María Amaya, Interview by author, Archivo Histórico del Cauca, Popayán. June 26, 2017.

Amaya emphasized the importance for Colombian history of understanding the Colonial processes and their development in the political transition to the reborn Republic: “The Great Council of Quito consisted of the provinces of Peru and Ecuador, where the Royal Court of Quito took part in the consolidation of the territories of the south of Colombia, demonstrating the importance of the Tacueyó, Caloto and Pubenense Indigenous peoples in the processes of organization and consolidation of the Republic.”¹⁷⁴

The policies and processes led by the Spanish Crown thus gave impetus to a peaceful resistance movement that would come to fruition not only with policies for the creation of Indigenous *resguardos* but eventually with policies concerning Indigenous lands and rights in the new Republic. In my visit to the archive, I found what would become my treasure in carrying out my studies: historical archives with the Colonial deeds and the letters sent by the chief Manuel de Quilo to the Spanish crown calling for the establishment of autonomous territories:

[...] the presenting Cacique (chief) named Don Manuel de Quilo: his request was as follows – to His Highness the King our Lord, with total submission and respect. I, Don Manuel de Quilo, Chief of the tributary Indians of his Majesty of the towns of Tacueyó and Toribío and San Francisco, respectfully place myself at his venerable feet, asking that his highness deign to recognize and legitimize possession of the lands that are sufficient enough for the supply of the families that are increasing every day and will [continue to] be increased, so it is fair that we recognize as tributary Indians of the Royal Crown land free of ownership so that as (not understood) preferably Your Majesty must order the Honorable Judge to order some people of integrity or trust, by means of his decree, to put me in possession of said lands according to their corresponding boundaries or demarcations: this is of utmost necessity [...].¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ My Translation. The original in Spanish: “Las provincias de Perú y Ecuador conformaron el Gran Cabildo de Quito, en donde la Real Audiencia de Quito participó en la consolidación de los territorios del sur Colombiano, demostrando la importancia de los pueblos Indígenas de los Tacueyoes, Calotos y Pubenenses en los procesos de organización y consolidación de la Republica.” Lina María Amaya, Interview by author, Archivo Histórico del Cauca, Popayán. June 26, 2017. For more information on colonial political organization see: César Chacón Rosasco and Gretel Bardalez. *The Royal Commentaries of The Incas, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*. Martin, Lawrence, Tran. Ed PIKI E.I.R.L, 2010.

¹⁷⁵ As quoted in Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe. *Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos. De las tierras de los indigenas de los pueblos de Tacueyó, Toribío i Sn Fco Espedidos en los años 1700 – i – 1770*. (Quito: Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, Archivo General de la Nación, 1866). My translation. The original in Spanish: “[...] el presentante Casique llamado Don Manuel de Quilo: su solicitud fue en la forma que se sigue - A su Alteza el Rei nuestro Señor, con toda sumisión i respecto. Yo Don Manuel del Quilo, Casique de los Indios tributarios de su Majestad de los pueblos de Tacueyó i el de Toribío i San Francisco, respetuosamente me pongo a

The previous excerpt implies that chief Manuel de Quilo affirms that Indigenous land granted or recognized as legitimately should be that land where the community has gathered to organize their “new Indigenous community.” The intentionality behind this request to the Spanish Crown, as we can observe, is of Indigenous resistance, rather than of subjugation. The defiant position of the Indigenous peoples towards the Spaniards was subsequently exploited by the *criollos* at the time of Independence and the beginning of the Republic.

In early 1810, the Venezuelan *criollos* formed a delegation led by Simon Bolivar to support the independence of the South American people.¹⁷⁶ Bolivar began his liberation campaign with his home nation and then, with the force of *criollos* and Indigenous people from Colombia and Ecuador, fought a series of battles with the Spanish Crown, ultimately obtaining liberty for much of Latin America: “On August 7, 1819, Bolivar and his forces defeated the Spanish on the plains near Bogotá and Boyacá. Spanish officials fled and the Nuevo Reino de Granada came definitively under the control of patriot forces.”¹⁷⁷

Nevertheless, the agreements with the *criollos*, thanks to which Indigenous peoples took their place on the battlefield, were broken soon after Bolivar’s victory. Promises to expropriate ancestral lands from Spanish colonizers and eliminate the tribute system were not kept. On the contrary, the expropriations never happened and tributes in some cases even increased.

sus venerables plantas pidiendo que su alteza se digne señalar i dar en legitimar posesión las tierras que nos corresponden bastante capaces para el abasto de las familias que cada día se aumentan i se aumentarán, por lo que es de justicia que reconozcamos como Indios tributarios de la real Corona el terrero libre de propiedad i que como (no se entiende) de preferencia debe su Majestad mande que el Excelentísimo oidor ordene a algunas personas de integridad o de su confianza para, mediante su decreto a ponerme en posesión de los dichos terrenos por sus correspondiente linderos o demarcaciones: esto es de suma necesidad [...].”

¹⁷⁶ Richard Graham, *Independence in Latin America: Contrasts and Comparisons* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 111.

¹⁷⁷ As quoted in Marshall C. Eakin, *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 181. See also: Burns E Bradford. *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*. Prentice-Hall, 1994.

In the early Republic years, as a result of the political processes of a nation undergoing consolidation, some of the *resguardos* endowed by the Spanish Crown and formally recognized as a form of government disappeared; others were radically reduced. This breakdown in Indigenous recognition on the part of the nascent Republic instigated multiple Indigenous protests and movements of a political nature.

Indeed, it is also important to realize that under the Republic *haciendas* increased in their former territories, and the settlements of *latifundia* expanded their abuse of the land. Colombian national independence and subsequent movements for the vindication of Indigenous territories were succeeded by a widespread situation of violence, as traditional political parties fought over control of the nation.¹⁷⁸ Such national disintegration and domestic struggles provoked social instability that was reflected fundamentally in a territorial confrontation in rural areas that affected peasants and Indigenous peoples. If the trusted lands had provoked political chaos around land possession, the *haciendas*, the Spanish colony and later the Republic continued the same dynamic, though with growing resistance from Indigenous peoples and peasants.

Historically, the Nasa-Paéz have had to coexist and be involved in such struggles. Relationship between Colonial landholders and Indigenous communities were consistently difficult. The settlers' incomes fell; under these circumstances, the *haciendas* offered a new model of economic organization. The coffee-growing *haciendas* originated as a result of the activities of settlers who, clearing the land and replaced native species with coffee bushes provided by the *hacienda* owner.¹⁷⁹

Fixcué's testimony is insistent about the arrival of the *Antioqueños* in the region. Without any hesitation in expressing her resentment, she recounts forcefully how these modern processes of

¹⁷⁸As quoted in Rappaport, "Territory and Tradition", 263.

¹⁷⁹ Álvaro Valencia, et al., *La Recuperación de Tierras del Resguardo de Tacueyó y de la Zona Norte. Cátedra Nasa Unesco. Nasa Uus Kayatxisa. Segunda Etapa.* (Popayán: ACIN, 2001), 12.

colonization through the coffee *haciendas* went unchecked by the government. It is clear that there was never any kind of protection for the Indigenous peoples of the region: “The settlers came opening pathways, and thus passed over whoever was in their path [...]”¹⁸⁰ Conflict in the Colombian countryside unfortunately persists to this day.

The abovementioned situation generates the inherited fear of the contemporary Nasa-Paéz *resguardo*: It is important to recognize the *haciendas* not only as a Colonial and Republic economic entity, but also as a political intruder one. It is arguable that the institution of the *haciendas* motivated an Indigenous response, extending in socio-cultural and political dimensions, around the notion of *Nasa Kiwe*. *Nasa Kiwe* is a response to the theft of land. Colonization by means of the *haciendas* had a profound impact on the community, as is clear in Toribío foreign *haciendas* architecture where Spanish influence denied vernacular architecture (Fig. 1.5).



Fig. 1.5, *Hacienda* coffee house in Toribío. Photo by author.

¹⁸⁰ Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, Santo Domingo. October 22, 2016.

The arrival of Antioquian landowners introducing coffee cultivation in the temperate zones of the mountain range and the cultivation of tobacco and sugarcane in the warmer zones led to evictions of Indigenous people from their lands. Over time and with greater organization, these lands were forcibly recovered through uprisings and struggles between the *hacendados*, peasants and Indigenous peoples.¹⁸¹

The rural conflicts that began in the late nineteenth century are thus continuing today. In the second half of the twentieth century, they resumed and were even more strongly associated with leftist political parties, and with the strengthening of Indigenous policies and self-determination. Legrand emphasized increased government support for settlers through legislation: “Conflicts between colonos and land entrepreneurs were not only played out on paper but also generally involved direct and sometimes violent confrontations.”¹⁸²

According to the CRIC, “The Nasa-Paéz are an amalgamation of peoples for whom the land is the origin and the subject of their defense.”¹⁸³ Agreeing with this argument, the CRIC does not specify an origin of the Nasa-Paéz as a people, because the community itself seems to be clear on that; however, they organize themselves in an inclusive and borderless way that accepts their almost nomadic history of exile, a relocation both imposed and voluntary.

Exposure and subjugation to the institution of the *haciendas* motivated the Nasa-Paéz to fight for their preservation as an ancestral people.¹⁸⁴ Each community integrated and folded neighbouring cultural practices into their own. These changes and new adoptions from cultures foreign to their own grew exponentially during the Colonial period, initiating periods of unprecedented conflict. A new

¹⁸¹ Álvaro Valencia, et al., *La Recuperación de Tierras del Resguardo de Tacueyó y de la Zona Norte*, 12.

¹⁸² LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, 67.

¹⁸³ *Minga* Consejo Alcaldía de Toribío. Toribío – Cauca. October 20, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Symbols and cultural practices persist today; they form a new compound (or syndesis) of the past and present of this Indigenous community. See Introduction of *Modernismos Sindeticos, Syndetic Modernism*, where Robert Mellin introduces the meaning of Syndesis. Carlos Iván Rueda Plata, et al., *Modernismos Sindeticos/ Syndetic Modernism* (Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2012), 22-23.

point of reference was established for the ethno-cultural understanding of Indigenous communities and their development, a situation which has remained into the present. Because of the many incursions by settlers from Colonial times until today, Nasa-Paéz history has developed in endless territorial conflict, characterized by incessant struggle by Indigenous communities to resist intruders. The CRIC refers thus to the origin of the Nasa-Paéz, in which lakes and mountains as *Nasa Kiwe* evoke the community and its principles:

We are the children of water: One of the living beings who delayed a bit in finding their partner was our "star" father, nobody wanted to be his partner. The male star, tired of so much traveling and not finding a wife, was getting very bored, until he saw a very pretty woman and wanted to win her over, but she started to run away from him. She was called "water"; she lived high in the mountains quietly in the form of a lake; When the star began to pursue her, she began to escape him, from that moment the water began to run, but her body remained in the lake [...]. As time went by, they understood that there was a lot of love between the couples, the male star broke off one of his tips and used it to penetrate the eye of the water and from that instant the water lady was pregnant; after nine months, the first child was born, this was Nasa [...]. Other relatives of the star and the water lady realized that they had begun to fall in love and thus there were several births; the Nasa community grew because more stars and bodies of water had several children, Nasa man and woman, in different parts of the Earth; then the Páez began to marry, falling in love with other Nasa of different parents and places (Voz Nasa).¹⁸⁵

The oral tradition also emphasize that the Nasa-Paéz were widely known as warriors and territorial defenders. Equally important for understanding the oral tradition, the CECIDIC proudly highlights their belligerent spirit and tells of their many actions against the Colonial institutions, the

¹⁸⁵ As quoted in Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007), 48. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Somos los hijos del agua: Uno de los seres vivientes que se demoró un poco en conseguir su pareja fue nuestro Padres “estrella”, nadie quería ser su pareja. El señor estrella de tanto recorrer y no encontrara mujer para esposa se estaba aburriendo mucho hasta que vio una mujer muy bonita y empezó a conquistarla, pero ella empezó a huir de él. Ella se llamaba “agua”; ella vivía en lo alto de las montañas y vivía de manera quieta en forma de laguna; cuando el señor estrella empezó a conquistarla, ella comenzó a esquivarse del hombre; desde ese momento el agua empezó a correr, pero su cuerpo quedaba en la laguna [...]. Al pasar el tiempo se entendieron a maravillas que hubo mucho amor entre las parejas, el señor estrella desprendió una de sus puntas y la penetró en el ojo del agua y desde ese instante la señora agua quedó en embarazo; a los nueve meses nació el primer niño, este era nasa [...]. Al darse cuenta otros parientes de la estrella y la señora agua empezaron a enamorarse y así hubo varios partos y así creció la comunidad nasa porque entre diferentes parejas estrella y agua tuvieron varios hijos nasas hombre y mujer y en diferentes partes de la tierra, luego los Paeces comenzaron a casarse enamorándose entre nasas de diferentes padres y sectores (Voz Nasa).”

Pijaos, neighbouring communities and Republican and contemporary settlers they defeated in their search for new territories.¹⁸⁶ Oscar W. Cuchillo mentions that “A long history of resistance and agency in the defense of their place in the world make the Nasa-Paéz people an admirable instance of cultural resilience reflected in their mythical core and beliefs with regard to *Kiwe*: being-in-territory.”¹⁸⁷

This is another thread in the tapestry of beliefs by which the Nasa-Paéz community in general learn about the conflicts with the Spanish and settlers, from the late Colonial period through later independence and contemporary protest. Their principles of research through dreams and sense of identity and accompanying vigilance about the defense of territory are constructed not through oral tradition, and also from historical records, as a point of departure to consolidate current *resguardo* policies.

Territory and Legitimization

The process of territorial legitimization in the Colonial time led to a new type of social organization in which the new chief would enjoy more visibility in the community and greater political power when confronting the colonizers. These chiefs were named new chiefs to distinguish them from their predecessors. The new chiefs were in charge of consolidating their population and aligning them with the Colonial *resguardo* system. The Paéz centered this new institution of empowered chiefs at the

¹⁸⁶ About military incursions of the Nasa-Paéz against the ancient Pijaos who are recognized for their brutal bloody practices against opponents and with Guámbianos, see: Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC, *Juntos Construimos un Mejor Futuro* (Toribío: CECIDIC, 2017), 6.

¹⁸⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Su larga historia de Resistencia y defense de su lugar se refleja en el pensamiento mitico del nasa y todo lo que kiwe lo rodea.” Oscar Wilde Cuchillo, Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío CECIDIC – Cauca. May 29, 2017. For more information see: Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca ACIN. *Trenzar para Resistir*. Cauca: ACIN, 2009.

Togoima and Vitoncó chiefhoods.¹⁸⁸ Unlike the chiefhoods of the sixteenth and up to the mid-seventeenth century, these new leaders are documented in the historical record for their involvement in Colonial policies and institutions.

With the new chiefs institution, Paéz history confronted a political moment in which action was critical for the community. In addition to inhabiting a new land with a clear physical delimitation, and framed politically within the *resguardo* system, the Paéz were equally bound by a new concept of territory stemming from the rule of the Spanish Crown. This provided a space to reflect upon and conceive of ways to face the new social and political circumstances, as Rappaport points out “the basis for a new mythology, one which serves today as a blueprint for Páez policies.”¹⁸⁹

This becomes clear in the names that developed under the *resguardo*, which give us evidence about the actions of new chiefs, as well as how their communities began to face the new political framework. The Indigenous leaders, represented a new perception of the Indigenous sense of belonging to the community, based on resilience under the processes of subjugation.¹⁹⁰ The strategy employed by the new chiefs was to form alliances with other chiefhoods, thus gaining visibility and unity with respect to the Colonial state.¹⁹¹

It would be pertinent to note that the mythical origin of the new chiefs is linked to a sort of *chthonic* birth, which also gives rise to the sacred and dwelling places high up on the mountain range. On the other hand, settlers often were able to relocate the Indigenous population to make them work in other place; other movements were voluntarily, due to marriage and political agreements. Such relocations indirectly helped the contemporary Nasa-Paéz to find new places to dwell. This long and

¹⁸⁸ For more on the chiefhoods of Togoima by the Gueyomuse family, and the chiefhood of Don Juan Tama de la Estrella, cacique of Vitoncó, Moras, Pitayó and Toribío-Tacueyó, see: Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 175-176.

¹⁸⁹ As quoted in Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 226-227.

¹⁹⁰ The Nasa-Paéz who actively participated in meetings and activities on behalf of the community's welfare, be it economic, political or social, came to call themselves *comuneros*. *Minga* Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

¹⁹¹ Marcela Quiroga, “Las Políticas Coloniales y la Acción Indígena: La Configuración de los Pueblos de Indios de la Provincia de Páez, siglos XVII y XVIII”, *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, no. 1 (2015), 44.

hard experience ultimately allowed them to exercise agency and leadership in Indigenous matters, particularly in trying to coexist with (and despite) foreign environments.

With the advent of the *resguardo*, a social structure modified the cultural context. This provoked a more rigorous defense of what remained. The meaning of territory changed, passing from a birth-giving, creative mother who permitted the acquisition of territory to *Nasa Kiwe*, a new connotation that prioritized protection and restoration of the modern territory what Rappaport calls an “ideological mechanism used for claiming rights to territory.”¹⁹²

Perceiving the benefits pertaining to the established policies of the Spanish Crown in matters of Indigenous territories, the Paéz, under the leadership of Jacinto Moscaý, chief of Pitayó (and uncle of Juan Tama), themselves requested creation of the *resguardo*, in a presentation before the *Real Audiencia de Quito*.¹⁹³

These chiefs therefore had the unique opportunity to define their territorial limits, their contemporary *Nasa Kiwe*. Walking through and surveying their new territory allowed them to define those limits.¹⁹⁴ These borders were then refined by division into zones, which included boundaries for cultivation, inhabitation and sacred lands or places, the “ideological legitimization.”¹⁹⁵ When in the Nasa-Paéz context mentioned of a chief or Indigenous leader roaming or walking the territory or climbing up the mountain, a much more complex meaning of legitimization is generated. The act of walking across the territory is inherent in Nasa-Paéz being. Walking allows the community to know, recognize, defend, and expand the *Nasa Kiwe*.

One could say that the Nasa-Paéz lives for that sense of territorial belonging, to move through the land is to possess it. Therefore, place is inhabited in this way. This new recognition of the *Nasa*

¹⁹² Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 38.

¹⁹³ About the *cacique* Quilo and Sicos, in obtaining recognition and delimitation of the Paéz territories and the titles that his predecessor, the *cacique* Jacinto Muscuý had requested, see: Bonilla, *Historia Política del Pueblo Nasa*, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Oscar Wilde Cuchillo. Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío CECIDIC – Cauca. May 29, 2017.

¹⁹⁵ Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 37.

Kiwe as something of their own forged the modern myth on which the recovery of ancestral Nasa-Paéz territory is based and continues today through cultural vindication: “The mythological Juan Tama established the modern boundaries of Tierradentro by walking its limits in the company of the *Te’*, or shamans. Then he climbed up the highest mountain to legitimate their claims.”¹⁹⁶

This narrative is manifested in the legends of different new chiefs in their journeys to mark the boundaries of the Nasa-Paéz territory; marriages and diverse alliances of convenience are also significant to such stories and related consolidations of territory.¹⁹⁷

One example is the tale of Juan Tama’s wife chief Mariana Mandiguagua, whose final journey from Toribío to Caloto defined the last boundary of the Nasa-Paéz community.¹⁹⁸ An important journey, in political and cultural terms, makes evident what the journey itself could achieve: recognition of authority and possible expansion of a chiefhood. In the case of Juan Tama, that journey forms part of a larger trajectory: that of his entire life, which was also mythologized. The mythical origin of Juan Tama goes from birth to death: born by a lake high up on the mountain range, and after legitimizing the Nasa-Paéz territories, he returned to that same lake to die, near Mosoco, which the lake carries his name.

Nowadays, Indigenous leaders walk and guard the territory as did the *caciques nuevos*.¹⁹⁹ The basis of the new Nasa-Paéz mythology is the act of walking and viewing the territory as an “hodological space,”²⁰⁰ in which *Nasa Kiwe* means not only Earth but also universe and time, a coexistence between the terrestrial and the celestial through the dreams.²⁰¹ Today that history and tradition, are the source of the contemporary *resguardo*. Thus, the Nasa-Paéz leadership during the

¹⁹⁶ My Translation. The original in Spanish: “El Juan Tama mitológico estableció las fronteras modernas de Tierradentro por medio de recorrer a pie los límites, acompañado por los *Te’*, o shamanes. Luego subió a la montaña mas alta para legitimar sus reclamos.” Rappaport, “Tierra Paéz”, 28.

¹⁹⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 45–53.

¹⁹⁸ Gonzalo Rivera. Personal Interview. February 8, 2014. Caloto – Cauca.

¹⁹⁹ *Minga* Cerro Berlín, Toribío – Cauca. May 29, 2017.

²⁰⁰ This idea is beautifully presented by Castro, “Sounding the Path”, 25-44.

²⁰¹ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 20.

Colonial era provided a foundation for a society in which the mythical and historical amalgam gave birth to a new character: the contemporary *Nasa-Kiwe*.

This alignment with the terms of colonization and its laws, “peaceful” and in some sense pacified, curiously enough allowed the Nasa-Paéz the opportunity to rethink their ancestral traditions. This led to a contemporary mythology focused on consolidation and defense of territory through an emphasis on cultural resilience, beliefs, architecture and tradition, represented in images and murals in the contemporary *resguardo* (Fig. 1.6 & 1.7). The current mythology is founded directly on chief Juan Tama, under whose mandate a new vision for the Nasa-Paéz people was generated.



Fig. 1.6, Representation of the *caciques nuevos* in a mural at the CECIDIC created by the students, which symbolizes the union of the Nasa-Paéz people around the hearth. Photo by author.

During *mingas* and walks across the territory as seen on Fig. 1.6, Juan Tama’s presence resonates everywhere: significant places, educational facilities and diverse cultural practices such as

community work at Santo Domingo's Juan Tama's fish farm.²⁰² Murals (a contemporary artistic expression developed in *mingas* as a strategy to show through art the resistance process in a pacifist way, and which I dedicate a section later on in this dissertation) also refer to chief Juan Tama: his life and mandates are historically re-imagined and mythically visualized.

The purpose that was evident in every single *minga* that I have joined was to build a defensive and protective cultural identity to overcome the political and cultural vicissitudes of the Nasa-Paéz. As was noted above, myth and history come together in the making of this new leadership, providing empowerment and guidance.

In the process of integrating and interpreting the nature and origin of the Nasa-Paéz, and after years of walking in *Nasa Kiwe*, I felt the need to visit the legendary Mosoco in Tierradentro where the mythology says that Juan Tama was born. After a long time trying to obtain authorizations from Mosoco and Vitoncó *resguardos*, in May of 2017 I was able to make my pilgrimage.

Mosoco, a small town of mostly prefabricated houses –its traditional architecture was destroyed by an earthquake in 1994,²⁰³ – confirms that tradition is more actively lived in the western part of the Andean central mountain range than in Tierradentro (of which Mosoco is part). Despite Tierradentro being the place of “origin” for the Nasa-Paéz, the tradition of inhabiting the land, the authority and the legitimization of *Nasa Kiwe*, are lived more intensely in Toribío.

While the Nasa-Paéz of Toribío *resguardo* make use of their own policies to vindicate “Indigenous being,” in Tierradentro there is evidence of a mentality closer to that of the peasants; that is, with less self-consciousness and awareness of Indigenous identity. This is illustrative of the complexities of Indigenous experience in *Nasa Kiwe* today, and the importance of vindicate through

²⁰² *Minga*, Juan Tama Piscícola, Santo Domingo – Cauca. May 22, 2019May 22, 2019.

²⁰³ David D Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and The Moral Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 63.

traditional policies territorial legitimization and historical awareness to self-determination as the research through dreams does.

Juan Tama

While looking for testimonies about the legacy of Nasa-Paéz leaders, I met Gonzalo Rivera, an esteemed member of the Indigenous Nasa-Paéz community. He is an elder who has devoted his life to promoting their Indigenous culture to the new generations. He is also entrusted with a senior position within the Indigenous council, due precisely to his long work and engagement with the people.

We met one Sunday morning in a school where he gives weekend lessons to young community members. It caught my attention to see so many Indigenous students gathered in a Catholic school to learn about their Indigenous culture, as most live in villages of difficult access on the periphery of Caloto. When I asked him about the meaning of the new chiefs for him, he answered:

One day, one of the sacred lakes flooded after a storm that had lasted for several days. From those waters a baby was born, his body covered in fish scales. He was rescued by the *Thê'wala*, who welcomed him and immediately perceived that he would be a great chief. The *Thê'wala* took him to the home of the virgins, who nourished and raised him as a chief and he was baptized *Juan Tama de la Estrella*.²⁰⁴

As we have already seen, colonization radically changed and threatened Nasa-Paéz society, particularly concerning their relationship to territory. To preserve what territory meant for Indigenous communities forced the Nasa-Paéz to try to accommodate the new political institutions within their

²⁰⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Un día, una de las lagunas sagradas se desbordó y hubo muchas tormentas por mucho tiempo. De esas aguas un niño nació cubierto de escamas de pescado, quien fue visto y rescatado por un *Thê'wala* quien desde el principio supo que iba a ser un gran cacique. El *Thê'wala* se lo llevó a la casa de las vírgenes y allá lo alimentaron y creció como un cacique al que bautizaron Juan Tama de la Estrella”. Gonzalo Rivera. Personal Interview. February 8, 2014. Caloto – Cauca.

traditional beliefs and new social organization. One thing was for certain: the Colonial institutions altered territorial views, and myths and beliefs were revived and created.

A specific form of lineage was common among Indigenous communities from pre-Colonial times: chiefhood was an inheritance from high-ranking parents or relatives. For the *caciques nuevos*, this lineage begins with chief Juan Tama. As Gow has explained: “Juan Tama is viewed as a living, guiding presence who provides meaning to everything.”²⁰⁵ Terrestrial in origin, his power in the community begins with his appointment as chief de Pitayó, an inheritance received upon the death of his uncle, the chief Jacinto de Mosca. In the process of integrating the nature of the new chiefs, Mosca was a very active chief, constantly interacting with the Spanish Crown in defense of Indigenous rights and territory. Among other things, it was he who formally requested from the Spanish Crown the institutionalization of the *resguardo* under the new chief’s hereditary leadership.²⁰⁶

Chief Juan Tama, managed to consolidate the chiefdom of Vitoncó, Pitayó, Jambaló, Quichayá, Pueblo Nuevo, Caldonó and Toribío into a single chiefdom. The towns of Talawa and Wila also came under his control when he married chief Mariana Mondiguagua.²⁰⁷ Gow considers that due to his mythical origin, “Juan Tama is said to have been born in Vitoncó, in the stream of the morning star,”²⁰⁸ and helped to consolidate his people as a great leader in opposition to the Spanish regulations.

The various last names he adopted, such as Calambás or de la Estrella, give an indication of the magnitude of his geographic and spiritual domains; Fig. 1.7 Shows how his mythological birth in the Mosoco sacred lake and life are considered supernatural by the rest of the community. By

²⁰⁵ Gow, *Countering Development*, 152-153.

²⁰⁶ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 48.

²⁰⁷ About the last political union between chiefdom of Wila, who had Mrs. Mariana Mondiguagua as cacica, see: Equipo Nacional del Plan de Salvaguarda. *Baka'cxte'pa, Nasnasa Nees Yuwa'*, 18.

²⁰⁸ Gow, *Countering Development*, 153.

unifying these disparate communities, he strengthened the Nasa-Paéz as a whole. In addition to legitimatizing and bonding many territories, Juan Tama legally formed a new dynasty.²⁰⁹ His legacy resonates in the territory to this day; it lives on, thanks to oral tradition, through the voice of elders.



Fig. 1.7, Representation of the chief Juan Tama in a mural at the Mosoco Paéz *resguardo*. Photo by author.

His actions against Colonial institutions are still an example for the Nasa-Paéz to follow. Tama's mandate persists and empowers the cultural agency of today's *Proyecto Nasa*, CRIC and Indigenous organization.

The Andes and their perennial glaciers give birth to countless small lakes. One such lake is at the origin of the chief Juan Tama: "the mountains were the house of the moon, the sun and the

²⁰⁹ Quiroga, "Las Políticas Coloniales y la Acción Indígena", 47.

thunder, the mountains are the house of the Nasa-Paéz.”²¹⁰ The Andean mountain as sacred territory gives birth to this mythical character in a Mosoco lake, thus reaffirming the ancestral myth about the origin of the Nasa.²¹¹

Such mythological empowerment would continue through struggles for the Indigenous cause led by Indigenous leaders like Manuel Quintín Lame, during the 1910s and 1930s, and Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué during the 1980s.²¹² These circumstances are also at the core of their dispute with governmental sectors, as well as with groups participating in armed conflicts in Colombia. The *Proyecto Nasa*, ONIC and CRIC were born in that context, inheriting previous social struggles and achievements of the Indigenous movement.²¹³

The defense of culture and territory and other aspects of the recovery of Indigenous traditions remain central to the struggle of the Nasa-Paéz to this day.

As mentioned earlier, Rivera’s testimony argues that political events cannot be separated from beliefs. Juan Tama seems to condense metaphorically all of the components of the Indigenous political “dreams” and its goals including the liberation of the *Nasa Kiwe* and the reclamation of Nasa-Paéz territory, culture and tradition.²¹⁴ Furthermore, when we speak of the Nasa-Paéz and the

²¹⁰ Minga San Francisco – Cauca. March 16, 2015.

²¹¹ Gow, *Countering Development*, 153.

²¹² Equipo de capacitación del CRIC, “*El Movimiento Indígena*” *Entre Movimientos y Caudillos – 50 Años de Bipartidismo, Izquierda y Alternativas Populares en Colombia*, Comp. Gustavo Gallón Giraldo (Bogotá: CINEP, 1989), 294-307; Bedredin Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal Hoy Nasa Pal Äcxh Ente. Semilla y Camino Fxiw Dxi’j Yakh*. (Colombia: Instituto Para Misiones La Consolata, 2011); Burguete., et al. *Movimientos Indígenas en América Latina. Revista Liminar. Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos*, 5, no. 2, (2011): 144-162; Catherine González. “Naturaleza Política y Acciones Colectivas de los Movimientos Sociales un Emblemático Caso de Movilización Indígena”. *Universitas Humanística*, 70, (2010): 79-100.

²¹³ By means of the Proyecto Nasa, ONIC (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia) and the CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca), they organized and acted collectively along with other social sectors. The Nasa-Paéz aim their struggle essentially at recovery of their territory, their sacred places and water springs. It is this struggle that gave rise to what is now known as the Colombian Indigenous movement.

²¹⁴ Ester Sánchez, “La Realización del Pluralismo Jurídico de Tipo Igualitario en Colombia”. *Nueva Antropología* 22, no. 71 (2009), 33. See: Joanne Rappaport. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke University Press, 2005; Joanne Rappaport. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke University Press, 2005; Joanne Rappaport (Ed). *Retornando la Mirada: Una Investigación Colaborativa Interétnica Sobre el Cauca a la Entrada del Milenio*. Universidad del Cauca, 2005.

meaning that territory holds for them, references to the chief Juan Tama and his various embodiments occur repeatedly:

The elders tell us that in a very remote age, a nocturnal storm filled the children of those mountains with fear; dense clouds made the night terrifying; suddenly and continuously, nearby thunder shook their spirits. That sudden thunder, which retreated echoing among the peaks and caverns, filled the air with fright [...]
[...] Passing by the torrent that flows down from the mountains that rise south of *Tame* and *Vitoncó*, they saw amidst the foam and racing waves an extraordinary being, half child, half serpent.

The serpent-boy arrived at the backwaters and then reached the bank of that river, for carrying such a precious gift, from then on the river was called *Lucero*. Atop a high mountain, the boy established a home and dwelling; [...] that place was named *Vitoncó*, which is also called *Chimboguala*, meaning a great town; great because of its origin, and great because of its founder. He then established *Lame* nearby, as a residence for the greater among his entourage, who were named the *Gueina*. Next, he married *Doña Mandiguagua*, the chief of *Wilá*.

[...] the star-born one was invincible, animated by five hundred souls and five hundred hearts. The name of such a lord then began to enjoy certain privileges. Thus, the chief was called *Don Juan Tama Calambás*. Admirable *Don Juan Tama* ruled and managed the entire *Páez* race [...].

The *Páez* people inherited the attribute of invincibility, and possession of lands exclusively for that race, which should never coexist with others. The serpent-boy then went to the *Pataló* lake atop the mountain, where, having given him life, the star had also entrusted him with taking the *Lucero* River to the people. From that place he returned to his mother's bosom.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ As quoted in Jaime Zúñiga Salazar, *Mi Bello Popayán*. (Popayán: Talleres Editoriales del Departamento, 1972), 281. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: "Cuentan los más ancianos que en edad muy remota una tempestad nocturna llenó de espanto a los hijos de estas montañas; densas nubes pusieron la noche tenebrosa; el relámpago cercano, instantáneo y continuo, estremecía los ánimos; el repentino trueno, que se alejaba resonando en montes y cavernas, llenaba de pavor [...].

[...] Al pasar el torrente que baja de las altas montañas que se levantaban al sur de Lame y Vitoncó observaron, en medio de las espumas y rápidas ondas, un ser extraordinario, mitad niño, mitad serpiente. El niño-serpiente, al llegar a un remanso, ganó la orilla; el río portador de tan precioso don se llamó Río del Lucero como hasta el día de hoy. Fijó su morada en la cima de una alta montaña; [...] ese lugar se llamó Vitoncó o sea Chimboguala, que quiere decir pueblo grande, grande por su origen; por su fundador. En seguida fundó a Lame para residencia de los grandes de su corte, los gueinas; luego casó con doña Mandiguagua, cacica de Wilá.[...] el hijo de la estrella, era invencible y que lo animaban quinientas almas y quinientos corazones. El nombre del mayordomo empezó a gozar de ciertos privilegios. Cacique se llamó en adelante Don Juan Tama y Calambás. Don Juan Tama gobernaba y administraba admirablemente toda la raza Páez [...]. El tributo de invencible quedó en la raza Páez; la posesión de las tierras únicamente para dicha raza, la cual jamás debía convivir con otras. En seguida, el niño-serpiente fue a la laguna de Pataló, situada en la cima de la montaña, en donde la estrella, al darle vida le había confiado al río Lucero para que lo llevara a los hombres; de ese lugar volvió al seno de su madre."

The star thus appears as something powerful in the Jambaló *resguardo*, out of the reach of humans on earth. The star is not only part of Nasa-Paéz mythology, but is also part of the political guidelines of the *resguardo*.²¹⁶ The star has a supernatural connotation, connecting with the spiritual and reinforcing the political role of uniting the Nasa-Paéz in one single territory. Tama's supernatural origin provides the parameters for modern mythical constructs that is the basis of research into dreams, influencing the Nasa-Paéz right up to the present.

Indeed, in the Toribío *resguardo*, I have found that myths and legends are concentrated in “traditional” literature (which is nearly inaccessible because there is not a consolidated library to consult such information) and oral tradition. The content of most of these mythological versions varies, whether written or oral. Whenever a legend or myth is shared, it is inevitable that modifications will be made. However, these versions depend on when they were transmitted and by whom; there is thus no single consolidated version for any of the legends of Nasa-Paéz origins.

Connecting Tama's various acquired surnames with myths and tales about the Nasa-Paéz territory legitimizes the struggle for empowerment against oppressive Colonial and contemporary policies as well as resistance to violence towards Indigenous communities. It also opens a path for understanding the will to recover ancestral memories, and for the creation of *Nasa Kiwe*, both as an idea in the collective mentality and as a physical reality.²¹⁷ One may identify the origins of the myth in the Vitoncó and Popayán records. There, the same *Don Juan Tama* is described as the *cacique* son of the star:

In the district of Popayán, sovereign state of Cauca, United States of Colombia on October 23, 1883. In my presence, Vicente Mosquera, notary public of the Popayán circuit and the witnesses that he includes, neighbors of the same circuit, of legal age, of good credit and who do not have any reason for impediment, Mr. Sergio María Córdova, a resident of this city, of

²¹⁶ *Minga Khabuwee'sx* Jambaló – Cauca, March 15, 2018.

²¹⁷ About mythology and the characters of the myths, see: Bernal, “Aspectos de la Cultura Páez”, 291; Jonathan Hill. *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past*. University of Illinois Press, 1988.

legal age, whom I know and who presented to me for protocolization in the archive of this office, a copy of the document authorized by the notary, Mr. Gerónimo Caicedo on January 8, 1836, whose document is the copy of the title deed to the Indigenous division lands in the village of Vitoncó, in the district of Páez.

This document, which consists of four pages, is formalized at the request of the grantor and faithfully copied as follows: Lorenzo Ivito, *cacique* of the towns, both *caciques* Don José Calambás are from Páez, and recently arrived in this city, in your presence under the law, (illegible): that the clerk must give us a certified copy of the document that he solemnly presented in two pages, because it shows where the boundaries that enclose the town of Vitoncó are recorded. [...] I can, I must under the law affirm that the document presented reads as follows: Don Cristóbal Mosquera y Figueroa, Captain and entrusted by this city of Popayán of the Indies in the province of Páez in the name of our King and whom may the Lord our God keep.

Whereby many of those were chosen by the natives that I would like as a station for the lords captains to whom the Indians of this province of Tierradentro Páez have been entrusted; and it has happened and our lord has confirmed this jurisdiction of the new city of Popayán and that the Indians of the province are my *encomienda* (fiefdom). It is populated, in the town of Vitoncó by a *cacique* named Don Juan Tama, son of the stars of Tama's gorge, according to news about the said conquest, and which is focused on my first *encomienda*.²¹⁸

Juan Tama legitimized new places as sacred through titles that gave him tenure in his chiefhood. In the case of Vitoncó, chief Juan Tama developed a mythical creation of his own, with

²¹⁸ As quoted in Archivo General de La Nación, *Resguardo Indígena de Vitoncó, Municipio de Belalcázar, Departamento de Cauca, Sección Republica, Fondo Ministerio de Gobierno, Caja 2, Carpeta 1, Folio 038* (Bogotá: Archivo General de la Nación, 1883). My translation. The original in Spanish: “En el distrito de Popayán estado soberano del Cauca estados unidos de Colombia a 23 de octubre de 1883. Ante mi Vicente Mosquera notario público del circuito de Popayán y los testigos que suscribe, vecinos del mismo circuito, mayores de edad, de buen crédito y en quienes no concurre ninguna causal de impedimento compareció el señor doctor Sergio María Córdova, vecino de esta ciudad, mayor de edad, de quien conozco y me presentó para en protocolización en el archivo de esta oficina, un documento en copia autorizada por el escribano señor Gerónimo Caicedo en 8 de enero de 1836 cuyo documento es la copia del título de propiedad de los terrenos de la parcialidad indígenas de la aldea de Vitoncó, en el distrito de Páez. Dicha diligencia que consta de cuatro hojas útiles, se protocoliza a petición del otorgante y copiada a la letra dice así: Lorenzo Ivito cacique de los pueblos, Ambos caciques Don José Calambás es de Páez, y actualmente recientes en esta ciudad, ante usted según derecho, (ilegible): que necesitando que el escribano nos dé una copia certificada del documento que solemnemente presentó en dos hojas útiles, pues en donde constan los linderos que encierran el pueblo de Vitoncó. [...] yo puedo, debo y a lugar en derecho, que el documento presentado, a la letra es como sigue: Don Cristóbal Mosquera y Figueroa, Capitán y encomendado de esta ciudad de Popayán de los Indios de la provincia de Páez por el nombre del rey nuestro señor que Dios guarde. Por cuantos estos, elección de los naturales que quisiera por estatorio por los señores capitanes encomenderos de los Indios de esta provincia de tierradentro Páez; y ocurre y nuestro señor lo confirmó con esta jurisdicción de la ciudad nueva de Popayán y que los Indios de la provincia por mi encomienda. Está poblado, en el pueblo de Vitoncó con un cacique llamado Don Juan Tama, hijo de las estrellas de la dicha quebrada de Tama, según noticias los que debe la dicha conquista, y que centrarse dicho en mi encomienda primera.” See also: Antonio Olano. *Popayán en la Colonia: Bosquejo Histórico de la Gobernación y de la Ciudad de Popayán en los Siglos XVII y XVIII*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1910.

himself as a central character, to create new sacred places, a new territory for the Nasa-Paéz's: "Juan Tama is viewed as a living, guiding presence who provides meaning to everyday existence [...]." ²¹⁹

Although the strategy of the *caciques nuevos* was to generate a protected territory with new inhabitable and sacred places, the new geography were implemented as a means of defending territorial identity, as declared in the Fixcué's testimony, defending territorial identity consolidated the traditional territory. ²²⁰

Juan Tama nevertheless seemed to have been certain that defining new sacred places and new inhabitable ones would give his people cultural continuity as well as new beliefs and experience of place through *Nasa Kiwe*, while empowering them for resistance and resilience.

²¹⁹ Gow, *Countering Development*, 153.

²²⁰ Josefina Fixcué, Interview by author, *Minga Santo Domingo* – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

1.2 Mountains, *Nasa Kiwe* and *Nasa Yat*: Slumbering of Peace.

Marco Tulio Jascué's Testimony

Here we used to walk to the Santo Domingo school; it took a long time to get there, but there were nuns who taught us, although nothing about our own things. I used to go there and the rest was nearby [Village of López], because we lived here with my family. I used to help my dad with all kinds of chores [...]. Afterwards there were meetings high up on the mountain where they gathered for conversation and one day, I went there to see what was happening.

Those were meetings of people like me, from here, and they met with Father Álvaro, that's where I first saw him. Those meetings took place because what Father [Álvaro] was saying was not allowed at that time. In those gatherings, he used to tell us that we were important and should not allow others to control us; that our culture, and what we were, was more important than what existed outside, and that we should be respected.

Father [Álvaro] taught us that our culture was tied to the land we lived on, to these mountains and the land we had been dispossessed of, so we must cherish it because our grandparents lived on it, and the grandparents of our grandparents, and that these same mountains are where our children should live. It was Father who made us see that we had to do something for ourselves, and after that we began to gather here high up in at the lake, because those are sacred sites. And then, rituals took place there again, which had happened before but had later been lost, and we went back to performing harmonisations. But all that was done without anyone knowing because it was not permitted. Then Father Álvaro could not come back here anymore because he had been threatened.²²¹

²²¹ My translation. The original in Spanish: "Por acá íbamos a la escuela cerca a Santo Domingo, eso nos demorábamos caminando para llegar allá, pero había unas monjitas que nos daban clase y no nos enseñaban nada de lo de nosotros. Yo a veces iba por allá y el resto me quedaba acá cerca (Vereda López) porque por acá vivíamos con mi familia. Yo le ayudaba a mi papá en todo lo que tocara hacer [...]. Después veía que había reuniones de gente en lo alto de la montaña, se reunían a conversar y un día me fui para allá para ver qué era lo que pasaba. Eran reuniones de gente como yo de por acá y se reunían con el Padre Álvaro, ahí fue donde lo vi por primera vez. Se hacían esas reuniones porque lo que el padre decía no se podía decir en ese momento. Eran reuniones en donde él nos decía que nosotros éramos importantes y que no podíamos dejarnos manejar por otros, que nuestra cultura y lo que éramos era más importante que lo de afuera y que debíamos ser respetados. El padre nos enseñó que la cultura nuestra estaba amarrada a la tierra en la que vivíamos, a estas montañas y a la tierra que nos habían quitado, y que por eso debamos valorarla porque en ella estaban vivos nuestros abuelos y los abuelos de los abuelos, y que estas mismas montañas eran donde nuestros hijos deberían vivir. Fue el padre quien nos hizo ver que teníamos que hacer algo por nosotros mismos y después de eso nos comenzamos a reunir por acá en lo alto en la laguna, porque son sitios sagrados y allá se volvieron a hacer rituales que antes se hacían pero que luego se habían perdido y volvimos a hacer los refrescamientos y armonizaciones. Pero todo eso se hacía sin que nadie se diera cuenta porque eso no estaba permitido. Luego el padre ya no pudo volver por acá porque ya estaba muy amenazado." Marco Tulio Jascué, Interview by Author, Vereda López Tacueyó – Cauca. October 21, 2016. For information on Nasa-Paéz violence, peace process and policies see: Alicia Valeria Zamora Sánchez. "Restablecer la Armonía: Remedios desde los Pueblos Nasa y Guna para la Sanación de la Madre Tierra". *Ciencia e Interculturalidad* 23, no. 2 (2018): 98-114.

Marco Tulio Jascué's testimony enables us to appreciate how territory, giving primacy to the place of inhabitation, becomes the essential generator in a process of what we could refer to as the reinvention of Indigenous identity. Beginning in the 1970s traditional beliefs and political resistance, with the territory as the place of origin of the Paéz people, became a path toward social and political agency. This change came out of a movement promoted by chief Manuel Quintin Lame and later by Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué, with an emphasis of building Indigenous self-determination.

Not only did Quintín Lame become a leader of the Paéz, but his name and ideas generated a whole movement for Indigenous vindication, generating friction in the Colombian political milieu with the "Armed Movement Quintin Lame" created at the beginning of the 1980s.²²² This movement was seen as diverging from mainstream national ideologies, so it was labelled a *guerrilla* group. The movement managed to unite the Indigenous peoples with a vision based on the institution of the *resguardo*, strengthening of the Indigenous council, defense of the territory and the reclaiming of lands; all through political means.

The movement vision also included Indigenous peoples with an internal political organization of their own, whose purpose would be to support all the goals and ideals mentioned above. Thus was born the CRIC, which adopted as its objectives "recovery of the *resguardo* lands and their expansion through recovery of former *haciendas*; strengthening of the councils; refusal to pay *terrajés*; and the defense of Indigenous laws, history, language and customs by providing traditional teachers able to speak to the people in their own language."²²³ The CRIC, the first modern Indigenous movement in Cauca, soon adopted a clearly defined approach in its relations with the state, and created a complex organizational political structure.

²²² Juan Friede, *El Indio en Lucha por La Tierra* (Popayán: Punta de Lanza, 1976); Yuly Marín. *La Resistencia Indígena de Quintín Lame Como Una Praxis de Liberación*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad del Valle, 2004.

²²³ As quoted in Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, "Puntos de Cambio en el Programa de Lucha", CRIC, 16 May 2019, <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/estructura-organizativa/plataforma-de-lucha/>.

Quintin Lame political movement were portrayed as a struggle that was outside of the law, but in the early 1980s, a new revolution, this time a peaceful one, began in Toribío, led by Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué, in which he intended to re-establish the pride of being Indigenous through the *Proyecto Nasa*.²²⁴ Father Álvaro's role was dedicated to rebuilding of identity through peaceful projects and in his case practicing based on his own religious preaching. Ideals instituted by the new chiefs were resumed and restructured in contemporary times to consolidate a new Indigenous imaginary and a sense of community in the culture and traditional education policies.

The testimony of Marco Tulio Jascué, and his accompaniment during different walks in *Nasa-Kiwe*, help me to understand the legacy of the Indigenous leaders. Jascué, who when he was just a child was close to Father Álvaro Ulcué, explained how Ulcué's influence was essential for generating a new culture among the youngest in which preservation of Indigenous identity was sought through the peaceful policies of *Proyecto Nasa*.²²⁵

I met Jascué during field research in August of 2016, after the *Saakhelu* in Tacueyó, a ritual that brings together the community from different *resguardos* in a single place. It takes place over three days of *mingas*, dances, tributes, rituals and political meetings in search of unity for the community and is dedicated to the spirits of agriculture.²²⁶ On this walk, Luis Antonio Poto, Indigenous leader from the San Francisco *resguardo*, who accompanied me during the *Saakhelu*, suggested that I take advantage of the presence of Mariano Pilcué (elder of the *resguardo* of Jambaló) and the Indigenous governor Florencio Mestizo Musicué (Coordinator of the ACIN) to obtain access to Paéz Lake.²²⁷ After consultation with them, I was authorized to have access.

²²⁴ Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 182-183.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 182-183.

²²⁶ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Gran Ritual Sagrado Saakhelu Kiwe Kame* (Popayán: CRIC, 2018); Juan Pablo Gómez Ramírez. “Saakhelu: Memoria de Resistencia-Estética y Política de una Emergencia no Experimental”. *Maguaré*, 2016.

²²⁷ Mariano Pilcué and Florencio Mestizo Musicué. *Minga Saakhelu Tacueyó Kwet Yu'-Thakwe Yu'*. Tacueyó, Cauca. August 17 – 20, 2016.

After spending the night at a farm in Santo Domingo, in the early hours of August 20, 2016, we began to walk towards the Paéz Lake, which is highly sacred to the community. Access is restricted to only the Indigenous community, or through a permit issued directly by the *resguardos* of Tacueyó in the western part of the mountain range or Tierradentro on the eastern slope (Fig. 1.8 & 1.9).



Fig. 1.8, Huila Tierradentro *resguardo* – Paéz sacred lake. Photo by author.



Fig. 1.9, Paéz sacred lake. Tierradentro, Cauca. Photo by author.

After several hours of walking along the former royal path, I could understand why this place is significant. It's beautiful vegetation typical of the moorland and the glaciers of the snow-covered peaks make this a "place of origin" according to the Nasa-Paéz beliefs.

Given how far we were from Tacueyó, we decided to spend the night in the Village of López. Mayra Aida Fiscué, a friend of Poto, offered to put us up at her home.²²⁸ Fiscué shared her family history with me, telling how her Indigenous family, which had originally come from Tierradentro, had crossed the mountain range and settled in the western part in the of Tacueyó *resguardo* in search of better lands to cultivate. During dinner, she introduced me to Jascué. The two of them shared different experiences of dwelling in *Nasa-Kiwe*.

This would be the first of a number of visits to the village of López, and my first encounter with Jascué. In subsequent walks he would introduce me to his mother, Josefina Fixscué, and to a number of other important Nasa-Paéz life testimonies that evidence how the restoration and consolidation of *Nasa Kiwe* is realized through community participation.

Dwelling of the Gods

The mountain has been an invaluable fountain of spiritual wealth for many cultures. Professor Ricardo L. Castro introduced me, through a seminar in Critical Writing, to the relevance of the mountain in Japanese culture.²²⁹ I can best describe this academic experience as a sudden connection, which began to recreate similarities between places that incited a reflection upon the territorial meaning: one that becomes sacred. Analyzing Donald Richie's, *The Inland Sea* allowed me to make

²²⁸ Mayra Aida Fiscué, Interview by author, Vereda López, Tacueyó Cauca. August 20, 2016.

²²⁹ Graduate Seminar Critical Writing, taught by professor Ricardo L. Castro at the School of Architecture of McGill University Fall 2013. See: Shin'ichi Nagai. *Gods of Kumano: Shinto and the Occult*. Kodansha International, 1970.

connections between familiar places and places newly-discovered (vicariously) through the book.²³⁰ It prompted me to reflect upon the similarities with *Nasa Kiwe*.

This realization of the similar role of such environments in different cultural settings struck me deeply, perhaps because I have lived most of my life in Bogotá, a city framed by beautiful and impressive Andean mountains. Week by week, we discovered chapters where highlands were at the core of the narrative, referring to mountains on whose summits ceremonial and religious architecture maintains a presence, with spiritual connections always tied to experiences of the senses.²³¹

In any description of the meaning that the mountain has for the Nasa-Paéz, it is always referred to as the origin. The mountain is that divine place where everything began. This profound feeling held by the Nasa-Paéz toward the mountain as a sacred place can be understood in the context of their concept of *Nasa Kiwe*: “Territory as a home, represents and describes the principles and practices of our culture; in this way, the sacred sites are true maps that contain the significance of our culture.”²³²

From the above, we may infer how relevant the mountain is with regard to dwelling. The mountain exists in close relation to nature and architecture, understood as home-place and dwelling of the gods and, consequently, home for those whom the gods decide will be allowed to inhabit that territory. Power and dominance are therefore bound up with a mystical relationship between mountain and *Nasa Kiwe*.

In the search for the meaning, values, and poetic dimensions of *Nasa Kiwe*, I have had the opportunity to enhance my knowledge of a unique territory, a plethora of experiences and lessons. Although specific to the Nasa-Paéz, I cannot fully detach my search from the other, distant, Andean

²³⁰ Donald Richie, *The Inland Sea* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2002).

²³¹ Ibid., 50. See also: Marcus Tullius, Cicero and Thomas Francklin. *Of the Nature of the Gods*. William Pickering, 1829.

²³² As quoted in Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 122. My Translation. The original in Spanish: “El territorio como casa, representa y describe los principios y practicas de nuestra cultura, de esta manera los sitios sagrados son verdaderos mapas donde se encuentra el significado de nuestra cultura.”

cultural experiences and meanings of territory, I will introduce some of these briefly in the pages that follow. In the field research I have embarked on, in search of the meanings that mountains hold for the Nasa-Paéz, I have been able to ascertain that despite the geographical distance between Indigenous communities, there is a common language of respect and value for territory. This language concerns the wisdom and understanding of the land they belong to and of which they are custodians.

It can be established that Nasa-Paéz thinking enables us to understand the mountain as an ordering or connecting element in which the different relations between the parts, otherwise isolated, are woven together. Such an understanding takes into account the forms of social and cultural organization of this community. Ancestral thinking of the Nasa-Paéz is framed in a context of a place-concept and spatial organization that resembles a fabric. This fabric is what enables communication between, and strengthening of, these communities.

The mountain as sacred place thus appears in Andean looms; place is not just one objectified thing, but rather a web. Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, for instance, analyzes the sense of divinity and its connection with the Kogi territory. The Kogi from Koskunguena community represents the sacred territory through the act of weaving and dwelling an ancestral territory, and that representation has been read also into the way that they establish their villages high up on the mountain and in the dwellings where all of the elements are interrelated: “[...] weaving themselves to create a world-fabric that resembles a large loom where the universe is built.”²³³

To reach the highest elevations of the mountain is to access a frontier between the earthly and the spiritual. In mountains, spiritual beliefs achieve their highest expression: they are significant and

²³³ As quoted in Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, “Templos Kogi. Introducción al Simbolismo y la Astronomía del Espacio Sagrado”. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, no. 19 (1975): 195. For more information on the Kogi see: Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff. *Desana: Simbolismo de los Indios Tukano del Vaupés*. Universidad de los Andes, 1968; Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff. “Desana Shamans' Rock Crystals and the Hexagonal Universe”. *Journal of Latin America*, 5 (1979): 117-128; Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff. *Los Kogi: Una Tribu de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia*. Procultura, 1985.

inspired places worthy of appreciation and respect. In addition to its spiritual meaning, the mountain provides its dweller with a sort of existential mirror. It provides a connection between being and otherness. An example of this harmony is evident in the Kogi people from Koskunguena where architecture and culture blended in the inhabited territory (Fig. 1.10).



Fig. 1.10, Shows an exemplary Koskunguena scene of harmony between dwellers and dwelling at Teyuna *Ciudad Perdida*. Photo by author.

The value of the Kogi territory is represented in the multiple relations between its inhabitants and the place: the spiritual and earthly worlds are woven together like a fabric that covers the mountain and its inhabitants with varied paths joining one community to another. The relations that

occur represent both political and cultural structures. In the structure where territory is considered sacred, a balance is achieved between permanent and temporary dwelling.²³⁴

The ways of the Kogi point to the traditional paths followed by the Nasa-Paéz. The Nasa-Paéz sought refuge on the mountainsides, and in this way consolidated a territory, designating the higher grounds as the place to dwell and connect with their beliefs. Thus, a political and sacred place was created, which allowed the Nasa-Paéz to endure and not disappear.

Furthermore, this close relationship between the Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa Kiwe*, offers a specific dimension to notions of territory. It is a dimension revealed through architecture in, and of, the idea of a place: a place that originated from ephemeral needs but which become a whole, perennial structure. The embrace of *Nasa Kiwe* is thus a form of cultural revindication, and engages the dweller in countless connections with symbolism, Indigenous knowledge, and ancestral wisdom.

These connections, analogies even, are rendered visible as the community represents its principles: the defense and recovery of the *Nasa Kiwe*. I argue that the principle of ancestral ordering is expressed through the elements of traditional culture, which give meaning to a political project and daily life. What one might call the Nasa-Paéz way of thinking is thus created: a mystical representation of harmony and defense generated by these special places. The mountain is an element of the ancestral order that establishes the existential place and territory of the Nasa-Paéz.

These notions generate the transcendent places and actions that create a connection and pathway between the territory and the community. By moving through those places and pathways, the Nasa-Paéz move through a conceptual as well a physical space. *Nasa Kiwe* stresses its meaning in the physical space of the contemporary *resguardo* they inhabit, in the Andean mountain in particular,

²³⁴ Ricardo L. Castro, "Sounding the Path: Dwelling and Dreaming". *Chora 3: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, edited by Pérez Gómez, Alberto, and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1999): 25-44.

from which Nasa-Paéz culture originated borne by the law of origin and framed by their fundamental principles and beliefs.²³⁵

Fig. 1.11 shows how these ideas are articulated today in the political guidelines which focus on the idea that the Nasa-Paéz inhabit the *Nasa Kiwe* as great house. This understanding offers a clear model for inhabiting the mountain as sacred place in harmony while respecting and consolidating the “territory of the great people: the *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*.”²³⁶



Fig. 1.11, Depicts a mural in the Toribío *resguardo* representing the ancestral territory *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* vision coming from the new chiefs, and contemporary leaders. Photo by author.

²³⁵ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007), 43.

²³⁶ *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* is located in the municipalities of Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, Buenos Aires, Timbío, Suarez, Toribío and Jambaló. Alfredo Campo, *Tejido Territorial Económico Ambiental. Caminando el Territorio. Consolidando Sueños* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2010), 1. For more information see: Alcaldía Municipal de Caloto. *Diagnóstico PBOT Municipal Caloto*. Caloto: Alcaldía Municipal, 2013.

Fig. 1.11 shows how the mountain appears in the consolidation of the ancestral territory. The *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* is framed by the staff of command, and by weavings (the traditional *chumbe* in this case, a traditional ribbon representing the snake as a key emblematic element of community wellbeing)²³⁷ that incorporate symbols representing the *resguardos* of Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, Buenos Aires, Timbío, Suarez, Toribío and Jambaló. At its center, a tree symbolizes the different “*Proyectos Nasa*” with the elder by the hearth. The hearth – which is located inside each *Nasa Yat* – connects the different Nasa-Paéz worlds and represents the dwelling of the gods.

Nasa-Kiwe and *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* therefore represent cultural recovery and the resurgence of the great house. Incorporated into daily life, territory constitutes a new awakening of political and cultural consciousness as it directly relates to life in the *resguardo*. In a CECIDIC *minga*, Rivera declared that “to speak of the natural environment, or what today is meant by 'natural environment', one must have knowledge of the territory, of our land: one must know it in depth to understand and converse with it.”²³⁸ Rivera refers to a dialogue between territory and dwellers – the same relationship that Castro identifies in paths as places of cultural origin – in which the territory represents the sense of divinity, the dwelling of the gods:

The land is different with every step we take; it is warm at first, and then colder as we begin to climb up to the sacred places high above. One finds different products, different landscapes. All that the land has is distributed on the mountain. As our mother, the mountain desires our well-being, and so it provides us with these different climates, so that we may have a variety of goods to nurture us, to feed us. The mountain turns cold higher up so that

²³⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi zenxi*, 183. See also: Javier Baena, *Dimensión Estética en el Diseño de los Chumbes Paeces y Guámbianos*. Cali: Universidad ICESI, 2004.

²³⁸ Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC, San Francisco, Cauca. June 19, 2014. My translation. The original in Spanish says: “Para hablar sobre el ambiente natural, o para lo que hoy se dice que es el medio ambiente uno debe tener conocimiento de lo que es el territorio, nuestra tierra: uno debe conocerlo y dialogar con el.” For more on Indigenous nature view see: Lourdes Barragán. *Pueblos Indígenas y Áreas Protegidas en América Latina*. Santiago: Fortalecimiento del Manejo Sostenible de los Recursos Naturales en las Áreas Protegidas de América Latina, 2008.

we might be more aware, our mind opens up in the highlands and helps us think and connect with our spirits.²³⁹

***Nasa Kiwe* Foundational Principle**

There are three essential principles governing the contemporary *Nasa Kiwe* as a great house. They are: spirituality, respect for the land, and reciprocity. Spirituality is manifested through the actions of human beings upon the territory (as in ritual), as well as through the forces of nature (understood as manifestations of the gods). Respect for the land entails considering the territory as home and the mother of everything. Reciprocity is established between the occupying being and the occupied place.²⁴⁰

A rule of life stems from these principles, based on a constant search for an ideal state of harmony within the community and with the world. The equilibrium which these actions generate enables the symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe*: “The *resguardo* of Mosoco guidelines mention that territory is a ‘Nasa being’ and reminds the community that the points of action seek to consolidate greater union to protect the *Yat Wala*.”²⁴¹

In the consolidation of ancestral territory described by *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*, each element of *Nasa Kiwe* is shared with other beings, both natural and spiritual, and has to be preserved. Preserving and protecting cannot be achieved without unity, particularly in a context in which multiple political

²³⁹ Ibid. My translation. The original in Spanish says: “La tierra es diferente con cada paso que uno da, es caliente al principio y luego se va volviendo fría a medida que va subiendo a los lugares sagrados en lo alto. Diferentes productos, diferentes paisajes. Todo lo que tiene la tierra está distribuido en el la montaña. La montaña como madre nuestra quiere nuestro bienestar y por esa razón nos proporciona estas diferencias de clima para que podamos tener variedad de alimentos, para que podamos nutrarnos, alimentarnos. La montaña se torna fría en lo alto para que podamos también estar más despejados, nuestra mente se abre en las alturas y nos ayuda a pensar y a conectarnos también con nuestros espíritus.”

²⁴⁰ For more on the three principles, see: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 25.

²⁴¹ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “La lectura de la guía del *resguardo* de Mosoco menciona que el territorio es un “ser Nasa” y se recuerda a los participantes, compañeros y compañeras que los puntos de acción buscan consolidar una mayor unión en busca de la protección del *Yat Wala*.” Cuéne Mulcué, Interview by author, *Minga Mosoco*, Cauca. May 28, 2017.

interests and even illegal groups are in play, each with their own agendas. In the process of interpreting traditional guidelines, *Nasa Kiwe* becomes the house that protects, guards and guides:

The relationship with nature is a living thing that we can feel and experience, which is expressed clearly in the word Nasa; it refers to a person or people, but when coupled with Kiwe it becomes Nasa Kiwe and means a living territory, woven and intermingled with life because Nasa Kiwe determines the intimate and organic relationship that we share with nature, a vital and decisive relationship.²⁴²

From the above, we can infer that *Nasa Kiwe* evokes many phenomena tied to the past and present. Tradition recalls legends in which Indigenous leaders played a significant role in historical events that, with the passage of time, have acquired a mythological status. Through new chiefs and contemporary policies, and the myths associated with them, the community seeks to vindicate itself and render testimony for future generations in a transcendent manner. *Nasa Kiwe* is daily life, and represents the struggle to resist and defend it.²⁴³

The meaning of *Nasa Kiwe* is not only political and social but also spiritual: a kind of “shamanic geography.”²⁴⁴ It implies a constant dwelling in the same terrestrial and spiritual places, because of a strict delimitation of the *resguardo* boundaries. The place they inhabit is the place they defend; the notion of territory transcends physical meaning. Thus, its context becomes subjective, and the immaterial plays a significant role in the dwelling place.

Equally important, Tierradentro – recognized as the mythical place of origin – generates a connection between mountains as sacred: “The mountain, place of origin of Nasa-Paéz culture, gives

²⁴² As quoted in Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 47. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “La relación con la naturaleza es algo vivo que sentimos y sufrimos, se expresa claramente en la palabra Nasa; referida a la gente o persona, pero al fusionarse con Kiwe se convierte en Nasa Kiwe, significa territorio viviente, tejido con la vida porque Nasa Kiwe determina la íntima relación orgánica que tenemos con la naturaleza, relación vital y determinante.”

²⁴³ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, *Plan de Vida*, 18.

²⁴⁴ Carlos Niño Murcia, *Territorio Chamánico Una Mirada Desde la Arquitectura a la Manera Indígena de Construir y Ocupar el Territorio* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2015).

rise to a policy that protects the resistance of the Nasa-Paéz people through symbology and the voice of the elders.”²⁴⁵ Tierradentro therefore evokes the origins of the people and acquires mythical and representative value for the Nasa-Paéz community. Origin and defense are represented in the symbol of the arrow on which is inscribed the mountainous geography of the *resguardo*. The arrow is an allegorical form which can represent peaceful as much as warlike defense. (Fig. 1.12).



Fig. 1.12, Representation of the arrow and rhomboid shape as *chumbe* weaving in the CECIDIC dorms. Photo by author.

The notions of origin and defense are displayed in the symbology of arrow and rhomboid shapes in both murals and weavings. While these symbols remind the community that they live in a territory “must be defended,”²⁴⁶ I would argue that the *Nasa Kiwe* concept as peaceful resistance is of

²⁴⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish is as follows: “La montaña, lugar del origen de la cultura Nasa-Paéz da inicio a políticas que protegen la resistencia del pueblo Nasa por medio de la simbología y voz de los mayores.” Cuéne Mulcué, Interview by author, Minga Mosoco, Cauca, May 28, 2017.

²⁴⁶ Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca-ACIN, *Quiénes Somos* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2018).

equal importance. Nowadays, the Nasa-Paéz continue their struggle (sometimes peaceful, sometimes not) through the process of re-appropriation and vindication of their culture and ancestral territory.

This is not simply a matter of claiming legal rights to the land; to inhabit a place occupied by their ancestors invokes a sentiment associated with recovery of the land, which Rappaport describes as “rights over” and legitimation of territory.²⁴⁷ This foundational concept for *Nasa Kiwe* is essential for the Nasa-Paéz and for the activist groups that represent them.

Thus, with the word *Nasa Kiwe*, the community acknowledges the revival of an ancestral people, which has been linked to wisdom, respect, and defense of the land. Because they are part of the *Nasa Kiwe* as occupying and defending entity, it is evident that the Nasa-Paéz must maintain a special connection with his or her dwelling place through symbology and the presence of elders.

Nasa Kiwe is associated with the sensorial and territorial aspects because the Nasa-Paéz, connect their thinking and their foundational law to supernatural elements represented in the contemporary policies and all that they contain as *Kiwe*: “It means at one and the same time the following concepts: soil, terrain, individual landholdings, tribal territory, the dominion of a political leader and the whole world. In addition, the notion of *kiwe* seems to have a temporal dimension attached to it.”²⁴⁸

Rather than being a noun, *Nasa Kiwe* is best understood in terms of action. For the Nasa-Paéz, *Nasa Kiwe* involves an innumerable number of connections as seen in the symbology of the arrow and rhomboid shape and the *mingas*, which may be identified in occupied places, in addition to being a great house and sacred place. As previously stated, the inception of these cultures originates in a kind of supernatural birth that is nonetheless closely tied to nature: mountains and lakes. Being a revered element from which beliefs originate, the act of foundation prompts the re-creation of an entire cultural context for the symbolic construction of territory.

²⁴⁷ Joanne Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 31-32.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

Although *Nasa Kiwe* is consecrated to earthliness and spirituality – these are also seen in the *Nasa Yat* and its inhabitants in different ways – I would argue that the families that inhabit the *Nasa Yat* are sometimes aware and sometimes not of these interactions, depending on the *resguardo* that they inhabit. The way they participate in daily rituals, protest, or simply through living in balance with their environment changes from place to place, especially between the *resguardos* of Tierradentro and Toribío.²⁴⁹

In the process of cultural integration between the *resguardo* of Toribío and environs, the reciprocal obligation to help other members of the community, is what has made them a closer society than the *resguardo* near Tierradentro. Communitarian meetings of reflection comes as a result of policy guidelines; these call for all work within the *resguardo* to be collective.

In *mingas* in which I had the opportunity to participate, particularly those in Toribío (which are singularly important because of the presence of representatives of all the *resguardo*, summoned by the mayoralty and elder authorities), symbolic (ritual) or physical activities were carried out collectively by the different councils and *resguardos*. These can range from quotidian activities like weaving or working the land, to massively mobilizing people to protest in Bogotá to defend their territory.²⁵⁰ Thus, the essential principles governing the contemporary *Nasa Kiwe* as a “great house” are present in the Toribío *resguardo*.

Ancestral Property and Land Restitution

The symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe* personifies the connectivity between the Nasa-Paéz being, his (her) habitat and dwelling, and his (her) beliefs and interaction with the surrounding world,

²⁴⁹ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, *Plan de Vida*, 44; Isabel Ramírez, *Análisis de las Estrategias del Movimiento Indígena del Cauca*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2011.

²⁵⁰ *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. March 15, 2017.

so *Nasa Kiwe* is home, it is the place where the Nasa-Paéz live: “There are different words for our house: *Kwe'sx Yat* means house, territory or space where our thoughts move.”²⁵¹ This is how *Nasa Kiwe* is the great house that contains within it, and is also contained within, the *Nasa Yat*.

The traditional *minga* organizational system of the *resguardo* dates back to Colonial times, and the political and social structure of the *Nasa Kiwe*, which replaced the previous one, is still in place in the contemporary Indigenous councils.²⁵² The land does not belong to anyone in particular, but rather to the Nasa Paéz, who in their wisdom and territorial respect allow a unified community to settle and live there: “The first Kiwe principle has to do with the space of the ancestral property in which the Nasa community has been established to live in the yat (house) as territory.”²⁵³

The Nasa-Paéz are instructed in matters of culture and territorial defense, land, and/or house distribution and construction within the *Nasa Kiwe* as a great and communal house: a house where all Nasa-Paéz members belong and work together in a communitarian territory: the “great house.”²⁵⁴ The assignment of land for cultivating or living depends on family composition, on whether or not that family has been previously assigned a plot, how they have worked that land, and how the house was constructed: as a traditional or a contemporary house. However agreement with the dispensation of land is not unanimous.

This becomes clear when a new family is formed or a family disintegrates and the father, or mother, decides to re-apply for an individual plot. While the *resguardo* lands are communal, their distribution is not egalitarian. An individual might be assigned a larger or smaller plot of land based

²⁵¹ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Hay diferentes palabras para nuestra casa, *Kwe'sx Yat* que significa casa, territorio do espacio donde se mueven nuestros pensamientos.” Marco Tulio Jascué, Interview by author, Vereda López, Santo Domingo, Cauca. March 17, 2017.

²⁵² Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, *Plan de Vida*, 19-20.

²⁵³ As quoted in Tulio Rojas, *Una Mirada al Habla Nasa Yuwe de Novirao* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2011), 130. My translation. The original in Spanish: “El primer principio de kiwe tiene que ver con el espacio de propiedad ancestral en el que se ha establecido como pueblo nasa para vivir en ella donde está yat (casa), constituyéndola en territorio.”

²⁵⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 21.

on their activities, the qualities of their leadership and the social work they contribute for the good of the community.

Thus, distribution and legitimation of the land has been contentious not only for Indigenous peoples but also for farmers or peasants who live within *resguardo* lands, a situation that began during the Colonial period. The lack of a system of controlling and demonstrating the legitimacy of land titles has created conflicts, which in turn has triggered insurgencies and public order crises.

Nowadays, land restitution continues to be a problem, as shown by the mobilizations that the Nasa-Paéz are carrying out and which began with the Quintin Lame movement. This movement demanded vindication of the rights of Indigenous peoples and the recovery of ancestral territories lost through inadequate territorial distribution during the Colonial period.²⁵⁵

Land in Toribío is currently distributed with the assistance and management of its *resguardo*, who receive requests from the community and review them through the councils that ultimately designate lands for construction or for labor, through the Toribío town council. As Ul Ascué points out about the council: “Here we receive requests, although we already know who needs land to cultivate. We look into those requests at the planning office, along with ongoing projects and how to organize. In this we are well organized because we must properly manage our resources.”²⁵⁶

I came to realize how protest and mobilization to recover land from *haciendas* on the lower mountain slopes in the Huellas and Nuevo Toéz *resguardo* is tied to communitarian distribution of land itself. In the early stages of this process, a range of actions for land recovery through both peaceful and violent protests frequently took place to put pressure on the National Government to

²⁵⁵ Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1850-1936* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 5.

²⁵⁶ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Acá recibimos las solicitudes, aunque nosotros sabemos quién necesita tierra para trabajar. Esas solicitudes en la oficina de planeación miramos que proyectos que hay y se mira cómo se organiza. En eso somos muy organizados, pues debemos manejar bien los recursos”. Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, Toribío, Cauca, August 18, 2015.

assign territories. Such actions developed symbolic strategies for visualizing what belongs or what has been recuperated in and out of the *resguardo* (Fig. 1.13).



Fig. 1.13, The *Yatzunga* at Huellas *resguardo*. Photo by author.

The *Yatzunga* or communal house at the Huellas *resguardo* was the first construction built after legalizing this Indigenous territory (formerly a Colonial *hacienda*) and which became part of the *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*. Built in a *minga* ritual, the *Yatzunga* represents and visualizes the land restitution as a “new territory for all.” Some of the lands that formerly belonged to *haciendas*, after years of protests and violent clashes, are today part of contemporary *resguardos*.

Recovery and distribution of territory takes place through *mingas*, and the first symbolic and visual action performed in this process is the building of a *Yatzunga* in which the conic roof resembles the mountainous territory, and suggests the arrow and rhomboid shape. This is the place where Indigenous leaders meet to receive instructions from the elders and Indigenous council on what actions to take: “There were people needing land and many of us were displaced by a landslide in Belalcázar. Here we resisted for a long time, trying to recover territory until we achieved it; anything

can be achieved in a *minga*, when we mobilize, we strengthen ourselves, which is what I teach at the CECIDIC.”²⁵⁷

In addition to the struggles to recover lands, other disputes arise within the *resguardos* which the councils must mediate to avoid conflict between Indigenous members and illegal groups. Despite internal disagreements, the Nasa-Paéz have no ambiguity about their foundational principle of a communally-oriented life that includes the recovery of traditions. In this sense, it has been evident through my participation in different *mingas* that the peaceful recovery of the territory through the symbology of the traditional *Nasa Yat* is an important part of the Indigenous council contemporary agenda.

Because of the constant friction throughout history with the Spanish colonizers, settlers and insurgent groups, the Nasa-Paéz are accustomed to living in a closed community, and to the feeling that territory must be respected and defended. The idea of an Indigenous movement in defense of *Nasa Kiwe* is characteristic of the vision of research through dreams.²⁵⁸ Nasa-Paéz dreams have had various manifestations over time: policies, peaceful movements and violent uprisings, all aimed at preserving and recovering lost parts of their ancestral culture and territory.

Although evictions to new territories resulted not only in the loss of territory already assigned but also loss of culture, as I have argued the Nasa-Paéz concept of the spiritual and political legacy of the new chiefs is of equal importance to that of their contemporary leaders. Both motivate the consolidation of ancestral property and a process of resistance and land restitution. The unifying principle was the protection and defense of culture and territory. This is similar to the goal LeGrand

²⁵⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Había gente que tenía necesidad de tierras, muchos fuimos desplazados por la avalancha en Belalcázar. Aquí resistimos mucho tiempo tratando de recuperar tierra hasta que se pueda lograr, todo se puede hacer en *minga*, cuando nos movilizamos nos hacemos fuertes, eso es lo que yo enseño en el CECIDIC”. Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas, Cauca. May 21, 2015. For more information see: Óscar Cobo and Omaira Calvo. “Los Hijos de la Avalancha”. *Porik An*, 12, (2007):123-159.

²⁵⁸ Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación: Guía para Estructurar y Desarrollar Procesos Investigativos en el Territorio Nasa de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco* (Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015), 20.

refers to, that is, to achieve “liberation from the great estates and to become independent producers once again.”²⁵⁹

The Dream: Culture and Territorial Preservation

To return at last to Father Ulcué, with whom this chapter began, I want to focus on the photograph shown below – one of the many images of him to be found in Toribío (Fig. 1.14).

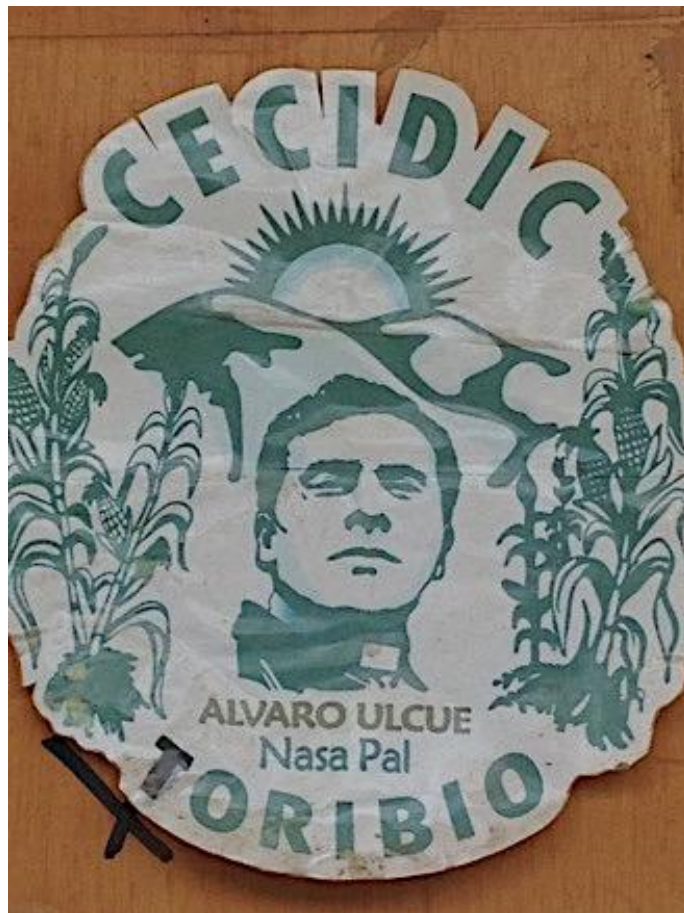


Fig. 1.14, Image of Father Álvaro Ulcué at the CECIDIC. Photo by author.

²⁵⁹ Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion*, 109.

In my visits to the *resguardo*, I usually stayed at the CECIDIC, and every time I went there, different images (from murals to simple posters) were displayed with information about historical events, contemporary policies, the mandates of the new chiefs, and especially Father Ulcué's legacy as part of the *Proyecto Nasa* and PEBI (Fig. 1.15).



Fig. 1.15, CECIDIC Image of Father Álvaro Ulcué united with *Nasa Kiwe*. Photo by author.

Father Ulcué's message, "the right to become free again," was at the heart of these organizations and their goals.²⁶⁰ As an Indigenous priest he was convinced that evangelization was the way to strengthen the potential of traditional culture. Through an evangelization close to Indigenous

²⁶⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 28.

tradition, he succeeded in setting the *resguardo* of Toribío on the path to a more solid process of cultural restitution than existed in Tierradentro itself.

Fig. 1.15 conveys the leader's important influence in mobilizing the community for cultural and territorial protection. It is a CECIDIC picture promoting a cultural activity that happens every year in Toribío, the “*Encuentro Sociocultural Zat Álvaro Ulcué Chocué*.” Significantly, it shows Father Ulcué as part of the mountain, next to a Nasa-Paéz group with traditional instruments walking by *Nasa Kiwe*.

The alignment of this image with the aims and ethos of the *Proyecto Nasa*, and *Nasa Kiwe*, should be evident. In literally becoming the mountain, Ulcué embodies the policy of unifying the people and the dream that motivated it. That policy led the Nasa-Paéz united toward one main objective: the dream of culture and territorial preservation. Thus, promotion of culture recovery, and the organization of the Nasa-Paéz around the authority of a contemporary political movement with the *Proyecto Nasa* and the Indigenous council, were steps taken to inspire hope in the establishment of a community evermore united and stronger: “May the community feel its lands, the sense of organization, the family and the culture.”²⁶¹

Ulcué followed the steps of the new chiefs in a “dream” of territorial consolidation. His travels in the territory and direct contact with the community made it possible to unify and convoke a movement that not even he believed would be possible to achieve.

The image of Ulcué shows the representation of this leader as a new chief, similar to the images that represent Juan Tama: son of the stars and connector of these spiritual and terrestrial worlds (Fig. 1.15). Ulcué strengthened the ties of the community, involving the youngest members through a peaceful revolution that incorporated the training of young leaders to accompany the

²⁶¹ Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 29.

communities, not only in religious activities but also in political movements for the rights of the Indigenous peoples.

This movement intensely pursues the recovery of lost territory. Socialization and education about exploitation by the *haciendas* and recovery of lands promote community mobilization. This uprising, despite having begun with a peaceful intention, led to collateral effects of violence and persecution: “We could not hold public meetings because they would tell us that we were subversives and so that’s how the organization matured.”²⁶²

It is truly remarkable to note the evolution implicit in Indigenous thinking as represented here: a resumption of the act of grounding as the phenomenon that attributes special value to territory and culture in the Nasa-Paéz context. The modern sense of *Nasa Kiwe* in Toribío began, as mentioned, in the seventies with creation of the CRIC and during the eighties, while father Ulcué was leader.²⁶³ With it came the need to link Indigenous populations to community action promoting a new awareness of ancestral identity and rights on issues concerning territory and cultural preservation.

All this happened in response to divisions occurring inside the *resguardos*. The recovery of the “great house” is related to the policies generated from the consciousness of the 1980s, when Father Ulcué led the community to begin a process of culture-based resistance to make their culture respected. He has been described as “(a)n intellectually well-prepared priest who spoke both Spanish and his mother tongue. In his sermons, he stressed love for indigenous identity: language, unity, land and autonomy.”²⁶⁴

Fig. 1.15 also shows how spirituality and a respect for the mountain as a “dwelling of the gods” are fused in the call for a unified community: “*Neh wesx úus `ptxiik: Los espíritus nos*

²⁶² Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 32.

²⁶³ Enrique Sánchez Gutiérrez and Hernán Molina Echeverri, *Documentos para la Historia del Movimiento Indígena Colombiano Contemporáneo*. (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010), 285.

²⁶⁴ As quoted in Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 34. My translation.

convocan” (The spirits summon us). Recovering lost territory and culture involved going back to one’s roots, as mentioned in Jascué’s testimony:

Father Álvaro met with us in Toribío and told us that we no longer had to feel sorry for who we were, that we should feel proud to be Indians. Then they started chasing him and it was our turn to meet him secretly around here, and he always told us not to feel sorry for how we lived, that we should feel proud of our ranches because they were our history [...] He said that this land had always been ours and that we should defend it.²⁶⁵

Ulcué promoted recovery of territory and compared this to the historical experience of the people of Israel.²⁶⁶ The land had been invaded and must be freed so that the Nasa-Paéz people could once again inhabit the *Nasa Kiwe* that had always belonged to them, free of the slavery of the *hacendados* and the national policies that did not acknowledge the Indigenous presence. There was an urgent need for an organization that would lead the proposal for cultural revindication.

Thus, a policy was begun for self-determined education, a pillar of the *Proyecto Nasa*. This strategy was the recognition and promotion of *Nasa Kiwe* and all it contains: an education based on traditional culture and language, land defense and restitution, promotion of the *mingas* within the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas* as shared symbols of the Indigenous unity and authority.

The *Proyecto Nasa* had a difficult start and subsequent evolution because it directly opposed national policies that had failed utterly to take into account the Indigenous presence and claim to the land. Its survival and success enables us to appreciate how territory, and the privileging of the place of inhabitation, became the essential generator in the reinvention of Indigenous identity. It can be

²⁶⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “El Padre Álvaro nos reunía en Toribío y nos decía que ya no teníamos que sentir pena de quienes éramos nosotros, que debíamos sentirnos orgullosos de ser indios. Luego lo comenzaron a perseguir y ya nos tocaba reunirnos con él por acá por estos lados a escondidas, y siempre nos decía que no sintiéramos pena de como vivíamos, que debíamos sentirnos orgullosos de nuestros ranchos porque hay estaba la historia de nosotros [...] nos decía que esta tierra siempre había sido nuestra y que debíamos defenderla.” Marco Tulio Jascué, Interview by author, Vereda López, Santo Domingo, Cauca. March 17, 2017.

²⁶⁶ Salazar et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal*, 41.

established that *Nasa Kiwe* allows us to understand the territory as a connecting element in which relations between dwellers and dwelling are woven together.

Father Ulcué was a thorn in the side of both national and local governments: “Ulcué used to say: we are going to become more involved in the problems of the municipality.”²⁶⁷ The active promotion of awareness of the reality of Indigenous peoples in the 80s culminated in one of the most painful episodes in the history of the Nasa-Paéz: “They killed him because they were envious that an Indian could be what he was and would take risks so that the other Indians could be equal to him, canceling centuries of subjection and servitude.”²⁶⁸

Ulcué personifies the dream of connection between the Nasa-Paéz being, his (her) habitat and dwelling, his (her) beliefs, and his (her) interaction with and interpretation of the surrounding world. It is this that enables the symbolic construction of the territory as home, where the Nasa-Paéz live.

Finally, the legacy of the new chiefs, elders, and the actions of contemporary leaders coalesce to build a new Nasa-Paéz community that wants its legacy preserved, not only politically, but also pedagogically and spiritually – in the vision of research through dreams.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 43.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 57.

1.3 Beliefs and Tributes to *Nasa Kiwe*.

Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué Testimony

Well, in this matter of territory, the Indigenous part, the Nasa one, for the most part begins with a cosmological vision that encompasses territory, speaking normally about three spaces woven together like a web that makes up Nasa thinking. The first space is that of [major] spirits, space of the *Ñek*. And a second space is woven around that of the *Ñek*, which corresponds to the space of minor spirits, which includes the *Thê'wala* or elder, who mediates between those major spirits of the cosmos and the Nasas down on Earth through the *tulpa*.

It is they who talk with the spirits and transmit information from them to the Nasa people, and the Nasa respond in that sense with how they will organize the mountain, the territory. The Nasa world moves within those three levels: the world of major spirits, we may say, that of the minor spirits, and humans. That whole space is what we normally call *Kiwe*, the *Yat Wala*, or the great house: *Wala* means grand, immense... that's what our mother is: *Maama'Kiwe*.

[...] There are three *Walas* in our territory but the one we call upon the most is *Thê'wala*, which refers to the elder. The *Thê'wala* communicates with the spirits that represent thunders, the elder asks the thunder and the thunder responds, that is more or less the hierarchy; an elder always consults the thunder who, in return, tells him what to do or what other spirits he must consult. But above all are the spirits of nature, *Maama'Kiwe's*; depending on what is requested, one asks them and they respond according to the request. Each one has a specific place for response; one might say, let's go and talk at the lake, another will say let's go and talk on the mountain. Each one has a place of their own, so they tell us where.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: "Pues mire en este asunto del territorio, la parte indígena tienen sobre todo la parte Nasa el punto de partida de una cosmovisión que abarca el territorio que normalmente se habla de tres espacios que se tejen entre todos como una red que es el pensamiento Nasa. El primer espacio, que es el espacio de los espíritus, que es el espacio del *Ñek* y alrededor del *Ñek* se teje el segundo espacio, que es el de los espíritus menores y entre los cuales se encuentra el *Thê'wala* o médico tradicional que prácticamente es la persona de la interrelación a través de la *tulpa* entre los espíritus mayores del cosmos y los Nasas, los de la tierra, entonces son ellos los que conversan con los espíritus, transmiten la información de estos espíritus a los Nasas, y los Nasas en este sentido responden como van a organizar la montaña, el territorio.

En estos tres niveles se mueve el mundo Nasa, el mundo de los espíritus mayores, podríamos decir, el de los espíritus menores y el de los humanos. A todo este espacio es al que normalmente se le llama *Kiwe*, el *Yat Wala* o la gran casa, *Wala* significa grande, inmenso... que es nuestra madre, *Maama'Kiwe*.

[...] En el territorio hay tres *Wala* pero el que más nombramos es el *Thê'wala*, es el que hace referencia a los mayores. El *Thê'wala* se comunica con los espíritus que representan los truenos, los mayores le preguntan al trueno y el trueno le responde, esa es un poco la jerarquía, un mayor siempre hace las consultas a los truenos y el le dice que debe hacer o a que otros espíritus debe consultar, pero sobre todo están los espíritus de la naturaleza, de *Maama'Kiwe*, dependiendo de lo que se requiera se les pregunta a ellos y ellos responden a su medida, cada uno de ellos tiene un lugar específico de respuesta, el uno dirá: vamos y conversamos en la laguna, el otro dirá vamos y conversamos en la montaña. Cada uno tiene su lugar, entonces ellos dicen en dónde." Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué, Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. May 30, 2017.

Vitonás' testimony above articulates the Nasa Paéz notion of territory. It is a conception central to current policies for territorial consolidation. These policies are initiated by modern Indigenous councils, but draw on the oral tradition and “dreams” of the elders. As Vitonás makes clear, this vision is consistent with *Proyecto Nasa*'s notion of “weaving of life.” It incorporates both physical and nonphysical territories; and it both imagines and realizes territory in the form of the *Nasa Yat*, the Indigenous house.²⁷⁰ This conception of territory has thus facilitated the creation of a place in which Nasa-Paéz culture can be perceived in all of its history, symbology, beliefs and the rituals: a place which generates and renders visible a community. The search for identity is central to the realization of contemporary Nasa-Paéz desire to live in harmony and peace. That desire includes the need to be aligned with their revitalized mythology, with their territory and beliefs, and with a strengthened community. The Nasa-Paéz notion of territory is inseparable from, in fact is fundamental to, these desires.

I met Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué in late May of 2017, while returning from my field trip in Tierradentro. Lina María Amaya, director of the Historical Archive in Popayan, suggested that I contact Vitonás Noscué because he was one of the few people who were doing academic research on Nasa-Paéz culture using a traditional methodology. Former Mayor of Toribío in 2004, Vitonás Noscué had dedicated his life to the promotion of self-determination for the community. These actions led by the mayor's office were not well received by members of the insurgent groups, which led to his kidnapping in 2004.

After going through this unfortunate situation, and after finishing his term as mayor of Toribío, Noscué decided to dedicate himself to academia by promoting the use of Nasa-Paéz

²⁷⁰ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 102. See also: PREDECAN. *Cosmovisión del Pueblo Indígena NASA en Colombia*. Lima: Comunidad Andina Secretaria General, 2009; Dover, Robert VH, et al. *Andean Cosmologies Through Time Persistence and Emergence*. Indiana University Press, 1992; José Navia. “El Blindaje de los Hijos del Trueno”. *El Tiempo*. August 17, 2004. <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-1577444>. Accessed August 6, 2017; Luz Tumbo. *Ipx Kwet Peku'j Alrededor de la Tulpa*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014; Hugo Pórtela. *El Pensamiento de las Aguas de las Montañas*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2019.

resguardo policies to develop a strong pedagogy supporting the political and cultural ideals of the community. He joined the Universidad del Cauca as a professor, working to generate new traditional research focused on the political parameters of the *Proyecto Nasa*, of which culture and tradition are the pillars.

Thanks to his wide-ranging knowledge of the Nasa-Paéz beliefs along with his understanding of the significance of the territory for the Nasa-Paéz, his accompaniment, guidance and testimony were of great importance for this dissertation.

Territory in Constant Transformation

“In the beginning of times there were only four stars in the horizon, positioned in the form of a cross. Lightning emerged from the heart of that cross, striking the Earth. From that contact an enormous mass of land and light appeared. *Sek, Ate, Kiwe*: the sun, the moon and the land / the mountain. It was the beginning of life, it all began in that place, up on the highland of the mountain where *Yuluch*, son of mother earth *Maama’Kiwe* and the sun, was born to live within animals, plants, stones, and human beings. The mountain transformed into a protector of all beings, which inhabited her; *Kiwe* became the home of all creatures”.²⁷¹

In *Nasa Kiwe*, the mountain is characterized by its pervasive relevance. The Nasa-Paéz have occupied this territory, trying to dwell in equilibrium due to their singular understanding of nature and their respect for the land they occupy. This equilibrium is achieved thanks to Indigenous wisdom in relation to, and with respect for, territory. Without such admiration for *Nasa Kiwe*, and a strong awareness of tradition, they would not have been able to extent and preserve their beliefs throughout the contemporary *resguardo*.

²⁷¹ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “En el principio de los tiempos solo existían cuatro estrellas en el horizonte, que estaban posicionadas en forma de cruz. Un día un rayo salió del centro de esta cruz y tocó la tierra. De eso una enorme masa de tierra y luz salió: *Sek, Ate, Kiwe*: el sol, la luna y la tierra o montaña. Este fue el principio de la vida, todo comenzó en ese lugar, en la parte alta de la montaña donde los *Yuluch* el hijo del sol y la madre tierra *Maama’Kiwe* nació y vive en los animales, las plantas, en las piedras y en nosotros. La montaña se transformó en protectora de todos los que la ocupaban, se volvió en hogar de todas las criaturas.” Gonzalo Rivera. Interview by author, *Resguardo Huellas*, Cauca, February 9, 2014.

Mountains equate to the dream of the great house; they are the home of the gods and the birthplace of the Nasa-Paéz tradition. Mountains, the sacred, and culture: these are words that give meaning to a territory in constant transformation. These three words offers a vision of *Nasa Kiwe* as mother earth: *Maa'ma Kiwe*.²⁷²

As I have already underlined, when considering the idea of a “dreamed territory” in the context of research in dreams, we must go beyond the conceptual definition of that term. Territory is more than spatial delimitation; it is a place that defines a political stance while also creating a collective identity. Territory is understood holistically, in terms of *Nasa Kiwe* – realized as a “great house” which is an inseparable part of mother earth. One could argue that this understanding, rooted in ancestral knowledge, has re-opened the modern experience of space to a more profound reflection on the dwelling-dweller relationship.

A process of questioning arises about how these territorial notions, and the experiential dimension of place, became determinants in the establishment of new relationships between land, community and national and *resguardo* policies.

This questioning gave birth to the *mingas* that I have had the opportunity to attend in Tacueyó, Toribío and especially in San Francisco, at the CECIDIC. Conceiving territory as their ‘great house’ has clearly moved from being strictly symbolic – the new mythology-based political structure of the Nasa-Paéz – to a wider understanding of the need to integrate community and region with a full spectrum of internal and external members. I argue that, behind this analysis of beliefs and ritualistic tributes to *Nasa-Kiwe*, is the community’s effort to understand their profoundly distinct social and cultural approach to the notion of territory. This understanding stands in stark contrast to the rational and abstract conception of territory inherent in conditions of modernity – and, one could argue, of violence.

²⁷² Dora Daza Güetio, *Aprendiendo Desde el Ser Nasa Para la Administración y Cuidado de Uma kiwe* (Manizales: Universidad de Manizales, 2015), 4.

It is also important to stress that the Nasa-Paéz's respectful approach to, and indeed embrace of, authentically established territory, while more symbolic than rational, is no less legitimate than modern rationalism as a mode of understanding. In fact, compared to the modern concept of territory, the Nasa-Paéz conception is enriched: it embraces a web of physically tangible, social, political and cultural (that is, spiritual and mythological) connotations which have been lost in modern times.

During social events like the *mingas*, the elders promote respect and defense for territory in accordance with the concept of *Nasa Kiwe*. This respect is cultivated by knowledge imparted through the processes of “*educación propia*” (traditional education) where this concept encompasses the twofold meaning of the Spanish word *propio* as “correct” and “of one’s own”, which is at the same time a sense of legitimacy. Hence, the notion of *Nasa Kiwe* shared in common is that of the mountain as the house and home of everything and everyone, which must be recovered and preserved.²⁷³

On the other hand, traditional education explores the vision of *Nasa Kiwe* as part of mother earth as holy and tempestuous. Holy because of her holistically creative and protective spirit, and tempestuous, when her territory is profaned. Profaning the land provokes the Nasa-Paéz themselves, who react with the will to defend it, through what Gustavo Wilches-Chaux refers to as “Nasa *Twixe* punishment.”²⁷⁴

Thus, it is important to understand that territorial ‘vigilance and respect’ are of great importance to the Nasa-Paéz: only one who dwells thus in *Nasa Kiwe* may give an account of and communicate with it. Their places are their way of orienting themselves, moving around, and giving an account of the territory, and for the Nasa-Paéz this is not merely physical or geographic.

I have experienced this personally through many walks across the *Nasa Kiwe*. I saw the Nasa-Paéz, vigilant about their sacred mountain, embracing it as something inherent in the nature of their Indigenous being, a suggestion of their relationship with, and positioning in, the territory, and their

²⁷³ *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. February 7, 2014.

²⁷⁴ As quoted in Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 139.

understanding of their own culture, summed up by William Antonio Pilcué Valbuena as “caring, protecting, respecting mother earth and maintaining the harmonious equilibrium of the cosmos.”²⁷⁵ Thus, ambulation and reciprocation are what allow the community to make sense of their place, in harmony with the territory.

Fig. 1.16 demonstrates the Nasa-Paéz representation of sacred mountains as part of the traditional education project in San Francisco *resguardo*. The spiral shape with two houses at its center indicates the community’s understanding of territory and the significance of belonging within the great house. The *Nasa Yat* (family house) and the *Yatzunga* (communal house) surrounded by a spiral represent meaningful connection with the territory. The *Yat* is where the “law of origin” originates, where culture begins, and the spiral opens transcendently towards territory. The notion of research based on dreams is expressed in the spiral: it is a symbol of wisdom and origin, represented and recognized as connecting with territory through the weaving of life.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ William Antonio Pilcué Valbuena, *Hacer Camino Entre las Educaciones (De La Escuela Convencional a la Escuela Comunitaria). Aprendizaje y Conocimiento en las Ciencias Sociales e Historia en el Municipio de Toribío (Resguardo de San Francisco, Tacueyó y Toribío)*. (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2015), 120. My translation. The original in Spanish: “cuidar, proteger, respetar la madre tierra manteniendo el equilibrio armónico del cosmos.” For more on sacred mountains see: Edwin Bernbaum. *Sacred Mountains of the World*. University of California Press, 1997; Johan Reinhard. “Las Montañas Sagradas y las Culturas Preincaicas de los Andes”. *América: Tierras de Montañas y Volcanes. Huellas de la Arqueología*. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2012; Kenneth R Wright, et al. *Tipón: Obra Maestra de la Ingeniería Hidráulica del Imperio de los Incas*. American Society of Civil Engineers, 2008; Fernando Elorrieta Salazar. *Cusco and The Sacred Valley of The Incas*. Tanpu, 2001; Marisol De la Cadena. *Indigenous Mestizos the Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

²⁷⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 102.



Fig. 1.16, *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* traditional education project and its interpretation of two houses and spiral as *Nasa Kiwe*. Photo by author.

The *Yat*'s symbolic role as connector extends not only to earthly and spiritual phenomena, but also to the political realm; it reflects the Nasa-Paéz understanding of the encompassing reach of territory, as represented in the spiral. The Nasa-Paéz notion of the law of origin (as seen on Fig. 1.16) refers to a spiral shape moving outward. It represents the temporal dimension of the transmission of wisdom; a spiral that ascends, yet draws collective memory along with it.

This interpretation of territory is realized in different ways that we might identify as geographical, political, social, cultural and – of the utmost importance – beliefs articulated in myth. Myth is often, erroneously, characterized as a false truth or irrational type of thinking, deceptive and

distanced from reality.²⁷⁷ This line of thinking caused some to equate Indigenous beliefs with primitive thinking and also relegated aboriginal culture to an inferior position.

As we have seen, Nasa-Paéz notions of, and ways of dealing with, territory are today complex and to some extent hybrid; they accommodate a relationship with the modern world and resulted in part from Colonial processes and displacements. Nevertheless, even contemporary processes of revindication of land assume another posture, revalidating the notion and function of beliefs within the compass of *Nasa Kiwe*.

Wilches-Chaux contrasts the differences between a modern worldview and the holistic concepts of the *Nasa Kiwe*. Though the perception of space inherited from rational modernity has evolved to a great extent, it cannot be said that modern misunderstandings of traditional cultures and their beliefs have been rectified, or that their rightful value and place has been restored.²⁷⁸

Understanding Indigenous communities requires a willingness that can only be achieved through an open and positive attitude towards the differences between the rooted ancestral and western perceptions of the land. The Nasa-Paéz have a specific way to reside and act within a territory, which provides them cultural and political protection and the opportunity for an enlightened coexistence with the territory. Gradually, a new understanding of Indigeneity and their own beliefs has emerged.

Thus, this understanding is self-determined, reflexive, and complex. The Nasa-Paéz themselves have developed new approaches and appreciations of what the term “Indigenous belief” means, in the context of a native cosmogony, and the pertinence of a respectful and ritualistic understanding of territory and its relationship with other Indigenous communities. As I have stated

²⁷⁷ As Claude Lévi-Strauss, who so eloquently explored the relationship of myth with life and death rituals, pointed out: “[...] the original ancestors were of a nature different from contemporary men: they were creators and these are imitators[...]. Thanks to the ritual, the ‘disjoined’ past of myths is expressed, on the one hand, through biological and seasonal periodicity and, on the other, through the ‘conjoined’ past, which unites from generation to generation the living and the dead.” Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. G (London: Weidenfeld, Nicolson Ltd, 1966), 236.

²⁷⁸ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 41.

already, being forced into exile led to transformations in Nasa-Paéz practices. Sacred sites in the highlands became homes: places of communitarian inhabitation between spirits and Nasa-Paéz people. They too are part of, as Vitonás Noscué declared, “the cosmological vision that encompasses territory.”²⁷⁹

Weaving Voices of Thought: a Tangible Understanding of Inhabitable Place

The Nasa-Paéz cannot uncouple themselves from their beliefs. The territory imagined as a great house contains the *Yat*: the Nasa house (Fig. 1.17). A relationship of coexistence generates a “dreamed” territory: a house that the Nasa-Paéz can inhabit by cultivating the land and dwelling in *Nasa-Kiwe*, where the concept of territory is described as a “great house and seed.”²⁸⁰ This relation to *Nasa Kiwe*, formulating place as sacred territory, can be seen in the imagery of the “weaving of life” developing outward from the great sacred house.²⁸¹ The Nasa-Paéz recognition of the weaving of life can be seen in Fig. 1.17, which unfolds a whole and unbounded spiritual vision of house, life, world and – as is written in the mural – “the voice of the Nasa people.”

This web links all living entities in one. The community therefore views the territory as the total realisation of the human being; the symbology of the mountain and the spiral is implicit to them as a cultural landscape, with the house incorporating territory and the human being in one. The mountain is both experience and central existential element; it is territory but at the same time it is architecture.

²⁷⁹ Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué, Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. May 30, 2017.

²⁸⁰ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 91.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

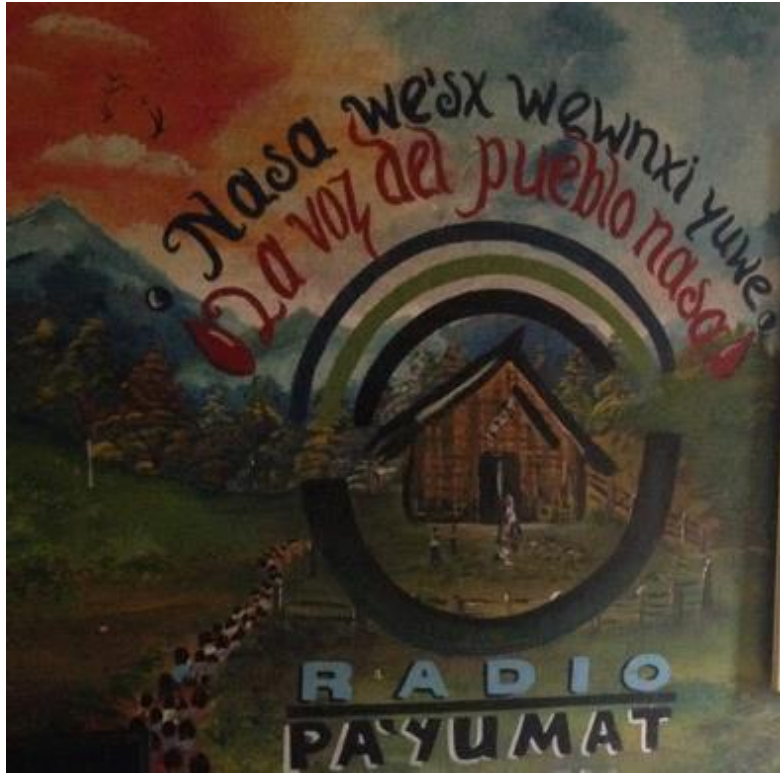


Fig. 1.17, Mural in Santander de Quilichao representing the *Nasa Yat* as a place for congregation and place of origin. Photo by author.

The house, as a symbol of the construction of territory, deals with a particular territorial arrangement articulated through the voice of the community. The significance of architecture to their world-view resonates with that affirmed by Juhani Pallasmaa: “Architecture is essentially an extension of nature into the manmade realm, providing the basis for perception and the horizon for experiencing and understanding the world”.²⁸²

The Nasa-Paéz offer an understanding of the house itself as a place where communication between dwellers and dwelling allows a balanced and tangible understanding of inhabitable place. Even today, the vision of “research through dreams” seeks ways to open new reciprocal perspectives

²⁸² Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 44; For more on place, mythology and senses, see: María Patricia Farfan S. “Μουσείον: the Museum/el Museo,” in *A Journey to Hellas / Un Viaje a Hellas Paisaje del Mito y la Razón*, Edited by Carlos Rueda Plata, 74-79. Bogotá D.C.: Universidad Piloto de Colombia. Express Estudio Gráfico y Digital S.A. 2015.

supporting respect for the community – and for the defended and inhabited territory.²⁸³ Their wisdom, and their way of interacting with *Nasa Kiwe*, offer a model all might do well to follow.

Hence, a sensible understanding of inhabitable place – that is, an understanding accessed through the senses rather than through reason – is tangible here. Such beliefs of that sort imply two views: first of all, sacred places connected with a spiritual life; and secondly, linking of the land with a terrestrial sacredness that includes politics, ritual and tributes.²⁸⁴

These traditions connect directly with the territory through agricultural practices, housing, and the praxis of daily life. Furthermore, as Niño Murcia suggests, this territorial connexion is strengthened through “a shamanistic geography – mother earth and her particular surroundings – that determines and keeps this memory alive.”²⁸⁵ *Nasa Kiwe* becomes a web of connections, and within this web the *Nasa Yat* is imagined as part of the sacred mountain. As expressed in Fig. 1.17, it is a place of reunification, weaving together the voices of the community. This symbolic network empowers the Nasa-Paéz to interpret their past and re-create their present on the basis of oral tradition, beliefs and rituals. It helps construct an identity through cultural protection, daily and ritual practices, and architecture.

It is from the strong and holistic experience each Nasa-Paéz has of their territory that identity and societal agency come. The continuity of innumerable traditions and their symbolism supports a community profoundly rooted in the territory that makes up their immediate landscape. This Indigenous construct of life, it might be noted, is made up of obedience, defense and respect. Each Nasa-Paéz is assigned functions by the elders to accomplish in order to achieve harmony in the different “place-worlds.”²⁸⁶

²⁸³ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 20.

²⁸⁴ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007), 21.

²⁸⁵ Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 60. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Es una geografía chamánica, la Madre Tierra y sus entornos particulares, que determinan y mantienen la memoria.”

²⁸⁶ Patricia Farfán Sopó, “The Corner: the Wanders and Wonders of Walking,” in *Escrito en Montreal / Written in Montreal, Textos en y Sobre el Lugar / Texts in and About Place*, Edited by Carlos Rueda Plata, 77-86. Bogotá D.C.:

Thus territorial configuration and beliefs are one. Although the concept of dwelling in a sacred territory is at the root of this way of thinking, I would argue that the concept of sacred territory in this context (part and parcel of daily life in the *resguardo*) must be understood not as a collection of separate parts or entities, but as a web of well-connected analogies.

Hence, all relationships in the end seem to come together, connecting all thinking on ancestral wisdom to the notion of a sacred territory. The Nasa-Paéz perception of place, which includes the notion of working in a *minga* as a spiritual and terrestrial web in time and space, enables the Nasa-Paéz to place the origin of their own history.

In the contemporary *resguardo*, beliefs and symbolisms constitute a new way to embracing their own culture, and contributing to the generation of an alternative, integrationist idea, a ‘weaving of life,’ which extends not only to the social, political and economic realms but also to aspects of cultural differentiation. This ‘web’ allows the Nasa-Paéz people to stress their mythological character as fighters for the vindication of their past and history, a practice that certainly “is a collective metaphor that synthesizes the whole experience and culture – the long duration of an ethnic group or nation – to establish the order of these things,”²⁸⁷ as described by Niño Murcia. This framework shapes the resulting experience of the current creation of a community, and originates with the autochthonous experiences and beliefs that govern the politics of the Nasa-Paéz.

Symbolism generates unique situations in which architecture, nature reality and myth are blended.²⁸⁸ The *Nasa-Kiwe* construction of territory has developed in this community through beliefs and places represented in architecture, as shown in Fig. 1.17. In this image the *Yatzunga* is that

Universidad Piloto de Colombia. Express Estudio Gráfico y Digital S.A. 2015; Carlos Iván Rueda Plata, “Place-Making as Poetic World Re-Creation: An Experimental Tale of Rogelio Salmona’s Places of Obliqueness and Desire” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2008), 24.

²⁸⁷ As quoted in Niño, *Territorio Chamánico*, 46-47. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Es una metáfora colectiva que sintetiza toda su experiencia y su cultura –la larga duración de una etnia o nación– para establecer el orden de las cosas.”

²⁸⁸ Jair Zapata, *Espacio y Territorio Sagrado. Lógica del Ordenamiento Territorial Indígena*. (Medellín: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2010), 25

special place connected through its form to the transmission of community knowledge and cultural wisdom.

These are made present in the concept of the great house, which in turn represents the high point where the terrestrial and the divine come together.²⁸⁹ However, those connections are not only established high up on the mountain: stones, paths, lakes, rivers and all of the elements contributing to the territory (and its defense) speak with a language and convey a special meaning consistent with this world view. Each element, each voice is a connector to a symbolic construction of reality, conducive to a special kind of respect for inhabited territory.

Tributes: Connector of Realities

The origin and principles with which the Nasa-Paéz identify themselves are drawn from their direct experience of place. Existence itself, and the power to understand the territory as a synonym of mother earth as home, provide a point of departure from which they inhabit territory through *minga* projects and tributes. This way of perceiving place in relation to the territory becomes evident in what could be called “mystical recognition”. These ancestral and contemporary connections explain the existence of diverse “worlds” or realities coexisting in *Nasa Kiwe*. The understanding and appropriation of ancestral thought “through dreams” requires the development of a broad vision of the relationship between territory and beliefs. Such a sense entails a series of hierarchies defining the various symbolic meanings represented by *Nasa Kiwe*, and the *Nasa Yat*.

This symbolism is articulated, for example, in the array of paths that open up from the hearth. These are associated with the concept of dwellers and dwelling, and with the recovery of territory. This territory is both physical and spiritual, and it is conceived as a world which is a confluence of

²⁸⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 91.

worlds: “The four worlds are interrelated, connected and constitute the territorial unit *Nasa Kiwe* and communicate through four paths.”²⁹⁰

Equally important, the mountain is the place which all beings inhabit, and all these worlds or realms exist through it. A potent manifestation of how the world-view of the Nasa-Paéz is realized in the composition of daily life is the analogical construction of the Nasa-Paéz reality in the hearth of a *Yatzunga* in San Francisco *resguardo* (Fig. 1.18).



Fig. 1.18, The hearth connects the different worlds of the Nasa-Paéz community. Photo by author.

²⁹⁰ As quoted in Secretaría General de la Comunidad Andina, *Cosmovisión del Pueblo Indígena Nasa en Colombia*. (Lima: Secretaría de la Comunidad Andina, 2009), 20. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Los cuatro mundos se encuentran interrelacionados, articulados, constituyen la unidad territorial nasa kiwe y se comunican a través de cuatro caminos.”

The three stones – located in the middle of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas* – that make up the traditional hearth are seen as a place that connects spirituality and community through the elders, women and their actions, by means of the *minga* rituals that guide most activities in the *resguardo*. Next to the three stones are *totumos*: natural containers for storing the *chicha* (homemade corn liquor) essential to ritualistic celebrations. The Nasa-Paéz universe, represented in the form of multi-dimensional paths that suggest the weaving of life, is analogically represented in vertical and horizontal lines departing from the hearth. A further symbolism can be identified in the role of this traditional place as the site of the “*ombligada*” ritual: the Nasa-Paéz burial of a newborn’s navel.²⁹¹

This ritualistic interpretation of the creation and appropriation of territory has been interpreted as a “seed” that generates life and connects the community as through it was a large family.²⁹² It is a web of physical, spiritual and cultural paths.

Although reflected in daily activities such as building the *Nasa Yat* or cultivating the *tull*, these multidimensional paths enable the unceasing communication of relationships. I argue that it is in this way – through ritual and the symbology of the hearth – that not only community wisdom, but also strength specific to new generations is built.

This is clearly stated: “We can symbolize these axes as the three stones that make our fire to cook the *mote* for the *minga*, where our elders narrate myths to us, and give us appropriate rules for carrying out any activity in our tradition. Close to the fire, we bury the navel, so that it does not leave and remains within our community.”²⁹³ These connections allow the Nasa-Paéz to existentially guide

²⁹¹ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Proyecto Nasa, Cabildo Económico Ambiental* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal, Unidad Municipal de Asistencia Técnica Agropecuaria, 2011), 14

²⁹² Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 102.

²⁹³ As quoted in Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa* (Bogotá: Fundación Panamericana Para el Desarrollo, 2016), 5. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Estos ejes los podemos simbolizar como las tres piedras que forman el fogón donde cocinamos el mote para la minga, donde nuestros mayores narran los mitos, y también teniendo en cuenta las normas propias para la realización de cualquier actividad de nuestra tradición. Igualmente, cerca al fogón, se entierra el ombligo del Nasa, para que no se vaya, y permanezca cerca de la comunidad.” For more on traditional manifestations, see: Victor Molina and Hurtado, Arnulfo. “El Fogón y el Tejer Como Elementos de Encuentro”. *Educación y Territorio* 3, no. 1, (2013): 16-30.

themselves and to understand their place in their territory, through to the distinct roles set for the diverse ‘worlds’ in which the Nasa-Paéz dwell, and which they adamantly defend.

In Nasa-Paéz beliefs *Nasa Kiwe* becomes sacred by virtue of the presence and delimitation of the various sacred places of which it is composed. The most relevant of these is the mountain, which I argue represents not only a place with connections to the sacred, but also the origin of the new mythology inaugurated by the birth of the chief Juan Tama. It continues with strong policies reinforcing new rituals like the *ombligada* ritual, among others. The highest part of the mountain is considered to be the home of the gods, a place designated for spiritual connections through the hearth. It is through this relationship, represented in Fig. 1.18, between the mountain embodied in the communal house – a political place for reunion – and the hearth as a ritualistic point of departure, that the Nasa-Paéz communicate and acquire “traditional knowledge from the elders.”²⁹⁴

Nasa-Kiwe is freighted with meaning embodied in such analogies (or symbolic relationships)²⁹⁵ established by its inhabitants with their surroundings, connecting elements of nature and politics with mythical and spiritual characters. The sacredness of the mountain, and of the Nasa-Paéz relationship to the different worlds, is represented in the following description which speaks of the “spirits of thunders”:

Our body is made of parts with which we relate to the three spaces: celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean worlds. For that reason, we symbolize the body, life, and people as a rhomboid, accompanied by the guards, owners of the night, who are the *Ksxa 'w*, and the *I'kwe'sx*, who are owners of the day. This relationship is guided by the three thunders, in the order that we see them. The first thunder holds the golden staff and occupies the highest spot. The second thunder holds the axe staff and is to the right of the rhomboid. The third thunder has a bow and is to the left of the rhomboid. But there is a helper, down at the bottom, who holds the *chonta* staff of command, which we call the *Thë Wala*.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 20.

²⁹⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 130.

²⁹⁶ As quoted in Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa. *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena*, 10. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Nuestro cuerpo está conformado por las partes con las cuales nos relacionamos con los tres espacios: mundo celeste, mundo terrestre y mundo subterráneo. Por eso lo reflejamos a través del rombo, que simboliza el cuerpo, la vida y el pueblo, acompañados por los vigilantes que son *Ksxa 'w*, dueños de la noche y *I'kwe'sx* dueños del día. Esta relación está orientada por los tres truenos que están en el orden

From this excerpt, it can be inferred that *Nasa Kiwe* has been established as a network of relationships which preserve these principles about territory. As life itself comes from ‘nature,’ the cult and adoration of what we call natural elements are the basis for these principles. Water, for instance, is a source of life that is present—and is also represented—in high-mountain springs, and in lakes as mythological places where chief Juan Tama was born. These bodies of water occupy an essential place due to the special connection designated for them between territory and spirituality. In this way those sacred places are defined; life and its meaning become symbol, tradition and tributes.

Nasa Kiwe also has its origins high up on the mountains. There on the highest peaks, it is believed that one comes closer to the thunders, and thus to the spirits and the gods. Fig.1.11 & 1.15 show how the thunders relate to mythical and political historical moments. While Fig. 1.11 is a clear representation of the different worlds represented in the ancestral territory *Cxhab Wala Kiwe* (a thunder connecting the hearth and the mountain as one political unity), Fig. 1.15 represents a spiritual leader – in this case Father Ulcué (close to the thunders) – as one who connect beliefs and politics whose goals include the unification of the community.

Beliefs are woven throughout *Nasa Kiwe*, realized and reinforced through traditional rituals that honour the emergence of political strategies and that reinforce the well-being of the community. These pay special tribute to territory as a symbol of a unified community. The mountain represents magnificently the beginning of life, along with the tributes, rituals and wisdom from the voice of the elders and women offered up to *Nasa Kiwe*. That wisdom may well be understood as an oral narrative of events rendering Nasa-Paéz culture recognizable. It is a form of speech allowing the community to see who they are, and to recognize what are the rights for which they are fighting.

que vemos. El primer trueno tiene el bastón de oro, y es el que está en lo más alto. El Segundo trueno tiene el bastón del hacha, y está al lado derecho del rombo. El tercer trueno tiene un arco y está a la izquierda del rombo. Pero hay un ayudante que está en la parte inferior, que tiene el bastón de chonta, a este le llamamos Thë Wala.”

However, as occupants, the Nasa-Paéz somehow inevitably transform the place in which they dwell. A territorial transformation of this sort is understood, in the Nasa-Paéz context, as a harmonious but active recovery of territory.

In this regard, as documented in the testimony of Vitonás Noscué, the territory itself and its relationship with the varied worlds that make up the Nasa-Paéz thinking exhibits an intrinsic language acknowledging harmonious transcendence. This is communicated through the symbology of the thunders and the hearth, which are both sacred and loaded with political content.²⁹⁷ It is also reflected in the Nasa-Paéz dweller's approach, including an "unimaginable" respect manifested in daily life, to *Nasa Kiwe* – represented par-excellence by the mountain as "spirit house and seed."²⁹⁸

Nasa Kiwe as a concept of place thus encompasses the sacred, the mundane, and the attainment of a state of harmony in a violent context. The Nasa-Paéz relationship to it is realized and reinforced through tributes, which play the role of offering. Respect for *Nasa Kiwe* becomes evident in the community's veneration for the mountain. In this regard, Rivera asserts that:

Before, during the rainy season, rain used to fall everywhere and we had no problems with drought or anything because people used to fulfill the requirements of Mother Nature. Our ancestors knew how to obey and to do what their parents had taught them. That's why nature and all that inhabited her was respected. Consequently, there were no natural disasters, for there was respect. If one respects the mountain, *Kiwe*, she respects you as well, providing shelter to one's family and giving protection.²⁹⁹

It also becomes evident that such an interpretation – the mountain is territory but at the same time it is architecture – is present not only in architectural elements, but in the daily ritualistic

²⁹⁷ Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué, Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. May 30, 2017.

²⁹⁸ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi 'zenxi*, 121, 91.

²⁹⁹ My translation. The original Spanish follows: "Antes, durante la época de lluvias, esta lluvia caía por todas partes y no había problemas de sequías ni de nada porque la gente cumplía con las exigencias de la madre naturaleza, nuestros antepasados obedecían lo que sabían, hacían lo que sus padres les habían enseñado y por eso se respetaba a la naturaleza se respetaba todo lo que en ella vivía y por eso no habían desastres naturales, porque había respeto. Si uno respeta la montaña, a *Kiwe*, ella también lo respeta a uno dándole abrigo a su familia, brindado protección." Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Caloto, Cauca. February 9, 2014.

practices and tributes to *Nasa Kiwe*. That ‘narrative’ is present in ancestral and contemporary architectural settlements, in their selection of materials and sites for planting and inhabitation, and in the paths on which they walk that form part of contemporary ritualistic practices. These paths also contribute to the symbolic representation of the connection to *Nasa Kiwe*: opening up from the hearth, they link to and helping define Nasa-Paéz territory conceived as a world.

Consequently, tributes serve as connectors of multiple worlds and realities, realized through the dreams and voices of the elders. As a symbol of a unified community, the elder acts as mediator between the different *Nasa Kiwe* realities, the different paths that are part of the Nasa-Paéz beliefs, and worldly concerns:

The ancestors were people of wisdom. They first learned to listen to their surroundings and then to their parents. A Nasa is born not only of their mother’s uterus but also of the territory. It is believed that, for a woman to get pregnant, she must first ask for permission from the land, because only *she* (the earth) can permit it and say who can inhabit her. The Earth gives us permission to inhabit her before being born; therefore, if we occupy her, we must respect her because as with our mother, she gave us life, not only at birth, but also with every breath we take.³⁰⁰

Cultural Reclamation

Nasa-Paéz tributes to *Nasa Kiwe* represent both ancestral and contemporary mandates, bestowed through community meetings with the aim of consolidating their own culture. Celebrations and rituals of great recognition and unity were of course created by the Indigenous people in pre-

³⁰⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Los ancestros eran personas sabias. Ellos aprendieron primero a oír su entorno y luego a sus padres. Un Nasa no solo nace del útero de su madre sino del territorio. Se cree que para poder una mujer quedar en embarazo debe pedir permiso a la tierra, pues ella es la única que permite y dice quién puede habitar sobre ella. La tierra nos da permiso de habitarla antes de nacer y por eso si estamos ocupándola debemos respetarla pues ella al igual que nuestra madre también nos dio vida no solo en el momento en que fuimos paridos sino cada segundo y cada momento que continuamos respirando.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Caloto, Cauca, February 9, 2014.

Colonial times, but such rituals and places were practically eliminated through processes of colonization, with the appearance of the *capillas doctrineras* (Colonial chapels), and with the Christianization that endured until the second half of the 20th century (Fig. 1.19).



Fig. 1.19, Catholic chapel Inzá – Tierradentro. Photo by author.

Nevertheless, Santiago Paredes tells how the building of the chapels in the region of Tierradentro contributed to the strengthening of the celebration of rituals, not only of an evangelical character, but also paradoxically as unifiers of the Indigenous peoples and as opportunities to continue with their own rituals and customs: “The relationship between the churches and the mountain paths was the mechanism used to evangelize the Indians of Tierradentro. On the other hand,

the building of churches seems to have ignored another type of spatial arrangement.”³⁰¹ Paredes remarks how this special organization facilitated the defense of their culture: “the native structuring of the territory, besides having been the basis for the early doctrines, defined the relationship that the Paéz established with the churches.”³⁰² The chapels, particularly in this region, were frequently set on fire.

As a sign of opposition to Christian missions, this burning of the chapels became an symbol of resistance manifested in architecture, not only during the Colonial period but also in contemporary times. In Tierradentro there have been constant uprisings as well as peaceful and violent protests aimed at shedding greater light on the problems of Indigenous people and obtaining a response from the government. So these Colonial places of indoctrination have been used as visual symbols of the resistance of the Nasa-Paéz people.

Nowadays, those chapels continue to be a symbol of resistance to political and cultural processes that have failed to acknowledge Indigenous autonomy. It was from this that the CRIC developed the notion of “*retoma cultural*” (cultural reclamation).³⁰³ This social process began as an alternative reenactment of cultural activities pre-dating colonization, which ultimately disappeared with Christian indoctrination. The evangelizing presence in Tierradentro was of great importance in Nasa-Paéz history, because it provoked Indigenous resistance. Similarly, policies implemented in the 1970s triggered a new resistance movement, this time a cultural one, in response to contemporary

³⁰¹ Paredes, *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial*, 143. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “la relación entre las iglesias y los recorridos fue el mecanismo empleado para evangelizar a los Indios de Tierradentro. Por otro lado, la edificación de iglesias parece haber dejado al margen otro tipo de ordenamiento espacial.”

³⁰² Ibid., 143. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “la estructuración nativa del territorio, además de haber sido la base para las primeras doctrinas, definió la relación que los Paéz establecieron con las iglesias.” For more information see: Roberto Ameneiro. “Las Iglesias Paeces de Tierradentro”. *Apuntes. Revista de Estudios Sobre Patrimonio Cultural* 13, (1976): 17-37; Alexandre Surralles, and Hierro Pedro. *Tierra Adentro: Territorio Indígena y Percepción del Entorno*. Lima: IWGIA, 2004.

³⁰³ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007)

colonizing processes. As a result, different rituals promoted by the CRIC were implemented by the different *resguardos* that were progressively growing into what they are today.³⁰⁴

Gradually, a new understanding of Indigeneity and traditional belief has emerged. Important contemporary tributes today form a significant part of political and cultural recovery.³⁰⁵ These include the following rituals, among others: *Ipx fxicxanxi* (ombligada ritual), *Khabu fxizehnxi* (Staff of command harmonization), *Sek Buy* (Nasa-Paéz new year celebration), *Saakhelu* (seeds ritual), *Çxapuç* (Offers to the spirits), and the dance of the *chucha* which pays tribute to *Nasa Yat*.³⁰⁶ These are examples of the restoration of traditional culture through ritual and tribute. They serve as a reinforcement of cultural identity, as a form of peaceful protest, and as a way to “thank the spirits.”³⁰⁷

The *Saakhelu* is one of the most important rituals of the Nasa-Paéz. It involves annual participation by the communities of all Nasa-Paéz *resguardos*, who through it pay tribute to *Nasa Kiwe* for the benefits received, for the new lands acquired, and for the declaration of new political goals:

The *Saakhelu* is a sacred ritual where community participation is the main objective; we mingle together to share, to be happy, to dance and make offerings to our spiritual guardians, to the memory of our ancestors and elders, who are the symbol of harmony, the balanced relationship that must exist between man and nature as a fundamental element of life; [it] is a spiritual feast. *Saakhelu* is a ceremony of fertility, fecundity and prosperity in the Nasa world; it is an offering of gratitude and reconciliation that the Nasa nation makes to the guardian spirits of mother nature.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ “Sek Buy, Ritual Sagrado de los Pueblos Ancestrales del Territorio Caucaño,” Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), accessed July 15, 2018, <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/sek-buy-ritual-sagrado-de-los-pueblos-ancestrales-del-territorio-caucano/>.

³⁰⁵ For more on contemporary tributes and rituals and its relationship with authority, balance, harmony, defense of territory, as well as autonomy see: Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus, *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena*, 30; Joris J. Van de Sandt. *Behind the Mask of Recognition — Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia*. Library of the University of Amsterdam, 2007.

³⁰⁶ Simbología de la Danza de la Chucha. Nasa ACIN, 2018. <https://nasaacin.org/el-ritual-de-la-danza-de-la-chucha-simbolo-de-armonia-y-equilibrio-de-la-familia-nasa-con-la-madre-naturaleza-se-realizo-en-la-ie-tecnica-kwesx-piya-yat/>

³⁰⁷ Heriberto Galeano Trilleras, *Tulpa de Pensamiento* (Popayán: FUP Fundación Universitaria de Popayán, 2016), 30.

³⁰⁸ As quoted in Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Gran Ritual Sagrado Saakhelu Kiwe Kame* (Popayán: CRIC, 2018). My translation. The original in Spanish: “El Saakhelu es un ritual sagrado donde la participación comunitaria es el objetivo principal, nos integramos para compartir, estar alegres, danzar y ofrendar a

Tradition, as reflected in contemporary tributes, was not always evident: the interruption of ritual during the Colonial period and subsequent era of the Republic was determined by political and economic interests. In a *Saakhelu minga* in Tacueyó in which I had the opportunity to participate, I found evidence of how the *mingas* and festivities are conducive to establishing not only symbolic cultural continuity, but also political survival.³⁰⁹

Contemporary tributes are transformative for the community. They result from an engagement with precolonial tradition, which is recovered or reclaimed as a form of defence of belief and territory. The convergence of present day circumstance and past ritual reflects the desire and need to align social and cultural concerns in support of resistance. Ritual and tribute create a collective strategy of visibility in *Nasa Kiwe* which strives to expand through peaceful protest, following the mandates of elders and Indigenous leaders.³¹⁰

In the specific case of the *Saakhelu*, the contemporary ritual pays tribute to the bounty of *Nasa Kiwe*, and is dedicated to consecration of seeds. Traditionally, *Saakhelu* have developed as a community ritual, where every August the people come together for an opening ceremony with drums and flutes to give the respective offerings to *Nasa Kiwe* (Fig. 1.20). The ritual acknowledges mother earth for cultivation and for the harvest obtained.

nuestros guardianes espirituales, a la memoria de nuestros ancestros y mayores, quienes son el símbolo de armonía, la relación armónica que debe existir entre hombre y la naturaleza como elemento fundamental de la vida, es una fiesta espiritual. El Saakhelu es una ceremonia de fertilidad, fecundidad y prosperidad en el mundo Nasa, es ofrecimiento de gratitud y reconciliación que la Nación Nasa hace a los espíritus guardianes de la madre naturaleza.”

³⁰⁹ *Minga Saakhelu* Tacueyó Kwet Yu’-Thakwe Yu’. Tacueyó, Cauca. August 17 – 20, 2016.

³¹⁰ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, *Gran Ritual Sagrado Saakhelu*.



Fig. 1.20, *Saakhelu* Ritual in Tacueyó. Photo by author.

The *Saakhelu*, manifesting a contemporary connexion between the Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa Kiwe*, is celebrated through dancing, singing, and the exchange of seeds between different *resguardos*; the seeds are then carried home to be planted and harvested in the territory of the recipients. This tribute has become a political celebration of resistance. It symbolizes belonging and defence of the territory, and in it mountains represent “guardian spirits.”³¹¹ Fig. 1.20 is a clear representation of Nasa-Paéz unity. People from different *resguardos* gather to dance, to celebrate, to pay tributes, but most importantly to safeguard their territory, their beliefs, and the political strategies that are developed while the community dances. The contemporary ritual makes visible the recovery of culture.

³¹¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 134.

These aspects of the *Saakhelu* are also rendered visible in the architecture of the *Yatzungas* associated with it. The *Yatzungas* or communal houses unify people from the different *resguardos* (Fig. 1.21). They play an important role in the *Saakhelu*'s celebration of their territory and their relationship to it as the fundamental axis of the Nasa-Paéz.

As mentioned earlier, defence and resistance are important in the *resguardo*. These tributes and communal places create a unique space in which to demonstrate and send messages of cultural proclamation calling for the vindication of Indigeneity and for territorial and cultural recovery. In spite of being an only recently revived ritual, the *Saakhelu* represents the intention to reclaim the specificity of the community's past through contemporary cultural activities that provide a meeting place and the potential to share ideas.

Territory thus conceived is thus far more than spatial delimitation; it is a place that defines political direction while also providing a collective identity. Understanding territory holistically, the relationship between the "great house" – conceived as the greater home of the Nasa-Paéz – and the *Yat* is confirmed during the *Saakhelu*. *Yatzungas* – communal houses – are a revival of the traditional *resguardo* architecture. These houses conserve traditional forms, but they also incorporate contemporary elements to represent contemporary evolution, unity and strength (Fig. 1.21).

To perform the *Saakhelu* ritual, it is necessary to have an ancestral living place, a *Yatzunga* made of straw, and wooden supports, just like the *bohío* or traditional Kogi house. It must be built in a place properly selected by elders, and crowned with the image of the Andean condor – the largest flying bird in the world – that represents the Nasa-Paéz as "the sons of the new chiefs."³¹²

³¹² Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 137.



Fig. 1.21, *Saakhelu* and *Yatzunga* in Tacueyó *resguardo*. Photo by author.

The construction of the communal house is an activity shared equally by attendees of the *minga*. During construction of the *Yatzunga*, suitable offerings are made for this type of event; *chicha* is drunk; *mambear* (coca leaf) is chewed; traditional dances are performed; and political meetings between Indigenous leaders, Indigenous council governors and elders take place.

Rappaport describes how cultural and political authority encourage the exercise of communal ritual participation: “This ceremony ensures the wellbeing of the community and the integrity of the council. Occasionally, a similar ritual is conducted on the riverbank. The entire council, accompanied

by shamans, spends the night atop the *ta'*.”³¹³ It is believed that such tributes originated with the *caciques nuevos*; such rituals form part of Nasa-Paéz demonstrations of loyalty to their new territories, and are in continuity with them.

I maintain that the array of rituals, including the architecture of *Yatzungas*, are not only a tribute to *Nasa Kiwe*, but also demonstrate how resistance has evolved from burning colonial chapels to building traditional houses as part of the symbolic construction of territory. In every single *minga* in which I have been able to participate, there is always a ritualistic ceremony that is performed, but the *Saakhelu* continues to be of the utmost importance. Through this event *Nasa Kiwe* proves itself central to the proclamation and appropriation of the territory of the Nasa-Paéz.

Today, new tributes like this are a significant component of Nasa-Paéz “research through dreams.” They realize the notion of territory as it is articulated in the testimony of Vitonás Noscué: as a connector of realities, as a place in constant transformation, and as the heart of the people.

Hence, one might view contemporary rituals and all that it contains as being both political and spiritual. It re-legitimizes the political and cultural goal of territorial autonomy and of the defense of Indigenous beliefs; it reinforces the world view articulated in the Nasa-Paéz notion of territory and their relationship to it. In both senses it can be said to shape the architecture of the Nasa-Paéz territory.

³¹³ As quoted in Joanne Rappaport, “*Territory and Tradition*”, 344.

Chapter 2 *Tulpa* - Hearth — Symbolism and Representations.

“The spiral is a Nasa symbol that means thinking from the hearth. If we think that way, being aware of what we are and the true meaning of our origin, our culture will never disappear.”³¹⁴

Chapter two, setting out its vision of research from the *tulpa* or hearth, analyzes how, the hearth is a focus for Nasa-Paéz generation of cultural and social connection through the voices of elders and women.³¹⁵

The Nasa-Paéz law of origin, and the rituals that are generated around the burial of a newborn’s navel, show the connection that this community has with territory and how, through this ritual, different relationships are generated related to inhabiting a sacred place. Those relationships, among their other concerns, facilitate acquisition of skills to recognize and defend the territory through peaceful activities; they promote new ritualistic approaches in a process of cultural revindication and territorial restitution.³¹⁶

The symbology of *Nasa-Kiwe*, understood as a great house, becomes a form of adaptation to the continuous natural and violent displacements in the history of the Nasa-Paéz people.

Understanding *Nasa Kiwe*, dwelling and planting in the *Nasa Yat* and the *tull*, promoting contemporary rituals and tributes, and understanding cultural practices like the *minga*, facilitate a new embodiment of tradition and contemporary beliefs. The Nasa-Paéz, amidst constant violence and displacement, created pedagogical projects to nurture and defend their culture. This is one of the central roles of the *Nasa Yat* and *tull*: they are key elements of ancestral memory and territorial

³¹⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El espiral es el símbolo Nasa que significa pensar desde el Corazón. Si pensamos de esta manera, siendo conscientes de lo que somos y del verdadero significado de nuestro origen, nuestra cultura nunca desaparecerá.” Mariano Welwéch, Interview by author, *Minga* Caldono. Cauca, March 18, 2018.

³¹⁵ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

³¹⁶ Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi “La Metamorfosis de la Vida”* (Toribío Cauca: Cabildo Etnoeducativo Proyecto Nasa, 2010), 136. For more on Colombian Andes ritualistic approaches, see: Ann Osborn, *The Four Seasons of the U’wa: a Chibcha Ritual Ecology in the Colombian Andes*. Sean Kingston, 2009.

defense.³¹⁷

Nasa-Paéz traditions and beliefs open a window to better understand the relationship between the community and its territory, as their people seek to create a harmonious dwelling that takes the natural and cultural context into account through dignity, symbology, boundaries, territorial expansion, protection, and cultural vindication.

Active community participation through the *mingas* is therefore deemed important from the vision of research from the hearth, in which the *tulpa*, as a way to connect with the spirits represented currently by the wisdom of the elders and women, enables the community to unite and generate their own policies for the common good.

³¹⁷ María Patricia Farfán S. “Nasa Kiwe: Defensa del Territorio”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto De Colombia, 2018.

2.1 Law of Origin and the Eternal Return

Soledad Martínez Cápi Testimony

My entire family was from Tierradentro; my parents and grandparents lived there all their lives, and I lived there until after the landslide. There were in fact several landslides but we finally had to move to the “Nuevo Tóez” *resguardo* in 2011. Our Tóez house in Tierradentro was made of *bahareque* (a construction system used by indigenous peoples consisted of reeds or sticks of cane with a mud finish, sometimes referred to by the English term “wattle and daub”); it was a big house where we lived with my grandparents, parents, and siblings; at that time, I was unmarried [...].

I remember my parents and grandparents spoke Paéz but I preferred to speak Spanish because that was what we spoke at school with my friends. It was then that everything began to get worse because we lost our language, which is what truly identifies us as Nasa but, at that moment, it didn’t seem that important [...]. The elders say that was why the avalanche happened, for the Earth to kick us out of there, because we were losing our traditions, and the mountain and the spirits became enraged [...].

I remember the house was big because we also had an orchard and the river—the house was near the river so the avalanche took it away—and we all worked the land in *minga*, because when there was something big to do, our neighbors used to come and help [...].

My grandmother was the one who really ruled our home along with my mother; they were always doing something at home, cooking, planting, weaving. My grandma used to weave *jigras* and *mochilas*, and it was she who taught us to weave around the *tulpa* or moving from one place to another. Women walk and weave, because weaving is part of our body, is part of our mind. What is in our mind is expressed through the act of weaving, in the *mochilas*.

[...] at home we were always around the *tulpa*, because it was a big house with only two rooms and the hearth, where everything happened; we chatted, ate, wove and everything there at the *tulpa*; we were even born around the *tulpa*. I was born in that house with a midwife, a *Thê’wala*, who would arrive before childbirth and harmonized the house and the people in it, so that everything would come out all right and, at birth, the *Thê’wala* returned and performed other rites for the newborn, and buried the navel in the *tulpa*. Every Nasa buries their navel somewhere in the house. I have mine buried there at Tóez, so, although I now live far from my home, my mind is always there [...].

Burying our navel is very important because, as Nasa, we belong to the territory, and to belong, we have to plant it. That has great meaning, and, if their [navel] has been buried, a Nasa never abandons that territory. That is important because if one does abandon it, then there will be no one to inhabit and defend it, so our history as a whole, from our ancestors to the youngsters, begins in the house, at the *tulpa* because without the *tulpa* and the house, we lose our tradition.

[...] truly, here in Nuevo Tóez, we try to recover our tradition and there is a *Yatzunga* to gather us together, but, as you can see, the houses now are made of brick, with tiled roofs, [and] we don't even have anywhere to grow crops: they are not like the old houses. That's why the *Yatzunga* in the middle of the *resguardo* is important; because everyone sees it, we can all participate in *mingas* at the *tulpa* and see how the "spiral" made of tree trunks around the fire keeps us from forgetting that our lives begin in the house, in the *tulpa*.³¹⁸

Soledad Martínez Cápi's testimony shows how conviction about and appropriation of tradition

engender women's action. The Nasa-Paéz, against all odds and external influences, search for ways to

persist over time. Congruent with the establishment of a cultural territory, places and events become

³¹⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: "Mi familia siempre fue de Tierradentro, allá toda la vida vivieron mis papás y mis abuelos, yo viví allá hasta cuando paso la avalancha, la verdad pasaron varias avalanchas pero ya nos sacaron de allá para acá al resguardo "Nuevo Tóez" en el 2011. La casa de Tóez en Tierradentro era de Bahareque, era una casa grande donde vivíamos con mis abuelos, mis papás y mis hermanos, en ese momento yo no me había casado. Yo me acuerdo que mis papás y mis abuelos hablaban Paéz pero yo ya prefería hablar español porque eso era lo que hablábamos en el colegio y con los amigos. Ahí fue cuando todo comenzó a empeorar porque ahí comenzamos a perder la lengua que es lo que realmente nos identifica como Nasa pero en ese momento eso no era tan importante. Los mayores dicen que por eso pasó lo de las avalanchas y que la tierra nos sacara de allá, fue que estábamos perdiendo las tradiciones y la montaña y los espíritus se enfurecieron [...].

Me acuerdo que la casa era grande porque además de eso teníamos el cultivo, teníamos el río –la casa era cerca al río por eso fue que se la llevo la avalancha– y todos trabajábamos la tierra en *minga* porque cuando había algo que hacer grande pues venían los vecinos y familia a ayudar. Mi abuela era realmente la que mandaba en la casa con mi mamá, ellas siempre estaban haciendo cosas en la casa, cocinando, sembrando, tejiendo, mi abuela tejía jigras y mochilas y ella fue la que nos enseñó a tejer alrededor de la *tulpa* o caminando de un lado para otro. Las mujeres caminan y tejen pues tejer es como parte de nuestro cuerpo, lo que esta en nuestra cabeza se ve el tejido, en las mochilas en todo lo que hacemos.

[...] en la casa siempre estábamos alrededor de la *tulpa*, pues era una casa grande solo tenía dos cuartos y el fogón y ahí era donde todo pasaba, se conversaba, se comía, se tejía de todo se hacía ahí en el fogón, hasta nacíamos alrededor de la *tulpa*. Yo nací en esa casa con partera, ahí llegaba el *Thê'wala* antes del parto y armonizaba la casa y a las personas para que todo saliera bien y cuando se nacía, el *Thê'wala* volvía y hacía otros ritos para el que había nacido, y se sembraba el ombligo en el fogón. Todos los Nasa entierran el ombligo en algún lugar de la casa, yo tengo mi ombligo enterrado allá en Tóez por eso es que aunque viva ahora tan lejos de mi casa mi mente siempre esta allá [...].

Esa enterrada del ombligo es muy importante porque como Nasas, pertenecemos al territorio y para poder pertenecer y vivir en nuestro territorio pues tenemos que sembrarlo. Eso tiene un significado muy grande y es que si se entierra el Nasa nunca abandonara su territorio. Eso es importante porque si lo abandona pues ya no habrá quien lo habite ni lo defienda por eso toda nuestra historia de los pasados y de los jóvenes comienzan en la casa, en la *tulpa* porque si no hay *tulpa* ni casa se pierde la tradición nuestra [...].

Acá en Nuevo Tóez de verdad se hacen esfuerzos para recuperar la tradición, se hizo una *Yatzunga* para poder reunirnos pero como ven acá, ya las casas son de ladrillo, con teja, no tenemos ni siquiera donde sembrar, ya no es como la de antes. Por eso es importante la *Yatzunga* que esta en la mitad del resguardo porque hay todos la ven, todos podemos participar de las *mingas* en la *tulpa* y ver como el "espiral" que se hace con troncos alrededor del fogón no nos deja olvidar que en la casa, en la *tulpa* se inicia la vida nuestra." Soledad Martínez Cápi, Interview by author, *Minga* Resguardo Nuevo Tóez – Cauca. October 23, 2016. For more on Tierradentro landslide, see: Richard Olson, and Juan Pablo Sarmiento. "El Desastre de Cauca y Huila en Colombia no es Otro Armero". *Desastre y Sociedad*, 1995: 7-18; Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina. "El Desastre y La Reconstrucción de Paéz". *Revista Semestral de la Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina*, 3, (1995): 01-122.

interwoven with representations, actions and beliefs. As part of this concept, *Nasa Kiwe* is perceived as the place of origin in which culture is born and where the Nasa-Paéz dwell. These virtues promote a new mythology along with the rituals which reveal that reality.

This interpretation of territory becomes clear in the “great house,” in which, rather than being objects (mountain and house, distinct), territory as *Nasa Kiwe* is visualized as *being*. The Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa Kiwe* thus establish the web of relationships that make up the place of origin within the house as “house of the spirits,” visualized as a spiral corresponding to, integral to, and comprising their territory.³¹⁹

I first met Soledad Martínez Cápi in October of 2016 when I was returning from Toribío to Cali. Before reaching Cali, I had a meeting with elder Gonzalo Rivera at his house in the Huellas *resguardo*. At the meeting, Rivera mentioned that he had to travel to the Nuevo Toéz *resguardo* because a *minga* was to be held with leaders from different *resguardos*. Rivera suggested that I accompany him to the community meeting and get to know the *resguardo* –until then, I had not had access to Nuevo Toéz– and thereby see the *Yatzunga* and share with the community.

Upon entering Nuevo Toéz, I saw a contemporary architecture that had nothing to do with the traditional *bahareque* from Toéz and Tierradentro (Fig. 2.1). Its small brick houses, some prefabricated, with zinc roofs, showed a lack of character and insufficient space to house a traditional family.

³¹⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121. For more on Indigenous policies and traditional territories see: Ginna Montoya. et al. *Poder en Espiral, Acción Política y Gobierno Propio en Territorios Ancestrales*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad del Cauca, 2015.



Fig. 2.1, Traditional *Bahareque* house in Tierradentro. Photo by author.

The southwestern Nuevo Toéz *resguardo* was created through the National Government with participation by different international entities as a new place for families affected by the avalanche of the Nevado del Huila in the Tierradentro region in 1994.³²⁰ Soledad's family was among those relocated here (Fig. 2.2).

At the end of the *minga*, Martínez Capi invited us to her home for something to eat and from there to continue my return journey to Cali. She told me the story of how she had arrived at Nuevo Toéz. Because of the avalanche, the Martínez Cápi family from Toéz in Tierradentro had suffered the loss of various family members along with their home, where the whole family had lived. After losing

³²⁰ David D Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and The Moral Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 63 – 69.

everything, various families were relocated to different newly southwestern *resguardo*, which in some cases led to the separation of some of their members.



Fig. 2.2, Nuevo Toéz *resguardo* houses. Photo by author.

Martínez voiced her desire to return to Tierradentro, her words expressing nostalgia when comparing how she had lived in Toéz and how she was living at that moment in Nuevo Toéz. She made comparisons between her traditional big house of *bahareque*, – where she would listen to the voice of elders and women, as she watched her mother and grandmother weave around the hearth– while glancing at her current house. Rather than express any unhappiness, she spoke of her dream to someday return to her ancestral territory.

Martínez expressed gratitude at having a roof under which to shelter, but said that she was sorry that she couldn't have a home fit for an Indigenous family, because its small size had led to separation of the family.

Emphasizing the lack of a hearth in this house, Martínez mentioned that “not being able to have a traditional space led to the loss of tradition, particularly among the new generations; not having a *tulpa*, the tradition of burial the newborn’s navel would be lost. We as women are the connectors to the house, to our territory.”³²¹ It was then that Martínez mentioned that her navel had been buried in her house in Toéz, which was why she felt that she must return to that place. The house and these rituals evidence the beginning of what the Nasa term “research from the hearth”.

Law of Origin

[...] we have laws of origin, which define and regulate our relationships with the cosmos and are as follows: To be true sons of the earth and to be together in the same house (Tierra-Nasa), we must follow the laws that the cosmic authorities gave us, along with the laws of behavior of which there are six: every six months, the family must practice the use of traditional medicine (tributes), do four general rituals for each *resguardo*, every year refresh the *varas de mando* for each council, put out the fire with rain or with the sun whenever necessary, and carry out the ritual for dialogue with the rain and the sun.³²²

The law of origin refers to the doorstep of the Nasa-Paéz built by the elders, which is given to the Nasa-Paéz for their benefit so that it may be used for good and to live in harmony with *Nasa Kiwe*. All symbolism and precepts governing the territory – as a house – are derived from it.³²³

³²¹ “No poder tener el espacio para una casa tradicional para los mas jovenes, no tener la tulpa hara que la ombilgada desaparezca. Nosotras las mujeres debemos continuar siendo las conectoras entre la casa y nuestra tierra.” Soledad Martínez Cápi, Interview by author, *Minga Resguardo Nuevo Tóez* – Cauca. October 23, 2016.

³²² As quoted in Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007), 43. My translation. The original in Spanish: “[...] tenemos leyes de origen, que definen y regulan nuestras relaciones con el cosmos son las siguientes. Para ser verdaderos hijos de la tierra y estar juntos en una misma casa (tierra- Nasa), debemos cumplir con las leyes que nos dejaron las autoridades cósmicas, o leyes de comportamiento, que son seis: cada tres meses la familia debe realizar los trabajos de medicina tradicional, (armonización), hacer cuatro rituales generales por resguardo, cada año refrescar las varas de mando por cada cabildo, hacer la apagada del fogón cuando sea necesario con la lluvia o con el sol (ritual mayor), ritual de diálogo con el sol y con la lluvia.”

³²³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 61, 126.

The *Proyecto Nasa* enables us to understand the place of the Nasa-Paéz in the territory and its work in the community. Ritual and beliefs are an essential part of the contemporary policy guidelines, the path on which this community acts in society. They are central to this society's understanding of its past and the bringing of that past into the present through traditional practices, which are what truly enable the Nasa-Paéz to understand and engage with their ancestral roots.

This is revealed in the following text that is part of the *Proyecto Nasa*, based on tradition and setting out the path the community must follow when inhabiting *Nasa-Kiwe*: “When a boy (or girl) is born, their navel must be buried; in the past, it was near the fire, nowadays it is in the left corner of the house, or in the *tull*, a task to be performed by a traditional physician, an elder or a midwife [...]. It is expected to apply animal fat to a newborn male so that when he grows up, he will be strong and a hard worker.”³²⁴

Thus, through the *Proyecto Nasa*, the construction of the *Nasa Kiwe* and *Nasa Yat* as place of origin has been strengthened. Its core intention, as already stated, is the restitution and defense of territory through rituals, cultural and political projects. By attending *mingas*, rituals and communitarian councils held by the mayor's office of Toribío, I had the opportunity to actively participate in academic proposals for architectural projects as part of their territorial plans and community necessities (Fig. 2.3 & 2.4).

³²⁴ As quoted in Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Proyecto Nasa, Cabildo Económico Ambiental* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal, Unidad Municipal de Asistencia Técnica Agropecuaria, 2011), 14. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Cuando un niño nace, el cordón umbilical debe ser enterrado. Antes se enterraba cerca del fuego, pero ahora se entierra en la esquina izquierda de la casa o en el *tull*. Este trabajo lo debe hacer el medico tradicional o mayor o la partera [...]. También se le debe poner grasa de animal al niño par que este sea fuerte y trabajador.”



Fig. 2.3, Design proposal following Nasa-Paéz beliefs – spiral and law of origin pattern. Andrés Romero. *Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2018.

Fig. 2.3 & 2.4 shows the urban and architectural proposal for the development of new *Yatzungas* in the CECIDIC following Nasa-Paéz traditional architecture and beliefs from non-Indigenous students³²⁵ I was able to see that *Nasa Kiwe* as the great house, for them, is an entity where Nasa-Paéz culture is created and endowed with knowledge.

Fig. 2,4 shows how the notions of *Nasa Kiwe* and *Nasa Yat* as place for the law of origin align with an ancestral world vision of the territory. That vision can be articulated as an unbreakable principle of truthful behavior towards the land and beliefs. According to the law of origin, if *Nasa Kiwe* is to be defended, it must be inhabited from the vision of research from the hearth, creating cultural connections through the voices of elders and women.³²⁶

³²⁵ A collaborative design project between Piloto de Colombia University School of Architecture and Toribío Town Council has been developed since 2013 through the Ecohabitat research group of the Architecture School at the Universidad Piloto de Colombia. Andrés Romero. *Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2018.

³²⁶ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.



Fig. 2.4, *Yatzungas* façades and design proposal following Nasa-Paéz beliefs: spiral pattern – law of origin. Andrés Romero. *Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2018.

The law of origin represented by the spiral and the ritual of burying the navel, symbolizes the birth of the Nasa-Paéz in a territory in which they must remain by inhabiting and defending it.³²⁷ In the context of living, relations extend like a web or fabric between *Nasa Kiwe* and *Nasa Yat*.

The act of burying the navel mirrors the act of weaving and sowing a seed. A sown seed allows life to germinate; likewise, when the navel is sown in the interior of the house, tradition also germinates, as a spiral that moves around the territory.

Indeed, by performing this ritual in the *Nasa Yat*, the house is made a creator of life. I argue that *Nasa Yat* is not a simple construction; on the contrary, Nasa-Paéz life is engendered in this architecture through tradition and the orality of its inhabitants. In doing so, the meaning of the ritual evolves as a creative activity and eternal construction of Nasa-Paéz life, what Niño Murcia describes as an illusion that alternates past and present: “the eternal return.”³²⁸

³²⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 136.

³²⁸ Carlos Niño Murcia, *Territorio Chamánico Una Mirada Desde la Arquitectura a la Manera Indígena de Construir y Ocupar el Territorio* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2015), 107.

Beliefs and rituals come from ancestral elders and women oral transmission and action, reestablished by the community. The continuity of their traditions is the first mandate a Nasa-Paéz receives, and becomes evident with the research from the hearth.³²⁹ The newborn's navel is buried or planted under the dwelling's hearth, so that it does not leave, and remains close to the community; thus, it remains tied to the territory as an origin not to be forgotten. The hearth, as point of departure for the law of origin, also means father, mother and daughter-son: "These axes can be symbolized as the 3 stones that form the *tulpa*, where we cook the *mote* for the *minga*, and our elders narrate the myths and pass on traditional knowledge."³³⁰

The Nasa-Paéz, anchored in their territory through the hearth-law of origin, believe that if there were no one who would care for, defend and inhabit the territory, the community would disappear.³³¹ Consequently, elders and women have the mission to watch over and take care of family traditions and as seen on Fig. 2.3 & 2.4 the territory and architecture is part of this. The elders delegate others to take care of the land, but anyone who inhabits it must work for the well-being and harmony of the territory.

On the other hand, various *mingas* promoted by CRIC propose to deal with territorial needs including requests for housing and land.³³² As the house is a representation of the law of origin, the birth of the resistance and defense of the territory, it has become an element of great value in the community's awareness of its own principles. I maintain that the foundation for territorial construction is the *Yat* itself.

³²⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 25 – 27.

³³⁰ As quoted in Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa* (Bogotá: Fundación Panamericana Para el Desarrollo, 2016), 4-5. My translation. The original in Spanish: "Los principios que nos rigen se representan dentro de nuestra concepción como la *tulpa*, que significa también padre, madre, hija. Estos ejes los podemos simbolizar como las 3 piedras que forman el fogón donde cocinamos el *mote* para la *minga*, donde nuestros mayores narran los mitos."

³³¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 40 – 44.

³³² *Ibid.*, 126.

The Nasa-Paéz abide by an ideal of permanence through respectful human intervention in *Nasa Kiwe*. They portray themselves as part of the territory, integrated into and integrating all of the beings and things that surround them. The creative (and created) figure of *Nasa Kiwe* is an essential part of the Nasa-Paéz being; it is present, and thus represented, in her (or his) immediate surroundings: the *Nasa Yat* as a representational space of territorial beliefs. Fig. 2.5 shows how the Nasa Paéz ritual of the burial of a newborn's navel, is performed to connect the child with the Earth and beliefs and thereby mobilize her (or his) abilities and skills to walk in and care for the territory.³³³



Fig. 2.5, Mural representation in Toribío of the Nasa-Paéz ritual of burial of the navel. Photo by author.

In this image the representation of *Nasa Kiwe* through the *mochila*, and the women in form of a mountain, connect the symbology of the Nasa-Paéz law of origin. The mural also represents the legacy of women in the processes of cultural preservation. It is therefore from the land, as Martínez mentions, that the meaningful aspects of Nasa-Paéz community take shape through simple activities

³³³ Ibid., 136.

like rituals, weaving and cultivation in and in relation to the great house - all part of the research from the hearth.³³⁴ These understandings result from lived experiences and cultural activities, including inhabitation, appreciation, defense and respect for the occupied territory.

Through the relationship between the Nasa-Paéz and the place they inhabit, one can understand the meaning of the law of origin and rituals in *Nasa-Kiwe*. From this territorial understanding, a new organization evolves that fosters resistance in search of freedom and equilibrium within *Nasa Kiwe*. From its inception, this form of cultural inhabitation generates a concern for territorial defense. Diverse ways of defending it from adversity emerge as a result.

Beliefs and Territorial Interpretation

The Nasa-Paéz approach to territory doesn't originate 'from motionless interactions'; instead, territory is a relationship, a connection of places and activities between the great house and its inhabitants. Rituals and beliefs mediate the order of the Nasa-Paéz world; they make territory a kind of place with the unique characteristic of reciprocity between the tangible and the intangible: "the eternal return."³³⁵ Geographic displacements, the consequence of historical circumstances and cultural perceptions of territory, gave rise to the Nasa-Paéz construction of place.

This interpretation of place in turn reflects the origins and evolution of their culture. After the events of colonization and modern protests, the Nasa-Paéz today strive to recover not only territory but also ancestral identity through their policies, culture, architecture and beliefs. The rationale of their tradition is framed in a mythical structure which, although partially pertaining to the world lived by their ancestors, has nonetheless changed and expanded to make room for contemporary

³³⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20, 136.

³³⁵ Niño Murcia, *Territorio Chamánico*, 107.

interpretations of historical events. This new cultural paradigm, necessarily hybrid, guides the new Nasa-Paéz generation in their weaving of life *Proyecto Nasa*.

As mentioned earlier, the Nasa-Paéz follow the law of origin and an understanding of the meaning of *Nasa Kiwe* based on the concept of the great house. Such a relationship between community and place nurtures numerous analogies that facilitate an interpretation of ancestral knowledge: an elucidation that enables access to historical specificity.

Beliefs and historical events together provide cultural interpretations of the multiple connections between place and acts of dwelling. Thus, the cultural structure of the Nasa-Paéz is twofold in the sense of consisting of Colonial myths and contemporary concepts of the law of origin and territory. In search of their origins today, the Nasa-Paéz recreate their history with mythological accounts that imprint a distinctive character on their society in relation to other Indigenous communities.

The law of origin for the *Nasa-Paéz* began when they settled in the great house around a fire.³³⁶ The territory, the house, rituals and tributes tied the Nasa-Paéz to the territory and bound them to its defense. I argue that the hearth is an aspect of the house that represents ancestral origin, the place of dwelling, genesis among the forefathers and the principles that govern their existence as Nasa-Paéz: territory, organization, defense and culture. So doing, these elements simultaneously embodied the symbolism and awakening of a community in a new territory who faced a situation of perpetual appropriation of the land.

They are therefore represented in the three stones of the hearth, which is an important part of their symbology that engenders and evokes the creation of the Nasa-Paéz in the context of a comprehensive and holistic vision of their world.³³⁷ That vision is represented by the spiral form

³³⁶ Ibid., 54 – 55.

³³⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 41.

which, according to Nasa-Paéz beliefs, is represented by a snake.³³⁸ Beliefs become central to interpreting their history and appreciating how it has been understood over time. We might refer to this as their new mythology, in which beliefs and origin are combined.

The Snake and Law of Origin

Power and dominance have therefore been mostly associated with the snake who beholds the *Nasa Kiwe*, the centre and origin of their beliefs: “They caught a chief in the water and brought her to Lame. She liked to carry water from the river. One day, she entered the water and turned into a snake. She then returned home, but in human form. Then she went back to the river and was again transformed into a snake[...].”³³⁹ As described by Rappaport such visions shape the representation of the Paéz world.

The snake is of special importance for understanding *Nasa Kiwe*. With its movement and aggressiveness, the Nasa-Paéz snake moves forcefully to a new territory; the tradition might well be considered analogous to the history of Nasa-Paéz displacement. According to the elders’ voice regarding the law of origin of foundational chiefhoods, the places where the snake moves correspond to important sites that became contemporary *resguardos* high up on the Andes. The movement of the snake from the jungle plains to the mountain helps us visualize their likely lowland origins and beliefs.³⁴⁰

Although it seems that the snake regained its importance in Colonial times with different communities as a symbol of resistance, I would argue that the contemporary political meaning of

³³⁸ Ibid., 16

³³⁹ Joanne Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition: The Ethnohistory of the Paéz of Tierradentro, Colombia” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982), 134. For more on Andes cultural interpretation, see: Jason Wilson. *The Andes: A Cultural History*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

³⁴⁰ Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 136 – 138.

recovering territory as an extension of the spiral is of equal importance, because of the power and skills it represents. The Nasa Paéz *chumbe* or *taw*, a traditional woven ribbon representing the snake as a key emblematic element of community protection, is a symbol whose meaning extends beyond a simple relationship to its immediate surroundings.³⁴¹ The *chumbe* represents and encompasses the wisdom of the elders, what Wilches-Chaux refers to as “the belief and footprint of the elders.”³⁴²

The snake recovers its symbolism in relation to the Spanish colonizers, as a powerful representation of Indigenous being and territorial consciousness, which is still present in contemporary policies by means of *resguardo* expansion through the spiral that moves towards *Nasa Kiwe*.

The anaconda snake “myth of origin” appears in different Colombian Indigenous communities, with different inflections.³⁴³ In the Sesquile Indigenous community, for example, Oscar Chauta describes how the snake is part of contemporary cultural transformation in Cundinamarca. Even though Chauta represents a different Indigenous community, it nonetheless shares common experience between the Kogi and Nasa-Paéz: “The spiral represents the origin of the peoples of many Indigenous communities, where they would acquire all of the knowledge of the “elders” and once again return to the highlands. This represents the movement of wisdom.”³⁴⁴

Throughout Colombia, representations of the mythical snake are prominent; one finds carvings with snake figures not only in architectural spaces but also in objects for daily use like textiles and other artefacts. Such traditional expressions in everyday objects also include the

³⁴¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 183.

³⁴² Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 23. See also: Abraham Quiguanás. *Los Tejidos Propios, Simbología y Pensamiento del Pueblo Nasa*. Jámalo: Resguardo del Municipio de Jámalo, 2011.

³⁴³ Niño. *Territorio Chamánico*, 64 – 66.

³⁴⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El espiral representa el origen de los pueblos de muchas comunidades Indígenas, donde adquiriría todo el conocimiento de los 'Mayores' y regresaba nuevamente a las altiplanicies. Este ir y venir representa el movimiento de la sabiduría.” Oscar Chauta, Interview by author, Sesquile – Cundinamarca. February 15, 2014.

movement between lowlands and mountain. It appears in rivers and along pathways moving from the forest to the Andean mountain range.

Another beautiful representation of legitimization of the territory is described by Niño Murcia, who speaks of the Tukanos myth of origin, which has similarities with Nasa-Paéz lowland beliefs: “The river is a snake whose origin and strength are not in its head but in its mouth, where its power ascends to the heights of the river course, which is the end. They distinguish between water snakes, such as the anaconda, which represent the female principle of attraction and seduction, devourer and connector, and the earthly ones, which are the masculine aggressive principle and are frequently poisonous.”³⁴⁵

From this quote, it can be inferred that the Indigenous approach to territory doesn’t originate from a specific place, but instead from the vision of “research from the hearth” and the new mythology, through which the Nasa-Paéz find a cultural and social connection in the power of the snake, as well as the voices of elders and women -- all contributing to the symbolic construction of territory.

Other Representations of the Snake

Their mythology was linked to a central element: the protection that Indigenous communities received from mystical animals, which, it was also believed, transferred lowland wisdom to the high mountain. As an example of this creation as referred to by Reichel-Dolmatoff, the Tukanos from

³⁴⁵ As quoted in Niño. *Territorio Chamánico*, 54. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “El río es una serpiente cuyo origen y cuya fuerza no están en la cabecera sino en la desembocadura, de donde asciende su potencia hasta lo alto del cauce, que es el fin. Ellos distinguen entre las serpientes de agua, como la anaconda, que representa el principio femenino de atracción y seducción, devorador y enlazador y las de tierra, que son el principio masculino agresivo y a menudo venenoso.” For more on snake representations, see: Claudia Carranza, et al. *La Figura de la Serpiente en la Tradición Oral Iberoamericana*. Valladolid: Fundación Joaquín Díaz, 2017.

Vaupéz narrate the story of an anaconda coming from the sky and roaming towards the mountain, where the ancestors were born. In this myth, the anaconda originates in the sky but also connects to the earthly world, just as the *caciques* originate from it.³⁴⁶ For the Nasa-Paéz, a connection with the “law of origin” as represented in their former Colonial *caciques* continues today through the figure and voice of the elders, and women.

Elder Máximo Pavi from the *resguardo* of Tacueyó remarks how the relationships in Nasa-Paéz territory are closely linked to the defense represented in the form of Andean and Amazonian animals, thus affirming the origins of the community: “There are different relationships among the spirits who take care of the territory: there are three characters in charge of this function: the spirits who deal with human and animal behaviour, the condor watching from high above, and the snake, the anaconda, watching from down below.”³⁴⁷ We may therefore speak of multiple landscapes – coexisting and sometimes competing modes of engagement with a single character.

It can be observed that daily life for the Nasa-Paéz also includes a series of mythical-cultural practices inherent in a collective vision and beliefs. Elder Pavi in various *mingas* demonstrated –in events like ritualistic dances and *Yat - tull* places– how the spiral is present with different meanings, shapes and places. The image of the snake is present in various forms, particularly in the San Francisco *resguardo* (Fig. 2.6).

³⁴⁶ Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Amazonian Cosmos: The Sexual and Religious Symbolism of the Tukano Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971).

³⁴⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Hay diferentes relaciones entre los espíritus que deben cuidar el territorio, hay tres seres encargados de la función de vigilar el territorio: los espíritus, los que ayudan a vigilar el comportamiento humano y animal, el cóndor que nos vigila desde arriba y la culebra, la anaconda que nos mira desde la parte de abajo de la montaña.” Máximo Pavi, Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 14, 2018.



Fig. 2.6, Snake head next to a *Yatzunga* at CECIDIC. It symbolizes the elder's wisdom present in communal houses. Photo by author.

Fig. 2.6, shows the head of a snake at the entrance of a *Yatzunga* in the CECIDIC. The wisdom of the elders is represented by the head of the snake, which symbolize the power of the community. This is one of the largest heads that I was able to see during my field research, and I believe the size of the head corresponds to the importance of the community center where it is located. The CECIDIC is not only the place for important political and cultural mingas; it is also the most important place for the restoration of traditional education in Toribío *resguardo*.

In the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project, CECIDIC, and throughout the paths that connect this *resguardo* with the different villages, those who travel this territory are accompanied by the presence of the mythological snake. In their belief, it gives them “protection from birth to death.”³⁴⁸

During my field research, I found three forms of snake representation in *Nasa Kiwe*: the first is inside the *Nasa Yat*, in the hearth and in the *tulpa*; the second is a snake in movement as it crosses the *Nasa Kiwe*; and the third is the snake represented in the act of weaving. These three representations are particularly visible in the Toribío *resguardo*.

The difference between this *resguardo* and the others in *Nasa Kiwe* could be due to the fact that in Toribío traditional education projects are promoted more intensely than elsewhere. Indeed, the significant presence of the CECIDIC and the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project has made the inhabitants of Toribío more aware of these issues than residents of other settlements; they have in turn been important in facilitating the promotion of educational centers elsewhere.

Traditional Nasa-Paéz education has been a crucial factor in this imagining of *Nasa Kiwe* as a “house of spirits” in the form of a spiral and snake.³⁴⁹ The three different snake representations that I found are associated with the appropriation of the territory as a sacred space in which the vision of research from the hearth, and through the voices of elders and women, exemplify the connection between beliefs and dwelling in the great house.

First Representation

The first form of representation corresponds to the snake coiled like a snail and spinning around its own center. This coiled snake connects territory with beliefs, the spiral being a symbol of

³⁴⁸ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 183.

³⁴⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 128.

ancestral knowledge. The spiral also makes evident the connection between the spiritual world and human beings arising from *Nasa Kiwe*.

The representation of the spiral as law of origin is at the source of the contemporary *tull* and *Nasa Yat*. Fig. 2.7 illustrates how the spiral begins its journey in the hearth and extends through the house. The coiled snake is represented in the three trunks that are arranged inside the house in an spiral form, where the community gather together. During *mingas*, it was usual that the elder – characterizing the head of the snake – sit close to the hearth, and the other members of the community outwards.



Fig. 2.7, Hearth and three trunk spiral in a *Yatzunga* at CECIDIC. Photo by author.

From the hearth, the spiral expands outward into the territory through the *tull* – a contemporary place for cultivation within the *resguardo* –visualizing the movement outwards from the center of *Nasa Kiwe* that shapes the symbolic construction of territory.³⁵⁰ Fig. 2.8 illustrates how

³⁵⁰ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 54, 91.

the continuous movement of the spiral represents the enduring Indigenous presence in the territory and the intention to recover lost land. In political terms, this is the purpose of the CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa*. Their strategy, among others, is to seek to visualize Nasa-Paéz culture by appropriating territory, beliefs and rituals.



Fig. 2.8, Representation of the coiled snake in the spiral movement in the contemporary *tull*. Photo by author.

The spiral movement also represents the increasing development and strengthening of institutions. CRIC has declared that, in order to achieve social justice within the community, “it is necessary for all Indigenous associations, councils and communities to improve and claim of

collective memories that strengthen their identity as Indigenous peoples, respecting cultural expressions.”³⁵¹

We can infer that the spiral’s continual movement as an “eternal return” strategy,³⁵² is an answer of what the community is impressively trying to continue with their ritualistic practices of the law of origin and ritual of the burial of the navel, to connect the Nasa-Paéz with their territory and beliefs.

Ritualistic approaches to these daily actions weave together the mundane and spiritual dimensions of life. Ritual gives meaning to the praxis of living, as does the recognition of and respect for sacred places. Hence, the meaning of the coiled snake is more than an ephemeral expression. It is a spiral of harmonious connections in the great house between daily praxis, policies and beliefs – all connected in the Nasa-Paéz world view.

The Nasa-Paéz refer to the law of origin as a series of activities that relate places to inhabitants. These activities result in human intervention: the construction of a symbolic territory in which the coiled snake represents the place of origin of the great house, of refuge and stability, in balance with the act of appropriation, inhabitation and cultivation of the land through the *tull*. Furthermore, as Gow suggests, this place of permanence “is a purely Nasa space interwoven by and generated from their cosmovision;”³⁵³ it is from this idea of place that the territorial concept of strength and attachment is established.

Second Representation

³⁵¹ As quoted in CRIC. *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca*. 59. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Para llegar a ello es necesario que todas las Asociaciones, Cabildos, Programas y Comunidades, tengan presente la recuperación de las memorias colectivas que fortalezcan la identidad como pueblos indígenas y como organización, respetando las expresiones culturales.” For more on Indigenous memory and agency see: Ana Clelia Valencia and Alirio Piamba, et al. *Memorias de un Pueblo que Renace*. Mesa Local de Víctimas de Toribío. 2018.

³⁵² Niño Murcia, *Territorio Chamánico*, 107.

³⁵³ Gow, *Countering Development*, 156.

The second representation is the snake in motion across the *Nasa Kiwe*, roaming through the territory (Fig. 2.9). For the Nasa-Paéz, the snake moves from the lowlands and up the mountain, carrying wisdom with it while founding settlements with their respective chiefhoods. The snake then descends the mountain back to the plains. This movement between lowlands and up the mountains is performed by the elders when they go down to the Putumayo to acquire knowledge and then climb the mountain to share it with the community.



Fig. 2.9, Snake in motion drawing in Las Palmeras- López traditional school. Photo by author.

During my field research in López, I was able to visit las Palmas traditional school where teachers were displaying student works referring to the association of the snake in movement with ancestral wisdom. The drawing illustrates the movement of the snake from the lowlands to the

mountain, bringing wisdom of the ancestors from the Putumayo and Amazonas to the Cauca mountains. The snake head resembles the colonial *caciques* who roamed the land to establish the *resguardos*, as well as the head of elders; and the body of the snake connotes the *chumbes*, and the power of women embodied in the act of weaving.³⁵⁴

The elders as spiritual guides move like the mythical snake throughout the territory, back and forth from the lowlands to the mountain, in search of ancestral knowledge and to pay tribute to *Nasa Kiwe*. Movement becomes a symbol of the wisdom acquired in the lowlands, the birthplace of the Nasa-Paéz. Rappaport remarks how mythology and the sacred principle of inhabitation are related to the traditional construction of territory and beliefs: “the insistence on supernatural serpents, important in Amazonia, gave way to a new notion of topography that was more Andean, corresponding to a more Andean landscape.”³⁵⁵

The Nasa-Paéz therefore pay special attention to representing their knowledge and understanding of ancestral culture: they represent them in both terrestrial and celestial dimensions, in the mountains and sacred places –as a rhomboid– and the origin –spiral– with its inherent meanings.³⁵⁶ These representative places contain a cultural sacredness in their origin, and/or they are framed by historical events that are significant for the memory of their community.³⁵⁷

The *caciques nuevos* who contributed to the delimitation of the territory are seen as both terrestrial and spiritual beings because of their participation in this foundational action, and also because of their mythical origin as snakes moving from the Putumayo lowlands.

The figure of chief Juan Tama, who created his own myth around his origins, military achievements and political leadership, is represented in relation to contemporary policies: “Nasa

³⁵⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 183, 27.

³⁵⁵ Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 188.

³⁵⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 122.

³⁵⁷ Joanne Rappaport, *Tierra Páez: La Etnohistoria de la Defensa Territorial Entre los Paeces de Tierradentro, Cauca* (Bogotá: Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales, Banco de la República, 1982), 232.

territory belongs only to the Nasa, the Nasa do not mix with others and this territory shall always be defended for Nasa descendants.”³⁵⁸ From the above quote, we can infer that the *caciques* who accompanied this legacy demarcated a new geographical territory and gave not only natural boundaries to both sacred and ordinary places, but also support in our own time a contemporary Nasa-Paéz vision. Thus, that legacy endures through the representation of the snake in communal places, as well as the rituals that have become meaningful in contemporary *resguardos*. (Fig. 2.10) illustrates how the symbology of the snake connects and moves from one place to another through art.



Fig. 2.10, Located along the path between Toribío and San Francisco, the mural represents a snake in movement. Its body is associated with the *chumbes*. Photo by author.

³⁵⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: “En el caso del cacique Don Juan Tama, se manifiesta en las leyes que le encomendó a su pueblo: “el territorio Nasa es solo de los Nasa, los Nasa no se mezclan con otras razas, y se defenderá por siempre este territorio para los descendientes Nasa.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

The mural that moves from Toribío to San Francisco *resguardo* evidences a symbology representing elders and women as traditional leaders is motivated by contemporary policies of cultural vindication, embodied in the mythical snake throughout the territory.

The notion of the law of origin and related beliefs is tied to the understanding of unified place inherent in *Nasa Kiwe*. I argue that persistence of this notion is evident in contemporary Nasa-Paéz agency: social movements that are based on preservation and recovery of ancestral traditions and territories. In this context I found that the snake in movement become the source of memory and recovery.

The significance of the Nasa-Paéz territory is not revealed merely through physical documentation of that space; what truly matters is to be aware of what it means to the Nasa-Paéz. In this case murals as traditional expression are part and parcel.

That is, as Rivera describes, *Nasa-Kiwe* is understood as the place from which Nasa-Paéz wisdom comes, and that wisdom is gained through perception: “The spirits live up high and they guide us every day. That is why it is important to respect them and listen to what they say.”³⁵⁹

Rivera’s description, from the standpoint of research from the hearth, shows how, by understanding and listening to the elders and women voice from the place of the hearth at the centre of the house, the Nasa-Paéz transmit knowledge and cultural wisdom to the people and throughout *Nasa Kiwe*.

I conclude that the spiral’s endless movement and “eternal return” represented in the snake in motion provides an answer to the question of what the community is so impressively trying to do. Their ritualistic practices – the law of origin and the ritual of the burial of the navel – connect the new generations of Nasa-Paéz to the legacy of their ancestors as well as to contemporary beliefs.

³⁵⁹ My translation. The original in Spanish: “En la altura los espíritus viven y ellos nos guían todos los días por eso es importante ser respetuosos con ellos y oír lo que nos dicen.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

Third Representation

The third representation of the snake is in the act of weaving or *umya'*. Tradition and culture are preserved through beliefs and the promotion of shared pedagogical strategies based on the *Proyecto Nasa* “weaving of life.”³⁶⁰ The weaving of life of the Nasa-Paéz is a process of communication within *Nasa Kiwe*. It is implemented through the different *mingas* carried out in the territory, and invoked by women as they walk from one place to another while weaving and carrying a message (Fig. 2.11).



Fig. 2.11, Women walking and weaving as part of the *Saakhelu* ritual in the Tacueyó *resguardo*. Photo by author.

³⁶⁰ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 154 – 155.

The spiral and linear movements of the snake come together to give origin to Nasa-Paéz thought, which is born in the *Nasa-Yat* and moves through the territory. In the hearth, women's knowledge is passed from generation to generation through oral tradition and weaving, represented as a snake. Its body is associated with the *chumbes*, and the beginning of the *mochilas* that resemble the coiled snake.

Chumbes and *mochilas* are woven by women around the hearth and while walking across the *resguardo*. Hence, the promotion of cultural activities in Tacueyó through traditional weaving empowers Indigenous women in the symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe*. When a woman weaves, she creates and shares a cultural message to the community in the patterns of the *mochilas* and *chumbes*. Each geometrical figure in a *mochila* or *chumbe* has an specific meaning.

The women organization has been a platform encouraging political and social participation. During my field research I evidenced how the message carried by women walking and weaving has started to influence policies focusing on their needs, such as programs for the family, health and protection against domestic violence, in particular the role of the weaving of women in the *Proyecto Nasa Cxhab Wala Kiwe*.³⁶¹

As Martínez Cápi mentioned, weaving – like other activities from cooking to conversation – originates in the hearth. It is taught not only as an action but also with all its embodied knowledge and meaning. The way the assembly of the *mochilas* begins spiraling evokes the movement of the snake. The art of weaving is learned along with its symbolism, which, when used in the *mochilas* and *chumbes*, transmits messages that are only understood by those who comprehend the close relationships between the Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa Kiwe* (Fig. 2.12).

Every time I went to the Toribío *resguardo*, I tried to walk with the women to understand the meaning of walking and weaving. Although the action of walking and weaving also evokes the snake

³⁶¹ ACIN, “Tejido Mujer” accessed June 20, 2020, <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/#>

that moves along the territory, I argue that it is when roaming that the imagined symbols are most fully represented in the textiles.

When a woman weaves, it is believed that she connects with the spirits; the ritual of weaving creates pathways for connection between the earthly and the spiritual. Thus, the fabric and the law of origin ratify their ritual and mythological meaning by transmitting knowledge and thus preserving Nasa-Paéz culture as “footprint of the elders.”³⁶²



Fig. 2.12, *Chumbes* and *mochilas* from the house of weavers in Toribío Saturday’s market. Photo by author.

The *chumbes* also have a political character, because of their symbology. I maintain that *chumbes* are visual elements for protest and peaceful defense of the territory: the traditional colors of the red and green *chumbe* represent the territory permanently bathed in the blood of the Nasa-Paéz, in which each section of figures represents a different path in life. On the other hand, the *chumbe* also

³⁶² Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 23.

represents the law of origin; it is used to girdle the newborn, so that the birth of a new member of the Nasa-Paéz is associated with the serpent that is wrapped around its body as a symbol of protection.³⁶³

The *chumbe* also suggests the snake that moves through the territory, protecting *Nasa-Kiwe*; it forms part of the staff of command, which is woven by women and carried by the elders and guardians:

The ones used by the *Nehw'esx* or *cabildantes*, who hold some position in the council, have three *chumbes*. The *chumbes* carry the energies that Nasa women have, because they are very important people in the life of our community. They represent life, and teach and fill with balanced energy and harmony like *Uma Kiwe*. Therefore, this *Khabu* or *Tama* is what man must carry. The *Khabu* or *Tama* of the *Kiwe Thëgu* men have two *chumbes*, with the same meaning. Those of the *Kiwe Thëgu* women have two bows that symbolize the testicles of man. Those who are going to manage the *Khabu* or *Tama* must know the respect and responsibility that they must have, and the deep meaning that this element has, which is very sacred for the Nasa.³⁶⁴

From the above, we may infer how the notion of origin is based on the symbology and beliefs reflected in modern mythology. (Fig. 2.13) shows how carrying the staff of command, with its *chumbes* hanging from it, means walking, defending and protecting the symbolic territory. The Nasa-Paéz developed their modern mythology from the notion of chief Juan Tama and the *caciques nuevos* whose territorial actions are represented in the weaving spiral and the staff of command that moves through the territory to preserve and defend its culture.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 183.

³⁶⁴ As quoted in Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa. *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena*. 30 – 31. My translation. The original in Spanish: “El de los Nehw'esx o cabildantes, que son quienes ejercen algún cargo en el cabildo, tienen tres moñas. Las moñas que llevan son las energías que tienen las mujeres Nasa, por tratarse de personas muy importantes en la vida de nuestro pueblo. Representan la vida, educan y llenan de energía equilibrada y armónica lo mismo que Uma Kiwe (abuela tierra). Por consiguiente este Khabu o Tama es la que debe portar el hombre. Los Khabu o Tama de los Kiwe Thëgu hombres tienen dos moñas, con el mismo significado. Los de las mujeres Kiwe Thëgu, tienen dos moños que simbolizan los testículos del hombre. Quienes van a manejar los Khabu o Tama deben saber del respeto y responsabilidad que se debe tener, y conocer el profundo significado que tiene este elemento que es muy sagrado para los Nasa.”

³⁶⁵ Gow, *Countering Development*, 154 – Fig. 6.



Fig. 2.13, Elder in the midst of the harmonization ritual of *Khabu* or *Tama* and with *chumbes* in Santander de Quilichao mural. Photo by author.

Walking, defending and moving to a new territory implied spatial change, a different dwelling pattern, through which new limits had to be defined: new territorial boundaries for both ritual and everyday inhabitation.

Currently, the possibility of recovering ancestral lowlands has led the Nasa-Paéz to reaffirm their Putumayo and Amazonian origin, generating contemporary *resguardos* in recognition of their beginning, and returning to that place of origin not only in tradition but also through physical return, as Vitonás Tálaga, points out: “They have asked me to go to Putumayo to help the community in the process of land recovery, territories that used to belong to the Nasa people.”³⁶⁶

The spiral-snake symbol evolves into a new image of power and of the struggle to defend and claim *Nasa Kiwe*. As Martínez Capi mentioned, activities such as rituals, walking, defending,

³⁶⁶ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Me han pedido que ayude en el putumayo a organizar la comunidad para el reconocimiento de unos resguardos en tierras que fueron nuestras”. Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

weaving, working with and cultivating the land give meaning to the law of origin as represented in the snake, and show how appropriation of tradition engender women's action.³⁶⁷ To conclude, a network of relationships connects the territory from and towards places: the reciprocal relationship that the Nasa-Paéz maintain with the great house extends to their beliefs (Fig. 2.14).



Fig. 2.14, The great house interpretation in a communal house: the symbolic construction of territory. Photo by author.

Walking, roaming and becoming part of it is an experience of appreciation and understanding of place, whether inhabited or sacred, which may only be understood and valued by community consciousness that is deeply immersed in their territory. The Nasa-Paéz have undertaken the primordial task of protecting territory, through the great house.

³⁶⁷ Soledad Martínez Cápi, Interview by author, *Minga Resguardo Nuevo Tóez* – Cauca. October 23, 2016.

Finally, the research from the *tulpa* through the law of origin and rituals, to the various spiral and snake representations, establish the symbolic construction of territory in contemporary *Nasa-Kiwe*. The territory is understood as the great house, where the development of their cultural principles defines the Nasa-Paéz relationship with, and appropriation of, the territory. Beliefs, rituals and places give permanence and stability to ancestral culture in its contemporary form.

2.2 The inhabitable Sacred Place: Symbolism and Boundaries.

Ingrid Dayana León Testimony

To tell you the truth, I do not remember feeling the tradition back in Belalcázar the way I do here now. I came here some years ago, and, although I still go to Belalcázar from time to time when I visit my parents, I now feel that I am from here more than from there. In Belalcázar we have that big house where my family has always lived, my parents, my brothers, this is my grandparents' house. This is a traditional house with earthen floors, walls of *bahareque* and a *tulpa* inside and outside. I lived there all my life with my family, and although it is a true Nasa house, in my family they do not consider themselves Indigenous.

The truth is, people in Tierradentro neglect their roots more; there they do not want to be Indigenous because my parents and grandparents suffered so much for being Indigenous that they do not want to have anything to do with tradition; no one in my house there speaks Nasa, they consider themselves peasants [...].

When I first came to Toribío, they criticized me a lot, they asked me why I had come here if there I had everything, house, family—in fact all my family is really from there while here I have nobody—but I came because of friends in Belalcázar who said that at Toribío there were opportunities to work with Indigenous councils and there was a lot of talk about our culture [...]. That was my reason for coming to Toribío. I was tired in Belalcázar and wanted to do something different so I ended up working at the CECIDIC.

When I started working at the CECIDIC and saw all that they do around here to recover culture with an education of our own, I realized that was what I wanted to do, work with youngsters so they would not have to live through what I had to; [despite] being Indigenous, my parents and family do not accept it and believe or live like something they are not, as if they were [non-Indigenous]peasants. I know that inside they know they are Nasa and would like to live like Indigenous people, but they are old and will not change their thinking. Although every time I visit my parents, they ask me what I'm doing in Toribío, what am I doing working with 'Indios,' the truth is that this empowers me more and makes me feel prouder of the work I'm doing.

Here at the CECIDIC, I have had my best life experiences. It is impressive how the work of recovering what is ours has begun to be manifested. That is what's most gratifying because, as Indigenous [people], we must know where we come from and must promote that love for what we are with the young ones. Now that they are building the new *Yatzunga* here, it is very good to see how the students understand the meaning of that house, and learn by doing, so that when their turn comes, they will be able to pass on the wisdom they have received from their elders.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: "En Belalcázar la verdad yo no me acuerdo que se sintiera la tradición como acá para este lado. Yo me vine para acá hace ya varios años, y aunque sigo yendo de vez en cuando para la casa

In spite of difficulties and limitations inherent in her family life in relation to her new life and work, Leon's testimony offers specific evidence of how a life-changing process also meaningfully touches the lives of others, acting as agents for the cultural change proclaimed by the Nasa-Paéz. One can equally appreciate the impact that people with clear objectives and proceeding in the context of cultural restoration policies can have on their society. In this case that impact takes place through an "act" of self-construction that involves creating their experiential world and the symbolic construction of territory through representations and beliefs. In this way, their ancestors' wisdom connects to the contemporary world to establish a traditional history. Dwelling in a place with such singular connotations as *Nasa Kiwe* allows for a deeper understanding of cultural phenomena.

I met Ingrid Dayana León in March of 2016 at the CECIDIC. As the academic secretary at this traditional educational institution, she helped me to manage my visits and my stays at the student dormitories. In the course of my journeys across the territory, her kindness and closeness led to a

de mis papás yo ya me siento más de aquí que de allá. En Belalcázar esta la casa grande en donde siempre ha vivido toda mi familia, mis papas, mis hermanos y hasta mis abuelos vivieron ahí. Esa casa es una casa tradicional con piso en tierra, de bahareque y tiene su tulpá adentro y afuera. Allá viví toda la vida con mi familia, y aunque la casa es una casa Nasa de verdad, mi familia ya no se considera Indios. La verdad es que en Tierradentro la gente está más negada a sus raíces, allá la gente no quiere ser indio porque pues la verdad es que como los antepasados sufrieron tanto siendo Indios pues ellos ya no quieren nada que ver con la tradición, allá en mi casa nadie habla Nasa, allá se consideran campesinos. Cuando me vine para Toribío me criticaron mucho, me decía que para que me venía para este lado si yo allá tenía todo, la casa, la familia, —es que toda mi familia realmente es de allá yo acá no tengo a nadie— pero pues me vine porque había compañeros que decían en Belalcázar que para el lado de Toribío había oportunidades de trabajar con los cabildos indígenas y se habla mucho de la recuperación de la cultura nuestra. Ese fue el motivo para que me viniera a Toribío, estaba cansada en Belalcázar y quería hacer algo distinto y así fue que terminé acá trabajando en el CECIDIC. Cuando comencé a trabajar en el CECIDIC y vi todo lo que hacían acá por recuperar la cultura con una educación que es nuestra, me di cuenta que esto era lo que quería hacer, trabajar con jóvenes para que no les pase lo que me pasó a mí, que siendo indígena, mis papás y familia no aceptan eso y se creen o viven como algo que no son como si fueran campesinos. Yo sé que en su interior saben que son Nasa y que quisieran vivir como indígenas, pero ellos ya están viejos y ya no van a volver a cambiar lo que piensan. Aunque cada vez que voy a mi casa mis papás me dicen que es lo que hago en Toribío, que hago trabajando con indios, la verdad eso me empodera más y me hace sentir orgullosa del trabajo que hago. Aquí en el CECIDIC he tenido mis mejores experiencias de vida. Es impresionante como el trabajo de recuperar lo nuestro ha comenzado a dar frutos. Eso es lo más gratificante porque uno como indígena debe saber de dónde viene y debe promover ese amor por lo que es uno con los jóvenes. Ahora que están en estos días haciendo las nuevas construcciones aquí de la nueva *Yatzunga*, es muy bueno ver como todos los estudiantes entienden el significado que la casa tiene, que lo aprenden haciendo para que cuando les toque a ellos con sus hijos puedan enseñarles toda la sabiduría que los mayores les han brindado a ellos.” Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 18, 2016.

close friendship that continues into the present.

As an Indigenous member of the staff at the CECIDIC, Ingrid was delegated on most of my journeys to accompany me in field research within the different *resguardos*. She also told me about the cultural and ritualistic activities that took place in the territory, helping me to obtain the different permits so that I could take part.

Our journeys in the *chiva* between the different *resguardos*, to participate in *mingas* and rituals, allowed us to share in the daily aspects of working and personal life. This closeness helped me to gain a more authentic perspective regarding the Nasa-Paéz reality on both sides of Andean central mountain range: Belalcázar-Tierradentro, as the place where Ingrid came from, and Toribío as a place of work at the CECIDIC.

The Act of Inhabiting

The *Nasa Yat*, more than a piece of property or a building that generates benefits for human beings, is a living thing, with its own knowledge, talent and qualities. In other words, it perceives and feels and has its own subjectivity. This means that a link or relationship is established between the *Nasa Yat* and all other beings in the universe: from subject to subject more than from subject to object.³⁶⁹

The Nasa-Paéz have established unbroken communication between humans and other beings through traditional practices and the concept of territory as a house: the great house, a territorial interaction, which comes from a culture that practices this communication in every action taken, and generates

³⁶⁹ As quoted in Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos, *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios*, 143. My translation. The original in Spanish: “El *nasa yat*, más que un bien inmueble o edificación que genera beneficios al ser humano, es un ser vivo con su propio saber, don y atributos. Es decir, que percibe y siente, que tiene su propia subjetividad. Lo que significa que, entre *nasa yat* y los demás seres del universo se establece una relación de tipo intersubjetivo, de sujeto a sujeto, más que de sujeto a objeto.”

traditions as legacies for future generations.³⁷⁰ That mythical great house takes as its model actual houses: the traditional houses of the Nasa-Paéz, known as the *Yat* and the *Yatzunga*, which is used for family and communal purposes respectively.

As mentioned earlier, on my first field research trip to Toribío, Ezequiel Vitonás, who was then the mayor of Toribío, was driving us from Caloto to Toribío. The first thing he mentioned during our conversation was his desire to promote different cultural projects in the community. He said it was very important to have the presence of people educated in different fields to thus have a variety of projects and not focus activities only on agriculture and commerce.

He clearly referred to the presence of my colleague Iván Erazo – who had introduced me to Vitonás, and the Nasa-Paéz community – and me, because he immediately mentioned his idea for an architectural project: he had governmental funding to build housing for the community. Upon our arrival in Toribío, Vitonás introduced me to Eyder Wulson Ul Ascué, a Nasa-Paéz architect who said that our presence in the territory would be welcome as long as my research and proposals adhered to the guidelines of ancestral thought.

That was the principle established by Vitonás and followed by the other Indigenous governors and elders, concerning a proposal for the study of the *Nasa Yat*. The research was to focus on understanding its significance for the Nasa-Paéz and its value as a cultural referent.³⁷¹ It was suggested that particular importance had to be placed on territorial thinking, place making and dwelling, in which the *Nasa Yat* is constructed as a reflection of acquired knowledge.

The *Nasa Yat* is therefore the “territory of beings” that contains the knowledge of its culture

³⁷⁰ María Patricia Farfán S., “Indigenous Traditional Practices”. *Conference Presented at the Second Annual National CAISES Conference, Canadian Indigenous Advisory Council (CIAC) of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)*. Montreal, McGill University, 2019.

³⁷¹ Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by author, Caloto – Cauca. February 7, 2014. See also: Fikret Berkes, Colding, Johan, and Folke Carl. "Rediscovery of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as Adaptive Management". *Ecological Applications* 10.5 (2000): 1251-1262.

within it.³⁷² The *Nasa Yat* has great significance because it is viewed as more than an architectural object; instead, it is alive and a vessel for life through the law of origin.

It can be shown from the vision of research from the hearth that the acts of dwelling, roaming, defending, weaving and planting are related to the assertion of belonging to a particular place. This is true, just as the act of weaving for the Nasa-Paéz provides a bond to ancestral knowledge, connecting the terrestrial world with the spiritual realm. Thus, inside the *Nasa Yat*, there are two links: to a territory which they continue to recover and defend, and to mythological and spiritual content that enables the Nasa-Paéz inhabiting the *Nasa Yat* to acquire ancestral wisdom through oral tradition.

These actions are elements of connection, not only with material things that are visible in *Nasa Kiwe*, but also with the immaterial. Tradition strengthens memory, rituals, tributes and beliefs, invaluable for enabling this community to uphold its cultural practices.

During my field research I was able to appreciate how the *Nasa Yat* is part of the culture of weaving. As mentioned earlier, the *Nasa Yat* is a woven house, because within it a multitude of social and spiritual connections are born and bound; it is the place and law of origin. Beliefs, territory and memory are expressed through the making of these connections. A knowledge of who one is and what one's roots are, accompanied by a sense of belonging to the territory, is both taught and learned from the acts of inhabiting, weaving and planting inside the territory as the "great house and seed."³⁷³

It can be observed that knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation by the elders and women of this society. Nasa-Paéz daily life is centered within the *tull* as the extension of *Kiwe*, and the two interconnected one to another.³⁷⁴ The actions of building the *Nasa Yat*, preparing the soil, and planting the *tull* are woven into the act of inhabiting. Thus the Nasa-Paéz lives as part of a communal family, a notion that extends beyond blood ties to the community as a whole.

³⁷² Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 114.

³⁷³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 91.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

Although social and cultural interpretation are framed by the territory they share and by the agricultural activities they practice within the *resguardo*, I argue that this generates an expansion of the notion of place for those who live in the community, achieved through *mingas* in which family-oriented actions and rituals take place under the notion of *Kiwe*. According to León, *Nasa Kiwe* is perceived as inseparable from cultivating and inhabiting the land: “The main point is to encourage new policies and beliefs that are aimed at preserving identity.”³⁷⁵

Failing to understand the meaning of *Nasa Kiwe* would hinder understanding of the respect, defense and recovery of the territory and traditions. Indeed, as León suggested, those activities are complementary and generate different connections in the territory. The profound nature of these activities has been preserved through the oral tradition of the elders and women.

Equally important for understating the act of planting, with its spiritual meaning, is the act of dwelling. The *Nasa Yat* – as cosmos-centered house and place of origin of the territory – is the material element in which ancestral knowledge is inscribed in architecture. Each feature evokes the sacredness of and respect for *Kiwe*. The house is a “seed,” according to Nasa-Paéz oral tradition; it changes because, when planted, it is transformed in a natural cycle.³⁷⁶ This is the main principle for contemporary policies in the Toribío *resguardo*.

In order to construct the symbolic territory, it is necessary to build the *Nasa Yat* through “research from the hearth” and through the voices of elders and women. As elder Pavi mentions, “reading the land means listening, hearing and understanding it,”³⁷⁷ although such differences seem evident and express a sort of extension of an all-encompassing cultural viewpoint. However, the origins and practices for territorial understanding of those interpretations rest on the *resguardo*

³⁷⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El punto central sea motivar las nuevas políticas y pensamientos, buscando mantener la identidad.” Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 22, 2019.

³⁷⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 101.

³⁷⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Leer el territorio significa escucharlo, oírlo y entenderlo.” Máximo Pavi, Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 15, 2017.

policies and contemporary beliefs that must be addressed before attempting to act upon them.

Therefore, to properly build the *Nasa Yat* as not only an extension of *Nasa Kiwe*, but also as one element of a policy for recovering the land, the contemporary policies of the *Proyecto Nasa* and elders must first be consulted. It is the elder who gives his approval and final consent about when or where to reclaim traditional lands or establish the exact location where the *Yat* is to be built. The wisdom of elders thus ensure that the moment and the place are in harmony; otherwise, they would select another one or, as an alternative, perform tributes to *Kiwe* to have access to it.³⁷⁸ I maintain that, just as the Nasa-Paéz have remained in constant evolution throughout their history, so their *Nasa Yat* and conception of territory have also evolved.

Interpretation of the House

The study of the pre-Hispanic house has drawn on different sources of information: descriptions in Colonial chronicles, anthropological studies, evidence of surviving communities and the voices of women and elders. Traditional houses from surviving Indigenous communities in la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Putumayo lowlands have served as models for contemporary policies aimed at constructing a contemporary, and autochthonous, Nasa-Paéz symbology.

Because of the Nasa-Paéz lowland origins, they have inherited many important architectural components that are evident in rural and urban areas today. Moving back and forth from the lowlands to the Andes enables the Nasa-Paéz to blend not only beliefs but also constructive elements and techniques.

The *Yat* and *Yatzunga* have similar characteristics and undeniable inheritances from the Amazonian and Putumayo *maloca* and the *bohío* of the Kogi. (Fig. 2.15, 2.16 & 2.17) show the *bohío*

³⁷⁸ Docentes Comunidad Nasa, *Nasa U'juxin Thegnxi, Leyendo la Vida Nasa. Serie Río de Letras* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014), 28.

of elder Atanasio of the Kogi Indigenous community in Taironaka, the *Nasa Yat* of the elder Máximo Pavi, and the *Yatzunga* at the CECIDIC in San Francisco *resguardo*. The features these share have been part of Nasa-Paéz tradition through several different historical moments.

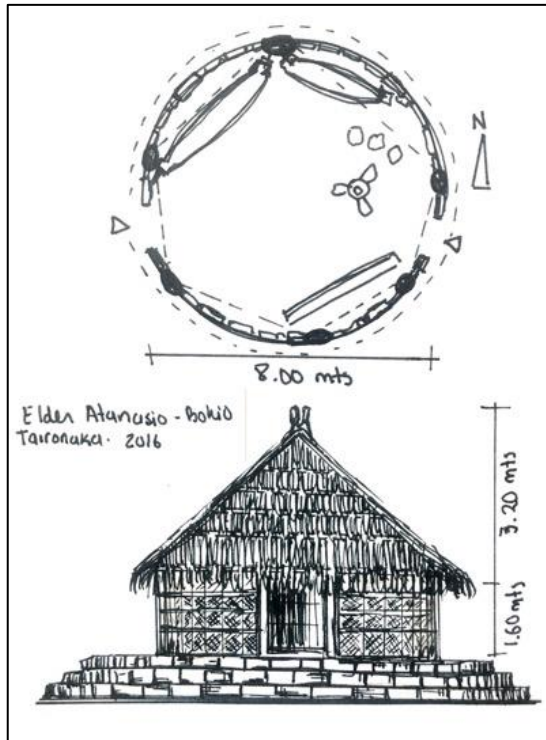


Fig. 2.15, Kogi *bohío* of elder Atanasio in Taironaka. Drawing by author.

The house of elder Atanasio in Taironaka is a clear evidence of how the Kogi community have preserved their traditional culture to today. In contrast, the house of Elder Pavi is the house he recalls from his childhood, and which he decided to rebuild from memory to show his community the traditional housing of Tierradentro.³⁷⁹ Similarly, the *Yatzunga* at the CECIDIC is an interpretation of a communal house based on the Kogi *maloca* and the *bohío* communal house (Fig. 2.17).

³⁷⁹ Máximo Pavi, Interview by author, *Minga* San Francisco – Cauca. July 30, 201

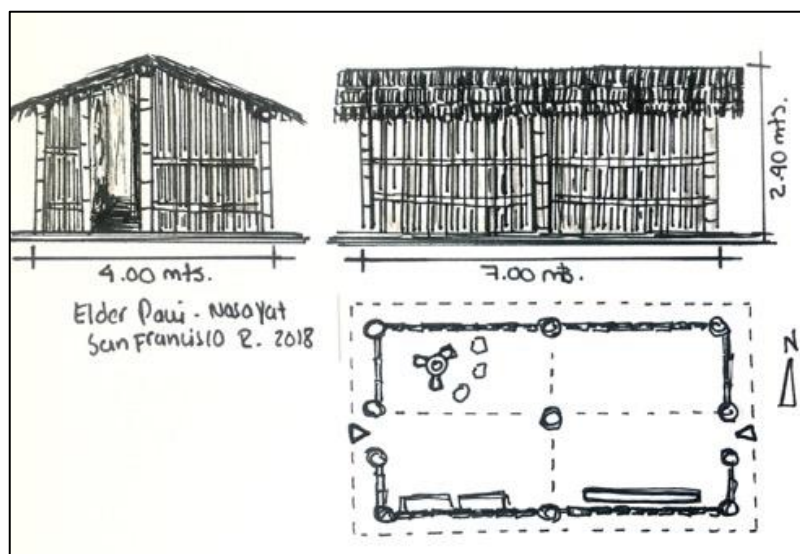


Fig. 2.16, Reconstruction of elder Pavi *Nasa Yat* in San Francisco *resguardo*. Drawing by author.

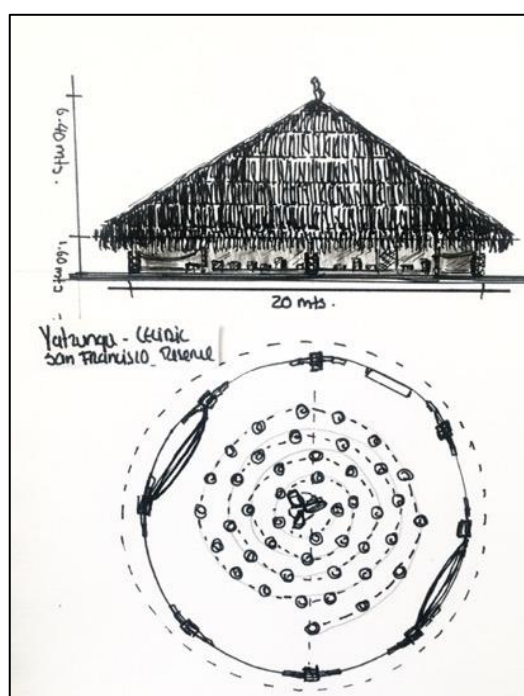


Fig. 2.17, *Yatzunga* at the CECIDIC San Francisco. Drawing by author.

Also drawing on historical evidence and cultural memory, former Mayor Vitonás proposed instituting a range of political and cultural actions to incorporate tradition into Nasa-Paéz life. Among these are the promotion of vernacular architecture, which is today an important project within the

community for visualizing, reviving and incorporating ancestral legacies and traditional practices through research from the hearth.³⁸⁰

Of equal importance for understanding the symbolism of the territorial concept is the ancestral notion of the recovery of memory, which is now more vital than during the past several decades. It allows the Nasa-Paéz to vindicate their culture through beliefs and architecture as ways of inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe*. It facilitates continuity with ancestral legacy, to guarantee a “pleasing environment in equilibrium.”³⁸¹

Hence, the creations of the Nasa-Paéz world in harmony and equilibrium discussed above are leading to examination of the contemporary *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*. This project not only has its roots in territory and tradition, but also, as previously mentioned, creates an amalgamation inspired by archetypes found in other Indigenous communities in Colombia, communities that have managed to surmount difficult circumstances over time.

The Nasa-Paéz have nowadays incorporated tradition through community action, traditional education and by assimilating other communities’ architectural knowledge and experiences. However, Indigenous architecture in Colombia is a relatively small research field. This is partially due to the ephemerality of its material components but also, as stated in León’s testimony, stems to a considerable degree from the uncomfortable appropriation of western civilization overlaid upon the foundations of its Indigenous origins. These “architectural complexities” make the understanding of Indigenous housing particularly difficult to formulate.³⁸²

It is important to mention that the study of housing in Colombia depends upon geographic

³⁸⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 11.

³⁸¹ As quoted in Gustavo Osorio, *Cosmovisión de Pueblo Indígena Nasa en Colombia. Reducción Integral de los Riesgos, Planificación y Desarrollo Sostenible* (Lima: Pull creativo SRL, 2009), 19.

³⁸² Silvia Arango, *Historia de la Arquitectura en Colombia* (Bogotá: Facultad de Artes Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1989), 17; Harold Martínez. *La Relación Cultura Naturaleza en la Arquitectura Occidental*. Universidad del Valle, 2001; “Del Hábito, al Hábitat y al Habitar”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogota: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018. Norbert Schoenauer, *Introduction to Contemporary Indigenous Housing*. Ottawa: J. Wyatt Books, 1973.

location and altitude, from the lowland plains to the highest elevation of the Andean region. This range of environments generates specific landscape conditions for each community inhabiting the different altitudes.

Although the Nasa Paéz have a tradition of extreme topographical and climatic diversity – from the lowlands to the mountains– and therefore different ways to supply themselves with food, building materials and *trueque* (barter) between communities, differing beliefs are also part of their symbolic construction of territory. Reichel-Dolmatoff describes how differences “shaped many important aspects of the character and growth of the aboriginal societies,”³⁸³ and relationships derived from those differences are evident in the *Nasa Kiwe*.

Equally important for territorial symbology – in addition to the spiral – is the conical shape of the mountain which represents the Andean territory and all it contains within its great house.³⁸⁴ The conical shape is transposed or translated to the architecture rooftop of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*. There the form reinforces harmonic relations between the territory – from low lands to mountains – and its dwellers. The form of the mountains is appropriated for the *Yat*: “Nasa architecture thus incorporates traditional materials and shapes that express Nasa-Paéz beliefs: a holistic experience of territoriality and spirituality that can only be found through roaming, walking, dwelling and belonging to *Kiwe*.”³⁸⁵

As a result, the inhabitation of *Nasa Kiwe* has generated different strategies for preserving it, from the previously-mentioned disputes to today’s struggles to maintain authority over Indigenous territory. In this case the visualization of traditional architecture incorporates the political, social and

³⁸³ Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Colombia: Ancient Peoples and Places* (Westport: Praeger Publisher, 1965), 36. For more information see: Adriana Vásquez and Andrea Buitrago (Ed). *El Gran Libro de Los Páramos*. Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt, 2011; Guillermo Ospina, Hernando Vergara, Quinchoa Julian. *Complejo de Páramos de las Hermosas*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2016.

³⁸⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 121 a 124.

³⁸⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “La casa Nasa utiliza materiales tradicionales, formas todo en una manera unida todo en una experiencia territorial y espiritual que solo se encuentra caminando y viviendo aquí en Kiwe.” Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, El Flayo, Toribío – Cauca. July 7, 2018.

cultural policies aimed at recovering ancestral memory.

Out of the condition of constantly living amidst internal and external conflicts, traditional projects and the institutions that instigate them have promote a new formulation of Nasa-Paéz experience. This includes adopting and teaching the traditional construction of the *Nasa Yat*, articulated as a manifestation of the concept of territory as great house binding together ancestral legacy and contemporary Nasa-Paéz vision. This represents a new way of inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe*, one guaranteeing cultural and territorial equilibrium.³⁸⁶

Elders and Women: Wisdom Caretaking

The different ways in which the Nasa-Paéz relate to territory are framed in political and cultural precedents represented by the elders and women.³⁸⁷ The new *caciques*, whose perceived mythological origins opened up the potential to reclaim ancestral mandates, enabled the survival of traditional culture. In the case of contemporary leaders, women and elders – this is achieved through the reinterpretation of ancestral practices within *Nasa Kiwe*. Similarly, the elders, who are also considered spiritual authorities and (it is believed) receive their authority from family legacy, inherit the knowledge and wisdom to defend and inhabit *Nasa Kiwe* from the *caciques* and their ancestors.

According to Rivera, s' interpretations of nature (plants, animals) and of dreams – is what makes them a “medium of wisdom for the community.”³⁸⁸ I maintain that such interpretation is not limited to useful knowledge of the physical world but, through its invocation of ancestral knowledge, ultimately nurtures the social bonds necessary to unify and strengthen contemporary belief systems and generate political resistance in the community.

³⁸⁶ Osorio. *Cosmovisión de Pueblo Indígena Nasa*, 19. For more on Andean architecture and beliefs, see: Juan Carlos Machicado Figueroa. *When the Stones Speak: Inka Architecture and Spirituality in the Andes*. Amauta, 2010.

³⁸⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 123.

³⁸⁸ Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC San Francisco – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

Thus, the wisdom and knowledge of the elders and women engaging in “research from the hearth” are promoters of political and social resilience, with a direct connection to the law of origin and to the great house.³⁸⁹ Elders and women have been active agents in the survival of the ancestral culture in their territory. The capacity to define and care for the territory and the community shows their active role in mediating the Nasa-Paéz social and spiritual worlds in relation to dwellers and dwelling.

The *Nasa Yat* is a key means by which the above-described relationships are made evident. Elders and women, as they articulate their wisdom to the community, are actively involved in interpreting the connections that the *Yat* has with its surroundings, occupants and beliefs. From the perspective of collective memory, the *Nasa Yat* becomes the center of *Nasa Kiwe*, and is analogically replicated by the community in its policies and practices.

At the core of the house, we find the point of departure of the spiral (so central to foundational Nasa beliefs) which expands and touches all beings in *Kiwe*: “[...] the *thê’jwala* are unified entities to each of which are assigned functions for the maintenance of harmony, equilibrium and reciprocity, provided the community listens to them.”³⁹⁰ Thus, although they have a direct connection to the territory as a whole, their unique expertise and exemplary respect enables them to provide support to the members of the community specifically. I argue that in pre-Colonial times, an understanding of territory was essential for the lowland and Andean peoples, and still is today, though in different ways.

In this context the elders and women today play the role of wise person who impact and unite the community: cultivating social harmony, offering collective guidance about cultural and protective

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 121

³⁹⁰ As quoted in Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos. *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios*, 30. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “[...] los *thê’jwala* son un gran cuerpo distribuido cada uno con responsabilidades y funciones alrededor de mantener la armonía, el equilibrio y la reciprocidad en tanto que la comunidad los escuche.”

policies, and organizing the territory in both practical and conceptual terms.

The elders and women thus become mediators between the community and traditional beliefs, and their mediation is enacted through traditional architecture, the *tull*, weaving and the rituals carried out in the *Yatzungas* – both those houses dedicated to *mambeo* (places where devotees chew coca leaves in order to get a super natural connection with ancestors) and as houses of weavers (Fig. 2.18).³⁹¹



Fig. 2.18, *Mingas* for reflection in one of the *Yatzungas* of the CECIDIC. Photo by author.

In the first of these, the *mambeo* ritual, the elder is considered a guardian and guide for the community. He carries coca leaves and *chicha* in his mochila as necessary components of ritual

³⁹¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 122-123.

tributes, appropriate to the needs of the *minga* and its participants.³⁹² The tributes performed by the elder in the *mambeo* demonstrate how chewing coca – a sacred plant – enables him to obtain strength and wisdom.

This is fundamentally the same wisdom as that obtained when a woman weaves in a house dedicated to weaving. As the vessel for both of these actions (*mambeo* and weaving) the architecture of the *Yatzungas* promote and achieve cultural stability and vindication: “It is very important to clarify that the traditional shamans, without classifying them in categories, are distributed according to fields of responsibility that are very precise, to maintain the necessary harmony, equilibrium and reciprocity in the *nasa yat*.”³⁹³

Finally, there are a variety of relationships between belief and inhabited places, but it is the wisdom of the elders and of women that ultimately guides the community: their devoutness facilitates a connection between the law of origin and the great house as “house of the spirits.”³⁹⁴ Recognizing the knowledge and actions of elders and women – cementing as they do community participation with the processes important to *Nasa Kiwe* – is fundamental if we are to properly speak of Nasa-Paéz cultural and political resistance through the *Yat*.

Architecture and Cultural Adaptations

Housing symbolism draws in general terms from the powerful significance of the Amazonian and Kogi *maloca* and *bohío*, which are present in diverse parts of the current Colombian territory as a

³⁹² Ibid., 138.

³⁹³ My Translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Es muy importante aclarar que los médicos tradicionales sin clasificarlos en categorías, están distribuidos más bien en unos campos de responsabilidad muy precisos en función de mantener el equilibrio, la armonía y la reciprocidad en la *nasa yat*. Dicho así, el conocimiento existente en la memoria *nasa* acerca de *yat*, es entendido y dicho por los médicos tradicionales cada uno desde sus responsabilidades.” Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos. *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios*, 28. For more on Nasa-Paéz tradition, education and culture see: Edison Bolaños. “Por la Memoria Ancestral, la Primera Universidad Autónoma Indígena del País”. *El Espectador*, 16 Octubre de 2014.

³⁹⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 121.

collective place for dwelling, rituals, gathering and knowledge-sharing. The first collective constructions were the “*bohío-ovalado*,” oval-shaped communal shelter, the original communal house in which a growing consciousness of their inhabited place generated new cultural practices.³⁹⁵

It was a lasting architecture, evidenced by the different historical periods in which events and circumstances fostered change in the Indigenous appropriation of place. Human and mythological relationships become evident in the communal house, the Nasa-Paéz dwelling place, in which physical and cultural forms created by Indigenous communities enable us to understand the intricate ancestral thinking, in its attempt to persist over time by means of architectural structures that (although not self-evidently for Western readers) convey meanings of ancestral wisdom to their dwellers.

Knowing the origin and relevance of symbols becomes of capital importance, not only for preserving culture, but also for a contemporary understanding of the meaning of Nasa-Paéz beliefs and ways to interact in the inhabited territory. Due to the limited historical and archaeological sources on Pre-Hispanic architecture in the specific area of Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco, the Indigenous council government and its agencies like *Proyecto Nasa* weaving of life, focus on the housing of today’s Nasa-Paéz for the transmission and reinvention of tradition.³⁹⁶

The architectural interpretation that has been adopted by the Toribío *resguardo* shows the development of communal houses where the participation of the community following *mingas* and research from the hearth developed different proposals in order to preserve Nasa-Paéz culture. Even though the oval house represents historically the ancestral communal house, from my field research I can attest that until 2020 in this *resguardo* only circular, rectangular and polygonal *Yatzungas* have

³⁹⁵ Álvaro Chávez Mendoza and Mauricio Puerta, *Vivienda Precolombina e Indígena Actual en Tierradentro* (Bogotá: Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales Banco de la República, 1988), 69. For more on Andean archeology See: Luis Duque Gómez. *Exploraciones Arqueológicas en San Agustín*. Impr. Nacional, 1964; Jerry D Moore. *Cultural Landscapes in the Ancient Andes: Archaeologies of Place*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.

³⁹⁶ Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca-ACIN, *Resolución No.051 de 1996 de la Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas del Ministerio del Interior* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 1996).

been developed (Fig. 2.17, 2.19 & 2.29).

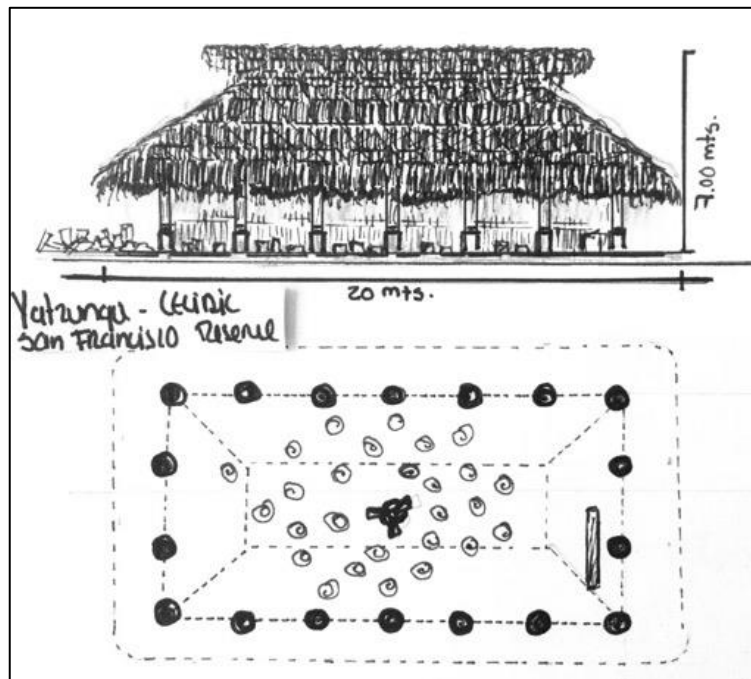


Fig. 2.19, Rectangular Yatzunga. Cecidic San Francisco *resguardo* 2019. Drawing by author.

Contemporary traditional architecture is of great importance for a community that has lost track of important aspects of ancestral knowledge embedded in buildings. As Vitonás has mentioned, architecture is an important part of the recovery of tradition.³⁹⁷ Due to the lack of ancestral communal housing in Toribío, traditional architecture was privileged in the construction of communal places.

Important principles in this tradition are the Amazonian *maloca* and the *bohío* of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Drawing on these precedents enabled the community to establish important characteristics adopted in the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga*. In fact, the Tayrona *bohío* and *Maloca* are an important referents for Indigenous housing generally; their (Kogi) successors continue to echo their forms and materials today, as it is evident in (Fig. 2.15 & Fig. 2.20).

³⁹⁷ Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, Interview by author, Toribío– Cauca. February 7, 2014. See also: Ezequiel Vitonás. *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal de Toribío 2012-2015*. Toribio: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribio, 2012.



Fig. 2.20, *Bohío* Kogi of elder Atanasio. Taironaka. Photo by author.

It can be observed that the Kogi *bohío* is an example of Indigenous traditional housing that has endured almost exempt of external influences. With its circular plan, the Kogi *bohío* and *maloca* appears across different Indigenous communities (Fig. 2.21). Archaeological sites show evidence of circular, oval and rectangular architectural layouts with specific uses, but even today the circular Kogi plan endures, with “ring house platforms” – rings that, according to Reichel-Dolmatoff, represent a unified discourse between ancestral thinking and praxis.³⁹⁸

The *maloca*, like the Nasa-Paéz *Yat*, has special characteristics, which significantly facilitate the connection between the mundane and spiritual worlds. Each constitutive element has a special

³⁹⁸ Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Colombia: Ancient Peoples and Places*, 146. See also: Ana Milena Horta Prieto. “Tejiendo Entre Redes Diversas: Reflexiones a Partir de una Etnografía Multisituada con los Pueblos Indígenas de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Caribe Colombiano”. *Espaço Ameríndio* 8, no. 1 (2014): 135-161.

purpose and significance in which there is also a “special place for the chief;”³⁹⁹ as Arango refers to the Amazonian *maloca* as a living relationship between the occupied place and spirituality. In addition to its singular architectural concept, the character of the *maloca* deserves to be highlighted.



Fig. 2.21, *Maloca Kogi. Pueblito Chairama*. Photo by author.

It is arguable that the *maloca* is the place of inspiration par excellence for the Indigenous communities, which conceived it and have always used it as a place of origin and a connector between the human and mythological worlds. Arango continues, saying that “all that is condensed in the house, and each one of its parts will be charged with constitutive symbolism [...], each and every one of its constructive elements will possess a magical meaning, ever present, which varies according

³⁹⁹ Arango. *Historia de la Arquitectura en Colombia*, 20.

to specific mythologies.”⁴⁰⁰ Thus, it is in the *maloca* interpretation that terrestrial and spiritual dimensions communicate and establish strong ties of interdependence.

The *maloca* adapts to its context from the moment of its conception. The materials used to build it are available in its immediate surroundings and may house up to three family generations.⁴⁰¹ Not all Pre-Hispanic dwellings followed a single pattern of site layout or emplacement in the context of their communities and surroundings. While in some cases only one major structure was built, in others one may observe several annexed buildings intended for different purposes, such as storing harvested goods, women during their menstrual periods, or other specific activities.

During my field research, I found that *Nasa Yat* were made up of one or two small units while *Yatzungas* took the form of one big house in which the community congregated. I also verified that across Nasa-Paéz territory the place with the most *Yatzungas* were San Francisco and Tacueyó *resguardos*; San Francisco is recognized to have an important traditional educational structure.

While in Toribío and San Francisco the traditional houses are smaller, in Tacueyó there is still evidence of big *hacienda* houses. These *haciendas* were recovered following a political process by the *resguardos* that enable different Indigenous families to take possession of these dwellings. As Leon testimony mention, in most of the houses visited, various generations live together.⁴⁰² On the other hand, in San Francisco, the houses are smaller and consist of different units and are also more traditional and simpler in form and structure. The different small units are mostly *tulpas*, in which each woman in the family has her own hearth to cook and weave.

Nowadays, as an exemplary form, the *maloca* has been re-appropriated by the Nasa-Paéz as the archetype of a communal house, not only for rituals and tributes around the hearth, but also for

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 21. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “cada una de sus partes estará cargada de un simbolismo constitutivo [...] todos y cada uno de los elementos constructivos poseerán una carga mágica que varía según las mitologías específicas.”

⁴⁰¹ Norbert Schoenauer, *6,000 Years of Housing*. (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2000), 36.

⁴⁰² Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 18, 2016.

important political meetings relating to matters of the *resguardo*. In *mingas* at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* Project, elder Pavi allowed me to interact with students to learn, and with models demonstrated the two typologies of the *Yat* and their relationships with the Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa-Kiwe* (Fig. 2.22).



Fig. 2.22, *Nasa Yat* (rectangular) and *Yatzunga* (circular) models made by students from the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* Project at San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.

Even though the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas* are considered carriers of knowledge, and connectors between the terrestrial and spiritual, the two houses have different identities. For the Nasa-Paéz, this tradition came, as previously noted, from the intercultural relationship between the Putumayo, Amazonian lowlands and Andean chiefdoms. That relationship is embodied nowadays in the

Yatzunga, which also represents the more recent history of the new chiefs, their culture and territorial boundaries. Although the *Nasa Yat* and the *Yatzunga* have similar characteristics for the contemporary Nasa-Paéz, I maintain that they complement each other – though in different ways. While the *Nasa Yat* is more family-oriented, the *Yatzunga* is more political.

The *Yatzunga* – the circular communal house – is considered the male house, and is designated as an architectural structure to support the community in a social, educational, political and ritualistic context. The rectangular *Nasa Yat* is considered to be the female house, and is designed to give rise to life and transmit knowledge through elder and women orality.⁴⁰³

Considering its smaller size in comparison with the *Yatzunga*, the female house may refer to the traditional *hypogeum* in Tierradentro (Fig. 2.23), which were used as burial places and made reference to the *ombligada* ritual (the burial of the navel) – as well as the small housing units used by women during menstruation and childbirth.⁴⁰⁴ Currently, the *Nasa Yat* is used for family purposes; the secondary houses as used as storage or as secondary hearths.

Early excavations in the Tierradentro region show that the circular plan was used for housing and also for burials. Subsequent excavations found vestiges of housing with oval layouts, built with stones and wood posts.⁴⁰⁵ Similar houses were found on the highest mountain slopes. Their irregular oval shapes suggest that these had *bareque* walls (earth spread over a wooden or *guadua* structure) as protection against Andean weather. The roof structure was composed of wood or *guadua* canes in conical shape, with a thatched roof. Inside, vestiges of hearths were found and, close by, human burials in ceramic vases.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ *Minga*, San Francisco – Cauca. July 15, 2015.

⁴⁰⁴ Chávez Mendoza and Puerta. *Vivienda Precolombina e Indígena*, 63. For more information on Tierradentro architecture, see: Elías Sevilla and Piñacué, Juan. “Los Nasa de Tierradentro y las Huellas Arqueológicas, Primera Aproximación”. *En Actas de IV Congreso de Arqueología en Colombia*. Barranquilla: Universidad del Norte, 2007.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 105. For more information on *guadua* in Cauca, see: Iván Mauricio Eraso. *Vivienda Sismo Resistente en Guadua*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2007; Iván Mauricio Eraso. *Construcción en Guadua: Una Experiencia Desde la Granja de Mamá Lulú*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019; Iván Mauricio Eraso, “Concepciones y Formas de Habitat el Territorio Ancestral Nasa”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de*



Fig. 2.23, Hypogeum in *Parque Arqueológico de Tierradentro*. Inzá Cauca. Photo by author.

Today, the circular and oval layouts form Tierradentro morphology, are revived in the form of the contemporary *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga*. Traditional houses becomes architectural object of resilience, a construction that motivates a new perception of what it means to be Indigenous: an architecture to let the community know that *Nasa Kiwe* belongs to them and must be respected and defended.

It can be observed that the *Yat*, as a political and cultural practice, generates a sacred place in

Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto De Colombia, 2018; James Parsons. "Giant American Bamboo in the Vernacular Architecture of Colombia and Ecuador". *Geographical Review*, 81, no. 2, (1991); 131-152.

which Nasa-Paéz beliefs prevail. This becomes evident in the traditional project undertaken in Loma Linda – Toribío (Fig. 2.24 & 2.25). The community asked for a traditional housing project that was developed with the Nasa-Paéz community, Toribío Indigenous Council and Andean Mountains Research group along with students from the Universidad Piloto de Colombia School of Architecture.⁴⁰⁷



Fig. 2.24, Community member from Loma Linda analyzing the *Yatzunga* proposal. Photo by author.

The Loma Linda Project began in response to my years of community research participation and my interaction with the Nasa-Paéz community regarding their perception of the housing that they inhabited. During my field research, I always ask how the subject remembered the house of their grandparents.

In every case in which I posed that question, the answer was always the same: the traditional

⁴⁰⁷ Proyecto de Investigacion Montañas Andinas Universidad Piloto de Colombia: Nasa 2007; Proyecto Ecohabitat 2016 Asociacion de Cabildos Indigenas del Norte del Cauca ACIN; Proyecto resguardo Huellas (2007-2020); Tacueyó, Toribío, Munchique los Tigres y Jambaló (2010-2020), Toéz (2011-2020) and San Francisco (2015-2020).

house with a single large room in which the entire family lived and with a hearth in the middle where the family gathered to cook and weave. Traditional house materials and the *tull* where the family grew crops for their own consumption was the answer, which enabled not only me but the community itself to see how the memory of the Tierradentro ancestral house endured.



Fig. 2.25, *Minga* in Loma Linda *Yatzunga* project. Photo by author.

As proposals for recovering tradition arose out of community policies and *mingas*, the community needed to return to the tradition of Tierradentro ancestral housing. Implementation of an architectural pilot project based on the traditional communal house, and with participation by the community in the construction process, was a suggestion implemented by the Indigenous council. It was intended to support the management of *Yatzungas* for a variety of *resguardos*.⁴⁰⁸

Therefore, tradition and ritualistic approaches such as traditional house form, materials and

⁴⁰⁸ William Yatacué, Interview by author, *Minga* Bloque BTC, Loma Linda Toribío – Cauca. July 28, 2018.

rituals incorporated pre-Colonial, Colonial and contemporary traditions. Hence, the legacy of the *caciques nuevos*, contemporary leaders and current policies –together – inform the political and cultural strategies to construct the symbolism and meaning of being a Nasa-Paéz in *Nasa Kiwe* – through architecture.

Symbology and Borders: Weaving the Territory

Transformations of the Nasa-Paéz tradition, in this case represented by the understanding of *Nasa Kiwe* and *Yat*, were triggered by Colonial and contemporary historical developments evident today in new construction of traditional architecture, and in processes of territorial recovery impacted by violence, particularly by the presence of illegal *coca* and *marihuana* cultivation.

As León's testimony revealed, the use of new materials, new typologies, and outside intrusions into the traditional territory – as well as expansions of built area in the *resguardo* themselves – have led to a supplantation of tradition and the displacement of cultural heritage. The purpose of the community meetings or *mingas*, which apply a vision based on research from the hearth and corresponding spirit and strategies of resistance, is not only to engage cultural, social and political policies but also to give voice to the community: for example describing how their ancestors used to live and what they want to preserve from those traditions.⁴⁰⁹

The intention is to better understand the context of Indigenous strife present in their political and social structure. As mentioned earlier, the displacement of Indigenous peoples and the rearrangement of traditional territories foreign to the cultural context – whether forced by Colonial institutions or conflicts today has enabled the Nasa-Paéz perception of their own culture to broaden and develop different approaches to symbology and territorial delimitation.

⁴⁰⁹ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

The history of colonization and Christianization, the establishment of the *República*, and the violence of the past and present, provide evidence of a constant struggle to consolidate a new territory. This struggle is waged against outsiders wanting to exploit Indigenous land for their own benefit, a practice that undoubtedly views “the land as an object for profit, buying and selling, and for obtaining precious metals. Quite the opposite of what it was for the Indigenous peoples, namely, the basis of existence, sustenance, in short, the basis of life,”⁴¹⁰ as described by Juan Friede. This exploitive agenda limited the potential for Indigenous, traditional economic development.

Indeed, the weakening of the traditional economy and subsequent cultural subordination of the Nasa-Paéz provoked a transformation: it is under these circumstances that the *Nasa Kiwe* implemented a new approach to his own history, incorporating both foreign and traditional urban and architectural patterns in their effort to build what I call the symbolic territory, hybridizing cultural specificities and beliefs.

Through their territorial displacements, the Nasa-Paéz brought with them their own beliefs and boundaries, their mythological and cultural traditions, and a sense of existential and spiritual place. These are the evidence of culture and tradition, at once living and sacred entities. As Rappaport points out: “Considering that the oral tradition is an elaboration upon Colonial *resguardo* titles, it is appropriate that historically loaded sites are for the most part located along community boundaries.”⁴¹¹

In fact, the Nasa-Paéz advanced the idea that Rappaport had of their community as cultural and political borders were amalgamated. The Nasa-Paéz also laid claim to the mythical past and present to reach a new understanding of the contemporary need for identity. There are a number of

⁴¹⁰ Juan Friede, *El Indio en Lucha por La Tierra* (Popayán: Punta de Lanza, 1976), 27. My translation. The original text in Spanish follows: “La tierra constituía un objeto de lucro, un objeto de compra y venta y de ganancias metálicas. Todo lo contrario de lo que no era para el indio, es decir, base de existencia, base alimenticia, en fin, base de la vida.”

⁴¹¹ Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, 148.

issues with those claims. Nasa-Paéz leaders and policies look for a return to traditions of dwelling, bringing ancestral memory into a new architectural process that does not neglect ancestral traditions of construction. That memory instills new architectural and territorial construction with meaning, aimed at a sacred understanding of the land and the need for harmonious dwelling.

Consequently, *Nasa Kiwe* as a great house is built and maintained not only in the context of a political agenda – land as territory to be claimed – but also with an appreciation of cultural significance – land as *Nasa Kiwe*. Embodying this second significance, the traditional architectural forms of the *Yatzunga* and *Nasa Yat* tend to acquire meaning, along with other already mentioned sacred places, from both historical and contemporary beliefs and rituals “encompassing past and present.”⁴¹²

On the other hand, some traditional symbolism is translated directly into contemporary material culture. One example is the symbolism embedded in the *Yat* of the elders. The *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga* of a person with high standing in the hierarchy of the community usually articulated his knowledge in space and construction by using elements, drawn from the territory, with mythological connotations and a clear traditional symbolism. We can see this in the *Nasa Yat* of elder Pavi (Fig. 2.16). Figures such as crosses or animal images –particularly condors– denote a spiritual level. These symbols and images appear on the rooftop of the *Yat*; thus, an element that projects the sacred out to the territory is placed at the *Yat*’s highest point (Fig. 2.26).

This demonstrates the symbology, borders and continuity of sacred territory into the dwelling, as part of *Nasa Kiwe*: “If we see the condor in the *Yatzunga*, it is like the one in the mountains (and) is part of our community too.”⁴¹³ It also associates the house with the sacred Andean mountains, adding value and character to the *Nasa Yat*.

⁴¹² Ibid., 153.

⁴¹³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Si vemos el cóndor en la *Yatzunga* es como que el cóndor que esta en las montañas hace parte también de nuestra comunidad”. Gonzalo Rivera. Interview by author, *Minga Tacueyó* – Cauca. August 18, 2016.



Fig. 2.26, *Yatzunga* at CECIDIC. The condor on the top symbolize the ‘spirits’ presence. Photo by author.

Furthermore, the symbols on the roofs are also replicated in different parts of the *Nasa Yat*. Each figure has a close connotation with housing: appearing either in an architectural element, or in a fabric incorporated within it, which Arango calls an “architectural structure connector.”⁴¹⁴ These symbols or their absence make clear whether the inhabitant is Nasa-Paéz or, on the contrary, a person unrelated to the Indigenous context.

The symbolism of weaving also comes alive in the *Nasa Kiwe* and *Yat* as a whole through the representations of Nasa-Paéz beliefs in rooftop motifs. The act of weaving explains the constructive practice of tradition and creates connections between the terrestrial and spiritual threads of life.

⁴¹⁴ Arango, *Historia de la Arquitectura en Colombia*, 19.

Weaving – whether of the *chumbes*, *mochilas* or the *Yat* roof figures – becomes part of a larger project of weaving the territory, extending boundaries and enacting them as creators of life.⁴¹⁵ The *Nasa Yat* generates visible footprints in *Nasa Kiwe*.

Equally important for understanding the concept of weaving as creator is the concept of the defense of *Nasa Kiwe*. In the same way that the Colonial or “new *caciques*” roaming the territory defined their own territorial borders, the “great house” is now demarcated and delimited through symbols, whether natural boundaries or handmade *chambas*; that is, ditches cut into the ground (Fig. 2.27).

Chambas provide protection and a delimitation. They establish spatial borders, not only with regard to neighbouring land, but also for cultural and political delimitation. They are analogous to furrows opened up for the cultivation of the *tull*, only deeper and wider.⁴¹⁶ And we can understand them as forms of weaving too, expanding out into the territory to protect the *resguardo*.

This is how the Nasa see them. They “weave the Nasa-Paéz territory” by marking borders, differentiating between areas held in common and the outer spaces of the house devoted to family or private cultivation -- the *tull*. “Weaving” *Nasa Kiwe*, they provide both protection and territorial continuity: “*Atx* means cloak or protector and *Tul* is a word that comes from loom or weaving the territory.”⁴¹⁷ In addition to being a defining element of the Nasa-Paéz landscape and contributing to the symbolic protection of territory, we can observe in these marks on the land the history and development of territorial land division and distribution.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 186.

⁴¹⁶ Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: an Andean Ethnography of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 83.

⁴¹⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 109.

⁴¹⁸ Chávez Mendoza and Puerta. *Vivienda Precolombina e Indígena*, 63.



Fig. 2.27, *Vereda López chambas* and timber bridges as territorial borders. Photo by author.

During my field research in Vereda López, I saw how each plot could be seen as demonstrating the policies of cultural and territorial recovery of *Nasa Kiwe*. One might consider this weaving of territory analogical to a genealogy: a text in which the knowledgeable reader may read the history of a family, their traditions and evolution.

Chambas mark the borders of family land and also demonstrate the recuperation of territory from colonial *haciendas*, recently returned to the *resguardo*. These weavings of the territory have evolved, then, from being simply practical delimitations of land, to becoming cultural messengers, creators of landscape, and components of the *Nasa Yat*; they keep ancestral memory alive.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Joanne Rappaport, *Cumbe Reborn: an Andean Ethnography of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 49.

However, the contemporary role of the *chambas* is not always thus. Unfortunately, in Tacueyó, Santo Domingo, and López, the *chambas* have been made use of in other ways by protagonists in the armed conflict, which has hit this region particularly hard (Fig. 2.28).

In recent decades, the *chambas* have inappropriately become trenches used to shelter members of both the National Army of Colombia and illegal groups. López, because it is the farthest village from Tacueyó *resguardo*, is where the insurgent groups move freely about the territory.



Fig. 2.28, Fiscué at her farm *chambas* - trenches. Vereda López. Photo by author.

This was made evident during a field research visit to López.⁴²⁰ Doña Mayra Aida Fiscué,

⁴²⁰ Maira Aida Finscué, Interview by author, *Minga* Vereda López Toribío – Cauca. August 20, 2016.

who invited me to visit her farm on the heights of the mountain, accompanied me on the journey, recounting the history of each plot through its delimitations as we walked.

As we crossed the *chambas*, some of which were filled with water, small bridges built of wooden boards by the inhabitants make it possible to walk from one farm to another. Most of the *chambas* mark borders. However, the higher we went up the mountain, the more we saw *chambas* converted into trenches.

Fiscué showed me this in her own plot, where *chambas* converted into war trenches had in some cases contained the remains of food or cooking utensils (Fig. 2.28). The presence of these illegal groups is one of the factors that has spurred the Nasa-Paéz to develop the additional territorial protections for the region, discussed here. While safeguarding their territories, they also live in singular “harmony” with people from outside the community who travel along this former royal path to cross the Andean central mountain range of Cauca towards Huila or the Pacific Ocean.

We have seen that the different forms of territorial protection, whether Colonial or contemporary, take as a point of departure the “research from the hearth” and related symbology; these are focused on demarcating limits and promoting a connection between the terrestrial and spiritual worlds. Much as the Nasa-Paéz might desire to explore other avenues of cultural development besides defense, the unending disputes over ancestral territories might be said to constitute the main constraint preventing them from doing so.

One could argue that this constantly defensive attitude has been a key element in reinforcing their identity as Indigenous people. As a result of the need to protect their land and to shelter their culture, the traditional imagery of the *Nasa Yat* as “great house,” and the weaving of territory through *chambas*, demonstrate the Nasa-Paéz conception of territory as a great fabric which encompasses the concept and understanding of weaving as creator, protector and defender of *Nasa Kiwe*.

Finally, I would like to return to León’s testimony. She makes clear how contemporary policies have positively impacted Nasa-Paéz processes of cultural recuperation. León’s account refers

to an explanation she gave me about the new *Yatzungas* at CECIDIC: “The *Yat* is the female house, because it is the place where we were born; it is where the umbilical cord is buried as a symbol of belonging to this land. With every new *Yat*, our community grows and we become more visible; that is why it is a sacred place for us.”⁴²¹ This is an architectural strategy fundamental to the survival, and thriving, of the Nasa-Paéz. From its symbology and the notion of territory emerges a myriad of relationships that strengthen their culture.

⁴²¹My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “El *Yat* es la casa femenina, porque es el lugar donde nacimos aquí es donde el Nasa nace y en donde el cordón umbilical es enterrado como símbolo de que pertenece a esta tierra y para que aunque se valla vuelva. Esta casa es como el útero porque ahí es donde se guarda y se crea la vida. Con cada nuevo *Yat* nosotros crecemos, por eso es que es un lugar sagrado para nosotros.” Ingrid Dayana León. Personal Interview. March 17, 2016. CECIDIC Toribío- Cauca.

2.3 Decolonizing Nasa-Paéz Identity and the Phenomena of Resilience.

Australia Poto Julicué Testimony

[...] I look around and remember all the stories I lived through in my childhood, some were happy and others not. I have always lived in this region, and remember having lived in the midst of war. I felt like there was always danger outside my house; when going to the market or to school, one was aware that something could happen. That's the way I lived and grew up here.

There were good things too. Our family was always very united and traditional, I grew up as a Nasa, which helped me to see what I wanted to do with my life and how I could help the *resguardo* policies by assisting and serving the community [...].

When elder Máximo Pavi began working here in San Francisco and looking for land to work with the youngsters in the community, I knew I must help him and I wanted to become a *Kapiya'sa* (traditional teacher). That was my reason for making a commitment to the community [...].

I have been here for a long time, working with the Indigenous councils proposing a decolonizing education, and besides that we have here what CECIDIC did for traditional education in the *resguardo*. As I say, the CECIDIC served as an example but what elder Máximo wanted was to work with the little ones because he said that the younger [they are] the easier it is [for them] to learn our language and everything concerning to our culture. That was very important since up to that moment there had been no educational plans with children as young as those we now are working on.

[...] when in 2013 this land was assigned for the children's centre, I knew that was what I had to do, it was clear to me from the start that this was for me, and so I began to train with the elder because, if I was going to teach children, then I had to receive instruction from the *Thê'wala* to do it right. The elder committed to a project that, as its name indicates, is a pilot, being the first of its kind, about teaching children our own education, speaking *Nasa Yuwe*, weaving, understanding territory, building our own constructions, in short, all that is ours. Thus, *proyecto piloto Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* was born in 2014, which means boys and girls in transition in the vision and stages of Nasa life.

What is most important to me is that these children, who unfortunately had to live through childhood in conflicts and situations one would have preferred not to ever experience, well, they would at least have good memories of their childhoods, in which the most important thing is that here they will learn to value their origins, and never feel ashamed to say they are Indigenous. And, on the contrary, all the knowledge the *Thê'wala* has given those children

they can then share with the next generations when they grow up and leave here.⁴²²

This section opens with Australia Poto's testimony, giving different perspectives about how the Nasa-Paéz people organize decolonized structures at contemporary *resguardos*. Recovery Nasa-Paéz philosophy has generated new decolonized dynamics centered on the beliefs of the Nasa-Paéz. One appropriate analogy is how the territory – as a fabric –weaves together traditional thinking and practices: *Nasa Kiwe*.

Cultural practices, from political action to traditional and quotidian rituals, link Nasa-Paéz beliefs with the idea of harmony in territory. This happens in response to a coexistence with what one might call a conflict-filled absence of harmony (now due to armed conflict). In *Nasa-Kiwe* this is not new. Such adverse conditions have instilled an even greater motivation in the people to become an

⁴²² My translation. The original in Spanish: “Miro a mi alrededor y me recuerdo de todas las historias que pasé cuando era niña, unas fueron felices y otras no. Siempre he vivido en este municipio, y recuerdo haber vivido en medio de la guerra. Sentía como siempre había peligro afuera de la casa, cuando uno iba al mercado o cuando uno iba para la escuela, uno estaba atento a que algo pudiera pasar. Esa fue la manera en que yo viví y crecí acá. También pasaban cosas buenas, la familia siempre fue muy unida y muy tradicional, y eso me ayudo a mi ver que era lo que quería hacer con mi vida y como podría yo ayudar a la política del resguardo poniendo mi ayuda al servicio de la comunidad [...]. Cuando el mayor Máximo Pavi comenzó a trabajar acá en San Francisco tratando de buscar una tierra para trabajar con los mas pequeños de la comunidad, supe que debía ayudarlo, supe que quería convertirme en *Kapiya'sa* (profesora tradicional). Esa fue la razón de tener el compromiso con la comunidad [...].

Aquí que llevo un buen tiempo trabajando con los cabildos proponiendo la ejecución de una educación propia, pues además ya teníamos acá cerquita el ejercicio que se hizo en el CECIDIC para tener educación nuestra acá en el resguardo. Como le digo el CECIDIC sirvió de ejemplo pero lo que quería el mayor Máximo era trabajar con los más pequeños porque el decía que entre más pequeños es mas fácil aprender nuestra lengua y aprender todo de nuestra cultura. Eso fue muy importante porque hasta ese momento no había habido ningún plan de educación con niños tan pequeños como los que tenemos hoy en día acá.

[...] cuando ya se asigno aquí esta tierra para el centro de los niños en el año 2013, supe que eso era lo que debía hacer, tuve claro desde el principio que esto era lo mío y comencé también a formarme con el mayor porque si iba a enseñar a los niños pues también tenía que recibir el conocimiento del mayor para poder enseñar bien. Lo que se propuso el mayor fue un proyecto que como el mismo nombre se llama piloto pues era el primero así que se hacia, y era enseñar a los niños en la educación nuestra, como hablar el *nasa yuwe*, tejer, entender el territorio, realizar nuestras propias construcciones, mejor dicho todo lo relacionado con lo nuestro. Así fue como nació en el 2014 el *proyecto piloto Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* que significa niños y niñas en la transición de las etapas de la vida Nasa. Lo más importante para mi es que estos niños aunque desafortunadamente les toco vivir como a mi una infancia en medio de conflictos y situaciones que uno hubiera querido nunca tener que vivir, pues por lo menos les quede en la mente un buen recuerdo de su niñez, en donde lo mas importante es que aquí van a aprender a valorar sus raíces, a que nunca les de pena ni miedo decir que son indígenas, y que por el contrario todo el conocimiento que el mayor les ha dado directamente a estos niños pues puedan compartirlo con otras generaciones cuando ellos ya crezcan y se vayan de aquí.” Australia Poto Julicué, Interview by author, *Minga* San Francisco – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

autonomous and resilient community.

Unlike from the political conflict, cultural resistance is proclaimed in the form of a peaceful movement in the midst of conflict. In that sense, it is important to understand the decolonizing structures and relationships between beliefs and struggle in the experience lived by the Nasa-Paéz.

Decolonizing Education Through the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*

I met Australia in late 2015 at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* (“youth in the transition of Nasa life”),⁴²³ when the project was just beginning. My initial approach to this project was through my search of *Yatzungas* in the Nasa-Paéz territories, when I was looking into new constructions that were to be implemented in the *resguardo* (Fig. 1.1). Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, who at that time served as director of planning for Toribío, advised me to contact the person who would later be designated by the authorities of the *resguardo* as one of the guides for my field research: Luis Antonio Poto.⁴²⁴

Poto, Indigenous leader from the San Francisco *resguardo* and a collaborator in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project, facilitated my first contacts with its director, the elder Máximo Pavi and one of his collaborators in children’s decolonizing education, Australia Poto Julicué. That was how not only the CECIDIC but also the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* would become obligatory destinations on each of my field trips to Toribío.

Contemporary *Nasa Kiwe* becomes a reason to understand the interpretation of what cultural ancestry might mean in the process of reaffirming cultural identity. The Toribío elders and the Indigenous council, through *Proyecto Nasa*, incorporate new pedagogical strategies to unify territory as the big house through traditional education, as part of the contemporary process of resilience.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Australia Poto Julicué. Interview by author, *Minga* San Francisco – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

⁴²⁴ Luis Antonio Poto, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 17, 2016.

⁴²⁵ For information on traditional education, see: Arsenio Ascué. *Nasa Yuwe Primeros Pasos - Proyecto Nasa*. CECIDIC, 2014.

The *Wasar Kiwewex Fxidx* project promoting principles of *Nasa Kiwe-Yat* and recovery of language, is a case in point.

In 2015 I was able to witness the beginning of the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project, where a decolonized educational project was implemented through the construction of the first *Yatzunga* and traditional *tulpa* functioned as a place for hosting community meetings for reflection or *mingas*, and where smaller *Yatzungas* were erected nearby to host their youngest students (Fig. 2.29).



Fig. 2.29, Construction of *Yatzunga* as part of the traditional education at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project. Photo by author.

On 2017th, funds were collected by the San Francisco Indigenous council to build other *Yatzungas*, this time with contemporary materials but with the same symbology: to congregate and to serve the community (2.30). Material like the one used in this contemporary *Yatzunga* evidence the intention to incorporate concrete structure to promote long-lasting constructions but keeping the symbology and meaning of this traditional building.

In each visit, I could see how the students improve not only in numbers but in Indigenous

knowledge and how the community work by the elder Pavi and the traditional professors generated different processes for culture recovery based on the research from the *tulpa* or hearth in which the *Nasa Yuwe* language, the traditional weavings of *chumbes* and *mochilas*, and the recovery and construction of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas* –with traditional and contemporary materials– were shared with the students and the broader community through oral tradition and building practices.



Fig. 2.30, Construction of a contemporary *Yatzunga* at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* project. Photo by author.

Their knowledge, taught in the contemporary *Yatzungas* and also conveyed there symbolically, enabled me to corroborate the importance of traditional architecture in the process of cultural recovery. Learning by observing, weaving, cultivating, inhabiting and defending within *Nasa Kiwe* as the “big house and seed,”⁴²⁶ facilitates the strengthening of cultural relationships through

⁴²⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 91.

mingas while fostering processes of peaceful resistance among inhabitants.

This initiative, proposed by the *Proyecto Nasa* and elder Máximo Pavi, was undertaken to strengthen and bring recognition to traditional Nasa-Paéz education. Core changes associated with this project were driven by traditional professors, formalizing a pedagogical proposal for minors based on the Nasa-Paéz culture and *Nasa Yuwe* language recovery. Architecture in the form of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga* was proposed from the beginning of the project as a cultural carrier. Its intention from the start was to involve students by learning around the hearth the traditional language through the cultural activities of sowing, dancing, music, rituals, and tributes, as well as construction and interpretation of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga*:

The first thing that was built here to develop this project was a *tulpa* and *Yatzunga*, because it was necessary to have a traditional place to start the project. The second construction was the female housing, where the elder selected the place and building materials, and *minga* rituals were performed with lots of food. This house is the dining room and place for the traditional professors to teach the students [...]. Here the need arose to show the *Nasa Yat* as an important element of our culture and so we are building one here.⁴²⁷

In the above quote, elder Pavi shows the importance of the *Nasa Yat* as an element that generates its own dynamics decolonizing cultural processes. Thus, the *Yat*, with its traditional architecture and relationship to the territory, becomes a carrier of knowledge. Going back to the testimony of Australia Poto Julicué, constructions as carrier of knowledge in the *Nasa Kiwe* are created based on different historical moments and contemporary actions, enabling traditional education to address important issues. The intention is that new generations – through traditional

⁴²⁷ My Translation. The original in Spanish follows: “La primera cosa que se construyo aquí para que tomara forma este proyecto fue una *tulpa* y una *Yatzunga*, pues era necesario tener una casa ceremonial inicial para poder dar origen al proyecto. La segunda construcción que se realizó fue una vivienda, la femenina, ahí también el Thê’wala escogió el lugar y materiales para la construcción y se hizo una *Minga* con mucha comida. Esta casa es el comedor y lugar de enseñanza de las *kapiyasawesx* a sus alumnos [...]. Aquí surgió la necesidad de mostrar de alguna manera como el *Nasa Yat* es un elemento importante de nuestra cultura y por eso estamos construyendo uno aquí.” Máximo Pavi, Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 17, 2016.

language— may be able to see their own culture and know how to deal with the challenges that arise from being Indigenous in a disputed territory.⁴²⁸

This becomes clear to me in the study and analysis of other Indigenous communities. Descriptions and images of the architectural form of the circular *bohío*, of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta and the lowlands of the Amazon and Putumayo, were a reference (Fig. 1.10). These, provided a starting point for a consolidated project to build *Nasa Yat* as a visual Indigenous symbology through the territory.

Prototypes both recovered ancestral tradition and harmonized with the contemporary Nasa-Paéz urban and rural house, to merge the two cultures into one. These structures are designed with representative Nasa Paéz symbolic elements – the hearth— and materials that differentiate them from modern construction and articulate the identity they seek to recover.

Processes of resistance have become evident in the CRIC proposals to safeguard language, culture and history through “*Proyecto Educativo Comunitario PEC*”⁴²⁹ and *educación propia*, which applies the Nasa-Paéz model to socially advance the community through architecture as part of peaceful academic activities (Fig. 2.31).

The first *Yatzungas* were built at the CECIDIC in 2013. The second *Nasa Yat* prototype was started in 2014 at the Tacueyó *resguardo*, with support from the “*Centro de Educación Quintín Lame*.”⁴³⁰ That same year in Tacueyó, the *Yatzunga* “*Piscícola Juan Tama*”⁴³¹ was built, and in 2015

⁴²⁸ María Patricia Farfán S., “Cultural Preservation and Recognition Through Traditional Language and Architecture”. *Conference Presented at the 51st Algonquian Conference*. University of Chicago and McGill University. Montreal, Canada, 2019.

⁴²⁹ Proyecto Educativo Comunitario PEC, 2018, Betty Calero. “Proyecto Educativo Comunitario”. *Educación, Lenguaje y Sociedad*, IX, Num, 9 (Diciembre 2012): 119-133.

⁴³⁰ “Propuesta Didáctica de E.A para la I.E Agropecuaria Indígena Quintín Lame del Resguardo de Tacueyó”. Leidy Tatiana Cuchillo Mosquera, Martha Isabel Vélez Arévalo Universidad del Valle 2017.

⁴³¹ Kewextoritrucha, “Piscicultores del Territorio Ancestral de Toribío: KEW´SX TORITRUCHA”, <https://bibliotecadigital.univalle.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10893/12354/CB-0575728.pdf?sequence=1>

<https://kewextoritrucha.wordpress.com/2017/08/28/piscicultores-del-territorio-ancestral-de-toribio-kwesx-toritrucha/>. Accessed on May 1, 2019; Iván Mauricio Eraso, “Piscicultores del Territorio Ancestral de Toribío Juan Tama La Fonda, Tacueyó”. *Seminario de Habitat, Ecoterritorio, Espacio & Construcción*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

the “*Proyecto Piloto Wasar Kiwewex Fxidx*” was established on the San Francisco *resguardo*.⁴³²

After these initial prototypes, a policy of territorial recovery was proposed, with the construction of *Yatzungas* and *Nasa Yat* throughout the *resguardo* used as a way to visualize the Indigenous belonging to the territory.



Fig. 2.31, Decolonizing architecture to host traditional education at *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* Project. Photo by author.

The policy implemented through community meetings has since then promoted various *Yatzungas* to host the different *mingas de pensamiento*. The implementation of *Proyecto Piloto Wasar Kiwewex Fxidx*, with the support of the CECIDIC and the San Francisco *resguardo*, creates the opportunity for the Nasa-Paéz to have a formal understanding and interpretation of their own culture through its architecture which “represents, in a ritualistic way, the preservation and recovery of culture.”⁴³³ CRIC and *Proyecto Nasa* began a process to decolonize education, to transform

⁴³² Luis Antonio Poto Eyder and Wuilson Ul Ascué, *Minga* – Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

⁴³³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “[...]desde los rituales, el *Yat* representa la preservación y retoma cultural.” Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

relationships with the territory into a place of their own, in response to contemporary policies and beliefs (Fig. 2.32 & 2.33).



Fig. 2.32, Elder Pavi, *kapiyazas* and students at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*. Photo by author.

Educational spaces reveal the hearth within the *Nasa Yat* as the place of origin and birth of tradition through the big house where believes and elders wisdom promote a “new territorial interpretation.”⁴³⁴ Decolonizing education sets up a scenario for peaceful protest, to face adversity through social and academic programs. The overarching principle of Indigenous autonomy has guided organization at the *resguardo* level, through interaction between not only the community and the elders, but also women and *kapiyazas*.

⁴³⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121.



Fig. 2.33, *Mochilas* woven by students as part of the academic program at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*. Photo by author.

Fig. 2.32 & 2.33 and the testimony of Poto Julicué illustrates how the policies of the Indigenous council have been implemented efficiently on behalf of cultural recovery. It also shows how, by teaching around the hearth the value of Indigenous culture among the youngest members of the community, processes of resilience are generated, forging a new Nasa-Paéz generation willing to continue to defend their own culture with greater autonomy.

In my field research at the *Wasar Kiwewex Fxidx*, the revival of traditional dynamics exposed in the academic program confirm how recognition of Indigenous autonomy is imperative for cultural continuity, maintenance and development of their own systems to govern *Nasa Kiwe*. Indigenous autonomy has therefore rationalized the Nasa-Paéz' sense of *being* and place converging in the symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe*. As a result, new territorial definitions and governance structures

have appeared that decode ancestral land based on Indigenous beliefs, particularly the Nasa-Paéz law of origin, the new mythology and the dictums of contemporary leaders where “territory as physical place is visualized as the *Yat*.”⁴³⁵

Although respect for the culture must materialize in the possibility of unrestricted development in all aspects that govern the *resguardo*, including political, social and cultural ones, I would argue that this type of peaceful claim must not only seek territorial transformation but must also foster autonomy in the transition to a different system of Indigenous revindication through governance and traditional research, thereby “identifying the community organization and ancestral knowledge.”⁴³⁶

In sum, through research from the hearth, the law of origin and the Nasa-Paéz concept of the world that is currently taught through decolonizing education and traditional architecture, it is possible to lead a respectful process of Indigenous vindication that has been denied by cultural oppression.

Decolonizing *Nasa Kiwe* from Adaptation and Displacements

According to its location in relation to *Nasa Kiwe*, the *Nasa Yat* is either urban or rural. The urban house has been built according to established parameters from Colonial Spanish morphology within municipalities and towns; the rural represents the traditional Indigenous house through its materials and forms, but some cultural practices associated with them have been lost.

This is the main concern for the Nasa-Paéz and this is why academic and cultural strategies have been implemented for protection through the “Nasa life cosmovision.”⁴³⁷ Resisting settlers

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 114.

⁴³⁶ As quoted in CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 7.

⁴³⁷ Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos. *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios*, 43.

influence, several policies currently proposed by the *Proyecto Nasa* aim to strengthen culture through tradition, allowing the Nasa-Paéz to relate to ancestral wisdom through cultural practices and in their relationship with the *Kiwe*. *Nasa Kiwe* responds to different circumstances in the community as a whole with regard to the possession, recovery and defense of *Nasa Kiwe*. Current Colombian policies and laws are not adapted to the full range of contexts of Indigenous communities. The violent situation of Nasa-Paéz territories are one such blind spot.

Lack of government protection as expressed in Poto Julicué testimony in Indigenous territories where military presence is pervasive due to conflict with revolutionary groups in control of illegal marijuana and coca fields, and the resulting constant struggle for the recovery of ancestral lands, demonstrate the true limitations to Nasa-Paéz cultural and political freedom. It is remarkable how, nowadays, the proliferation of illegal land cultivation, which is growing exponentially and is apparently ineffectively controlled, promotes “new settlers” who produce and commercialize illegal crops.

Inaccessibility and high agricultural quality land make this territory ideal for the cultivation of illegal products, feeding an enormous demand in different parts of the world. In addition to fostering an influx of outsiders, this situation spurs the building of new houses that are equally foreign to local Nasa-Paéz tradition.⁴³⁸ I maintain that the convergence of these circumstances affects the essence of the ancestral concept of a dwelling surrounded by a *tull* as a traditional orchard sustaining a family. This is evident throughout the *resguardo*, where a few years ago there were traditional use of land; now, most of those lands are used for growing illicit crops.

Remarkably, the Nasa-Paéz experience has been to respond with persistent interest in continuing their traditions, despite the violence and presence of settlers, and in vindicating their

⁴³⁸ Juliana Calvache, *Cultivos de Uso Ilícito Como Alternativa Generadora de Ingresos en la Vereda La Luz, Resguardo de Tacueyó Municipio de Toribío Cauca Entre los Años 1980 y 2015* (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2016), 72-73.

culture regardless of external political circumstances. Thus, an adequate milieu for the Nasa-Paéz means much more than mere sheltering. Arguably, the influx of a pervasive external illegal economy that mixes uncontrollably with their own, negatively impacts cultural principles.⁴³⁹

Collective awareness of those changes and effects is of particular importance as the key motivation for recent initiatives that aim to show the cultural resilience of the Nasa-Paéz. Thus, “adaptation,” have been undertaken through political means but also traditional practices like relocation and expansion of the *resguardos*.

The Nasa-Paéz beliefs plays an important role in strengthening the mission of territorial defense. Decolonizing processes reinforce the boundaries of *Nasa Kiwe* set by the *caciques nuevos* and contemporary policies. Leon’s testimony about contemporary beliefs and the defense of the *Nasa Kiwe* mentions how “the act of walking on our land means that it is ours, but also that we continue to be in some way connected with our ancestors. The Nasa territory is sacred; it is our house, the mountain is our house.”⁴⁴⁰ Indeed, this is how the Nasa-Paéz peacefully adapt and continue to defend their cultural and territorial borders.

Historically, Nasa-Paéz territory has been defined by borders granted to the *caciques nuevos*, with subsequent processes of both legal and forced territorial occupation due to different situations ranging from political ones to natural disasters. Indigenous mobility has not ceased. On the contrary, the indefatigable quest to expand borders and recover ancestral territories sustains the idea of decolonizing *Nasa Kiwe* referring to diverse cultural processes of identity and territorial redemption.⁴⁴¹ Fig. 2.34 is a design proposal that shows how through architecture and symbology,

⁴³⁹ For more on the “peace process” and the disarming of the FARC guerrillas, see: Juan Carlos Garzón and María Victoria Llorente, “¿Por qué Siguen Aumentando los Cultivos de Coca en Colombia? Los Desafíos Para el Próximo Gobierno”, *Fundación Ideas Para la Paz*, 26 jun 2018, <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1686>. 4.

⁴⁴⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Para nosotros el hecho de caminar nuestra tierra significa que es nuestra pero también que seguimos de alguna manera conectados con los ancestros. El territorio para el Nasa es sagrado es nuestra casa, la montaña es la casa nuestra.” Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. May 29, 2017.

⁴⁴¹ A case an example, the Nasa-Paéz Aguadita *resguardo* in the municipality of Mocoa, the El Descanso *resguardo* in the municipality of Puerto Guzmán, the El Porvenir and La Florida *resguardo* (both located in Putumayo) clearly

territorial and culture recovery is achieved.

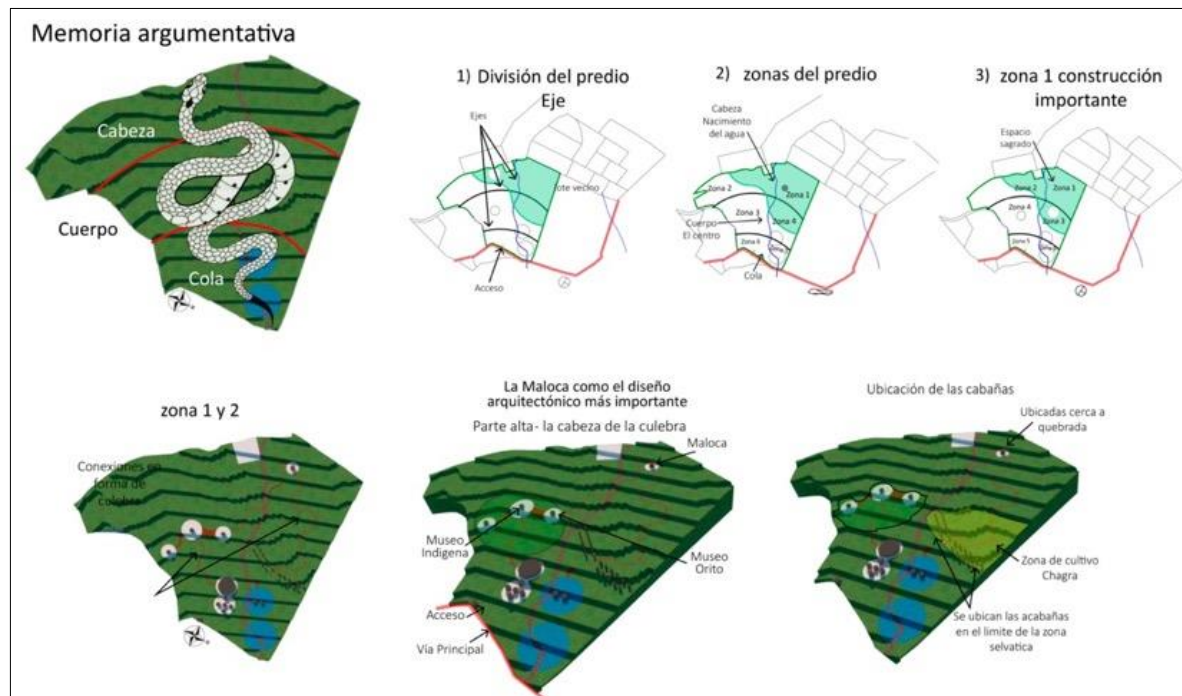


Fig. 2.34, Design project developed as a decolonized structure in contemporary Putumayo *resguardo*. Diana Ortiz. “Parque Paisajístico Cultural Yai.” Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia 2021-2022.

The studio proposal developed in Orito Putumayo, evidence the intention to preserve the tropical rain forest of Putumayo with an urban *resguardo* design that integrate Indigenous tradition.⁴⁴² For the Nasa-Paéz, these movements into the lowlands of Putumayo represent a return to their historical place of origin. It is a form of repatriation in the way that, as their law of origin indicates, the snake departed from the lowlands of Putumayo and Amazonas and climbed the Andean mountain to establish a new Nasa-Paéz territory.

show that the Nasa-Paéz have not ceased moving into and recovering lands. Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural –INCODER, *Acuerdo 024 - 029 de 2004* (Bogotá: INCODER, 2004).

⁴⁴² The design project “Parque Paisajístico Cultural Yai” is a B.Arch thesis submitted to Piloto de Colombia University. The thesis was developed in *minga* following the policies and beliefs of the community in Putumayo and Cauca. Internal advisors: Maria Patricia Farfán, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz from Piloto de Colombia University and External advisor Wuilson Úl Ascué from the Toribío *resguardo*. Diana Ortiz. “Parque Paisajístico Cultural Yai.” Universidad Piloto de Colombia 2021-2022.

Nowadays, the Nasa-Paéz also descend from *Nasa Kiwe* to reclaim and decolonize what ancestrally belonged to them, from displacement to replacement:

The policy has been to somehow return to the Putumayo jungle. We have bought some land parcels to organize a new Nasa *resguardo*. This means that we return to places that belonged to our grandparents. Now that we are organized, it is our duty to expand the Nasa territory so that we will have more land on which to live and cultivate. Palms are being planted there, and that is good for the community because apart from the land itself, our young people will see that, with shared efforts, we can recover what is ours.⁴⁴³

From this excerpt, it may be inferred that the return to the lowlands is not simply a displacement of people. It is a peaceful recovery and slow walk back in the footsteps of their ancestors. Rituals and symbolism derived from roaming across the territory persist today, just as the new chiefs roamed the land to define the current *resguardo*. In the process of integrating and interpreting *Nasa Kiwe*, the community and the Indigenous council leaders have decided to bring back this tradition to consolidate and expand the *resguardo* in regions different from the high mountains.

One aspect of particular importance in moving up and down the Andean mountain range deserves special attention. The symbolism of wandering and marking the territory through the action of “create boundaries” implies not only community ambulation and physical action.⁴⁴⁴ For the Nasa-Paéz, it involves a specific appraisal of territorial expansion on behalf of cultural survival. It is

⁴⁴³ My Translation. Original in Spanish follows: “La política ha sido retornar de alguna manera a la selva del Putumayo. Allí se han comprado finquitas para organizar nuevos resguardo Nasa. Eso significa que volvemos a lugares que pertenecieron a nuestros abuelos. Ahora que ya estamos organizados, es nuestra labor ampliar el territorio Nasa para que la comunidad tenga más tierra para vivir y cultivar. Allí se están sembrando palmas y eso es bueno para la comunidad porque no solo es la tierra, sino que vean los jóvenes que con un esfuerzo común podemos recuperar lo nuestro”. Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, Interview by author, Toribío- Cauca. February 7, 2014. See also: Jaime Navarro, et al. “Manejo de la Palma Barrigona o Chonta (*Iriartea deltoidea* Ruiz & Pav) en el Piedemonte Amazónico Colombiano y Perspectivas para Cosecha Sostenible”. *Colombia Forestal*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-24; Nicolás Ceballos. *Los Pensamientos del Indio que se Educó en las Selvas Colombianas*. Cali: Universidad del Cauca y Universidad del Valle, 2004.

⁴⁴⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 116.

important for the contemporary *resguardo* that Nasa-Paéz movement initiated by the *caciques nuevos* and empowered by contemporary leaders and policies must not cease.

At the same time, historical experience has demonstrated the consequences of a lack of unity within the community, and of the loss of tradition.⁴⁴⁵ Vicissitudes stemming from political, social and cultural circumstances led to a passive distancing from their own identity and beliefs, the loss of their customs and a resulting acculturation. This became clear in the disappearance of Indigenous architecture, language and tradition in general.

Cultural perception of the territory has unveiled a form of decolonize place making, an interpretation of inhabiting from the hearth.⁴⁴⁶ As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is pertinent to note that the geographic displacements of the Nasa-Paéz are not only tied to the defense of and return to places formerly inhabited by their ancestors, but are also framed by violence and natural disasters, such as the avalanche on the *Nevado del Huila*.⁴⁴⁷

That natural disaster and the issues presented through the testimony of Soledad Martínez Cápí earlier in this chapter, marked the beginning of a new period in Nasa-Paéz displacements.⁴⁴⁸ The former Toéz *resguardo* was relocated in different new *resguardo* through the *Nasa Kiwe* Corporation.⁴⁴⁹

The new *resguardo* of Huellas and Nuevo Toéz were installed on former lowland *haciendas*, promoting discomfort and confrontations between landlords and Indigenous people.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, the Huellas and Nuevo Toéz *resguardo*, became an example of recovery and decolonizing territory.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁴⁶ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

⁴⁴⁷ Gow. *Countering Development*, 63.

⁴⁴⁸ Gow. *Countering Development*, 82.

⁴⁴⁹ Corporación Nasa Kiwe, *Misión – Visión* (Popayán: Corporación Nasa Kiwe. 2019).

⁴⁵⁰ For more on 1992 land recovery, recognition of *resguardo* Huellas and Nilo massacre, see: Autoridades Indígenas Cabildo Indígena, *Plan de Vida y de Desarrollo Comunitario, Resguardo Huellas – Caloto 2016* (Caloto: Resguardo Huellas Municipio de Caloto, 2016), 19.

⁴⁵¹ According to Rivera, Many people working in southwestern *resguardo* of Toribio, Tacueyó or San Francisco are Nasa-Paéz who live in Toéz or Huellas *resguardos*. This is the case of Gonzalo Rivera who works at CECIDIC but

Unfortunately, the relocations failed to take into account the living conditions with which the Indigenous people were familiar, and many were –and still are– challenged by cultural difficulties resulting from those relocations. Perhaps the most significant problem was, and continues to be, the inappropriate living conditions that the people faced: an imposed architecture and no land to cultivate, in other words, alien cultural conditions (Fig. 2.35).



Fig. 2.35, Mosoco non-traditional house after the earthquake of June 4, 1994. Photo by author.

The basic conclusion for the community was that the earthquake was caused by disrespect shown by the people to the territory. I would not be likely to argue with the following interpretation of the consequences of this disaster: these broader cultural difficulties were a result of the influence of

was relocated from Tierradentro after the avalanche of Nevado del Huila to the Huellas *resguardo*. Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

outsiders on the community, resulting from displacement after the earthquake, and a resulting discord between Nasa-Paéz and their territory.

Most of the relocated Nasa-Paéz families had previously enjoyed access to the *Nasa Yat*, with traditional materials and morphology. Clearly however, the new *resguardo* and their houses did not take Indigenous character into consideration in any way. Neither geographic location nor the projects themselves were considered in the context of traditional inhabitation. Finally, after the natural disaster, Nasa-Paéz from Belalcázar, Mosoco and Tóez were required to live in prefabricated houses absolutely foreign to their cultural practices.

Although well-intentioned, it was an authoritarian and ignorant action by the Colombian authorities involved in these projects. As Rivera points out: “Several International Governments gave money for the houses, but they have no place to plant, are made of brick with zinc roofs, and are very hot inside. It is true that I built my house with bricks, but I made the roof from *guadua*, I have a *tulpa* and I made the roof higher so that the house stays cooler. In the back, I took out the bathroom and planted fruit trees.”⁴⁵²

From what Rivera says, we can perceive the disrespect for the local culture, where other serious social and political issues arose when the Nasa-Paéz were moved to *haciendas* that, by colonial tradition, had belonged to eminent wealthy families of the region.

As a result, there was – and still is – constant conflict between members of the Indigenous communities and the landowners. The relocations become a process of decolonization and the Nasa-Paéz are committed to recover what they consider was once their own and have taken action to return and occupy territory that belonged to them in the past and from which they were once separated.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² My translation. Original in Spanish: “Varios gobiernos internacionales aportaron dineros para las casas, pero son casas que no tienen donde cultivar, son de ladrillo y de teja de zinc, son muy calientes. yo sí la hice con ladrillo, pero el techo con *guadua*, con *tulpa* y más levantada así no se calienta tanto. En la parte de atrás saqué el baño y sembré unos palos de fruta.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

⁴⁵³ Mario Cajas Sarria, “La Masacre de Caloto: Un Estudio de Caso Sobre los Derechos y la Movilización Indígena en el Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos”, *Boletín Mexicano de Derecho Comparado*, no.130 (2011): 77-85.

Fig. 2.36 shows how recovery and decolonization process is promoted thorough *Yatzungas*, in order to visualize Indigenous presence and tradition to recovery territories.⁴⁵⁴



Fig. 2.36, *Yatzunga* and *Tulpa*. Nuevo Toéz *resguardo*. Photo by author.

Nowadays, recurring conflicts between the Colombian Army and the Nasa-Paéz Indigenous guard occur due to periodic Nasa-Paéz disruptive occupations of lowlands.⁴⁵⁵ The *Hacienda La Emperatriz*, adjacent to the Huellas and Nuevo Toéz *resguardo*, has become an example of this situation and a symbolic place for demonstrations. Consequently, decolonizing *Nasa Kiwe* from adaptations and displacements make up a territory that deserves to be defended.

Decolonizing the Political and Territorial Structure: Self-governing *Nasa-Kiwe*

⁴⁵⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

⁴⁵⁵ As quoted in Gow. *Countering Development*, 69.

“The elders, *The'walas*, *Kapiyasas*, men and women community members and *comuneros* have begun to contribute from their experience, from their natural learning, elements of the utmost importance, so that the road will become ever clearer, and from their experience we can fully understand the expectations for vocational training, but, from their roots, can also contribute to the comprehensive education of the people and thus strengthen our identity as children of the Earth, as Indigenous peoples.”⁴⁵⁶

The contemporary *Nasa Kiwe* seen as the big house from the vision of research from the hearth creates an strategy in which ancestral memory can be passed on, and thus maintained.⁴⁵⁷ Starting in the 1980s, the Nasa-Paéz started to narrate their own history intentionally through the *Proyecto Nasa*, on the foundation of the CRIC and through the progressive realization of different traditional projects.⁴⁵⁸

Of particular importance are “the factors” which the *Proyecto Nasa* establishes as part of the political guidelines.⁴⁵⁹ The importance of those factors as part of a decolonized strategies directly influenced the objectives that connect territory with Nasa-Paéz notions of beliefs and respect: the

⁴⁵⁶ As quoted in Jorge Prieto and Breiner Ortiz, *Ya' ja Tejiendo en Comunidad. El Camino Investigativo. Construyendo un Sueño Hacia la Fundamentación y la Construcción de la Propuesta Pedagógica Zonal en Artes* (Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015), 11. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Mayores, mayores The'walas, kapiyasas, comuneros y comuneras han comenzado a aportar desde su experiencia, desde su formación natural, elementos de suma importancia para que el camino sea cada vez mas claro, para que desde su vivencia podamos entender completamente las expectativas de formación de oficios, sino también pueda, desde sus raíces, contribuir a la formación integral del pueblo y por consecuencia al fortalecimiento de nuestra identidad como hijos de la tierra, como pueblos originarios.”

⁴⁵⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

⁴⁵⁸ For more on Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Youth Movement see: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal de Toribío 2012 – 2015* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2012), 29.

⁴⁵⁹ Factors of the *Proyecto Nasa*: 1. Strengthening the Indigenous councils and unifying the *resguardos*, 2. Defending natural resources and the autonomy of Indigenous authority, 3. Promoting unity, 4. Valuing culture, languages, oral tradition, community *mingas*, 5. Strengthening community values such as mutual respect, participation, union, autonomy, decision-making ability and politics. My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “1. Fortalecimiento del cabildo y unificación del resguardo, 2. Defensa de los recursos naturales, la autonomía de las autoridades propias, 3. Promoción de la unidad, 4. Valoración de la cultura, la lengua, las costumbres, la tradición oral, el trabajo comunitario minga, 5. Fortalecimiento de valores en la comunidad como el respeto mutuo, la participación, responsabilidad, la unión, la capacidad de decisión, la autonomía y política.” Flor Ilva Trochez, *Núcleo Territorio, Naturaleza y Producción, Educación Básica Primaria*. (Cali: Grafitextos, 2000), 26. For more information on political guidelines, see: Wilhelm Londoño. “Los Hijos de las Quebradas: Caracterización Cultural de la Configuración Política Nasa”. En: *Contra la Tiranía Tipológica en Arqueología*, Eds. Carl Langebaek y Cristóbal Gnecco, 175-190. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2006.

development of Indigenous land-based strategies and contribute towards the Indigenous studies program's community outreach, initiatives and ritualistic activities.

Thus, the political organization of the Nasa-Paéz concentrates its activities in one fundamental pillar: to see the Nasa-Paéz as a single community, communally inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe*. Their concept of culture and time, even if not linear, is not static: they see themselves as part of a changing process in which consciousness and evidence of Indigenous origins need to be preserved, not only because of social issues, but also due to continuous violence and conflict with different insurgent groups.

These are generative principles of the *Nasa Kiwe*. Starting with the contemporary Colombian Constitution (1991), Indigenous rights and land restitution have significantly advanced. When it comes to policies on Indigenous identity, the Nasa-Paéz have been empowered the generation of self-governing entities operating in their own territory.

This led to increasingly active participation in resolution of their problems, particularly those associated with recovery, defense and preservation of their culture and rightfully owned lands. An autonomous entity at the national level was consolidated in modern times through creation of the CRIC, and an Indigenous government have evolved significantly from that moment on, by means of “the union of the Indigenous communities.”⁴⁶⁰

Political transformations gave rise to more than just political movements. They have included cultural, academic, social and mythological developments. From this long struggle, new initiatives originated with the Nasa-Paéz for the preservation of traditional memory in a territory of constant conflict: the Indigenous councils unified by the CRIC brought together decolonizing process to sustain ancestral wisdom.

From the beginning of this research, I have consciously attempted not to take a personal position about the regional armed conflict, and to the greatest possible extent, to keep the specifics of

⁴⁶⁰ Friede. *El Indio en Lucha por la Tierra*, 172.

this subject outside of the scope of my research. But it has become impossible not to refer to it, because it impacts my subject. Armed conflict has caused multiple territory-related transformations, which include significant changes in attitudes and actions.

Armed conflict has brought a drastic change in the way that *Nasa Kiwe* are being protected by traditional authorities and Indigenous councils. Perhaps without realizing it, the Nasa-Paéz transform the original principles of the *caciques nuevos*, contemporary leaders and traditional authorities as a defensive process against violence.

Therefore, concerted efforts to prevent the deterioration of values and actions inside the *resguardo*, particularly directed towards the youth, who, seeking power outside the *resguardo*, are more easily impressed by consumerist values and other external economic and political influences.

In addition to violence due to political, economic and cultural differences within the *resguardo*, borders of the Nasa-Paéz *resguardo* are also a part of the political and territorial decolonizing structure that I consider it has to be analyzed. It is common among the *Nasa Kiwe* to consider the Andean central mountain range as a boundary.

For the Nasa-Paéz that border demarcates two complementary sides which, although divided by the mountain, need each another for political survival and territorial protection. Such geographic distinctions within the Nasa-Paéz have been denominated by Rappaport as *tierradentro* (traditional land) and *tierrafuera* (outside land), with the *tierradentro* on the eastern side of the mountain being an ancestral territory, and *tierrafuera* the new region that has evolved since the time of the new chiefs.

Thus, this *tierrafuera* is the result of several displacements made across the central Andean *cordillera* in Colonial times: “From a topographical perspective, we may isolate two concepts which better explain the foundations of Paéz territoriality. These are the notions of *ajyu* and *uyu*. In simple

terms, *ajyu* means on this side, while *uyu* means on the other.”⁴⁶¹ The two concepts can play an important role nowadays in traditional territorial understanding.

Since the new chiefs created a new concept of territory based on their own historical moment, new sacred places and rituals –like research from the hearth– have been part of contemporary *Nasa Kiwe*. While change is not foreign to the concept of *Nasa Kiwe*, in response to constant interaction with outsiders the idea of resistance and permanence in the newly occupied territories has become an important issue within the community.

Nonetheless, today the Toribío, San Francisco and Tacueyó *resguardo* do not recognize themselves as *tierrafuera*, neither do they acknowledge the distinction between *tierradentro* and *tierrafuera*; for inhabiting such different territories would create segmented places within the *Nasa Kiwe* or outside of it.

The Nasa-Paéz of Toribío currently do not recognize this division; thus, all are considered residents of a single territory without borders or languages other than *Nasa Kiwe*. Hence, *Nasa Kiwe* as part of the political and territorial decolonizing structure is nowadays identifies as an unified element for the Nasa-Paéz in the symbolic construction of territory.

This situation occurs not only within the area of armed conflict. Proximity to modern urban centers, external to the Nasa-Paéz context, lead younger generations to live away from tradition. For residents of Toribío, proximity to cities and urban centers has facilitated cultural permeability. This is a problem faced by all the Indigenous councils that aim to safeguard Nasa-Paéz identity.

Decolonizing the political and territorial structure, –where self-governing *Nasa-Kiwe* as part of the factors of the *Proyecto Nasa* – allow community strength. Numar Musicué comments: “I was born and live in Santo Domingo with my family but my parents are not from here, they came from Tierradentro. My grandparents still live far away, like around eight hours from here, and there the

⁴⁶¹ As quoted in Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 334-335.

people are different, they prefer to live in the country. Over there are almost none traditions left.

Here, there are some but not many, and the rituals are different. It is important to recover tradition.”⁴⁶²

Musicué shows how *resguardo* borders brings with it unexpected and involuntary cultural shifts that make tradition mutate more rapidly with the resulting risk of cultural disappearance. Subsequently, unconsciously appropriate otherness.

The cultural differentiation of the two sides of the Andean central mountain range as natural and cultural border, recognizes Tierradentro as more traditional because of its geographical location. In contrast, the way of life and awareness of cultural practices in Toribío that incorporates tradition more through policies, traditional education, new rituals and tributes, leads us to view *Tierraфуera* as even more cognizant of tradition than Tierradentro.

As mentioned earlier, the *Vereda* López, due to its proximity to Santo Domingo, Tacueyó and the *camino real* to Tierradentro, has been subject to a continuous presence of people who are not Nasa-Paéz, enabling us to describe the relationships with people who are from outside of the Indigenous context within the *resguardo*. The Nasa-Paéz of this region have dealt with cultural mixing not just with settlers, but with people who are part of illegal groups and others involved in illicit crops. This cultural mixture has permeated the traditional ways of Nasa-Paéz life.

Equally, the traditional and contemporary typologies of the *Nasa Yat* have been affected due to the political and territorial structure – including voluntary displacements between *resguardos*, forced displacements due to natural disasters such as the 1994 Tierradentro earthquake, or the above-mentioned violence.

In Tacueyó, Santo Domingo and López we may observe this process of decolonizing Nasa-

⁴⁶² My translation. The original text in Spanish follows: “Yo nací y vivo en Santo Domingo con mi familia pero mis papás no son de por acá, ellos provienen de la parte alta de Tierradentro. Allá todavía viven mis abuelos, eso es lejos, eso es como a ocho horas de acá y allá la gente es diferente, les gusta más el campo, y hay menos tradiciones. Aquí hay, hay algunos pero no muchos, son diferentes. Es por eso que es importante recuperarlos.” Numar Musicué, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 18, 2016.

Paéz Identity through its architecture. A case in point is the permeability of tradition visible in the *Nasa Yat* of the Fiscué family.⁴⁶³ During my field research in López, I always stayed in the home of Mayra Aida Fiscué, where I could observe the above mentioned differences in the two houses belonging to that family: a *Yat* located high up on the mountain and a second traditional *Yat* influenced by the proximity of settlers. (Fig. 2.37 & 2.38).



Fig. 2.37, Mayra Aida Fiscué in her traditional *Nasa Yat* in the upper part of López. Photo by author.

⁴⁶³ Mayra Aida Finscué, Interview by author, Vereda López Toribío Cauca. August 20-21, 2016 and October 21-22, 2016.



Fig. 2.38, North façade of the Fiscué family house in the lower part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.

As previously stated, the first time I arrived in López was when walking to Paéz Lake. That day, the *Saakhelu* ceremony in Tacueyó had ended and during that ceremony I was given permission to visit the sacred lake. I began my walk towards this sacred place the same day, staying the first night at Santo Domingo and arriving at López the next day. Even though it was my first time roaming this path, I could see how the architecture changed radically in comparison to Toribío.

The houses were conventional ones using traditional layouts and materials, but I could also see that there was a juxtaposition of traditional architecture with foreign materials that might be considered unsuitable for the indigenous context.

Being able to stay at the home of the Fiscué family frequently enabled me to travel with relative ease through this territory of difficult access, while also providing the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the ancestral understanding of *Nasa Kiwe* and the qualities of the *Nasa Yat* and its nontraditional additions. In the specific case of the Fiscué family, I could see how

decolonizing Nasa-Paéz identity alternated between their heritage, beliefs and settler influence as part of the phenomena of resilience.

The Fiscué family, who had come from Tierradentro and arrived in López more than 30 years earlier, lived in a traditional house high up on the mountain (Fig. 2.39).



Fig. 2.39, *Yat* of the Fiscué family in the upper part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.

The *finca*, as Doña Mayra refers to this traditional house, was located on the heights where they also planned to harvest and have a quality of life in accordance with Indigenous tradition. Fiscué mentioned that the *finca* was the land where she had lived most of her entire life and established her

family with her husband and children.⁴⁶⁴

Over the years, the only access to this *finca* – on foot or by mule – could take more than an hour and had become increasingly difficult. This led to incorporate nontraditional materials. The roof structure composed of *guadua* canes was replaced for a zinc roof, and due to the inaccessibility a second house was built in the mountain slope adjacent to the main road that connects the village of López with San Francisco.

The two houses of the Fiscué family enabled me to understand how the process of decolonizing the territorial structure has been transformed over time. The first house high up on the mountain is a traditional house, with a single rectangular room and a *tulpa*. The second house also consisted of a single room and a *tulpa*, but over time it had been modified with different additions that had nothing to do with Nasa-Paéz tradition and had more architectural features brought by settlers. Fig. 2.40 shows the Fiscué house additions. A bathroom, a closed-off kitchen different from the traditional *tulpa*, a dining area, and a family room with a big television, have been added.

On the other hand, in addition to the previously mentioned changes over time, during my different visits to the home of the Fiscué family, I could see other changes resulting from the commercialization of marijuana crops in the region. Changes in the course of a single year were considerable.

⁴⁶⁴ Mayra Aida Finscué, Interview by author, Vereda López Toribío Cauca. October 22, 2016.



Fig. 2.40, Addition of the Fiscué family house in the lower part of the Vereda López. Photo by author.

Even though additional income has been received due to other resources, and external architecture features has been incorporate, the process of decolonizing the territory has been maintained through the preservation of traditions: rituals performed by the elders and architectural features like the traditional *tulpa* has been maintained.

Architecture become an important point in the Nasa-Paéz decolonizing process, particularly with the policies generated from the national government regarding the *post-conflicto*. A future expansion of the Fiscué house involves two additional building: the first one in the form of a *Yatzunga* to host the community meetings, and traditional *Nasa Yats* to host people in López in their way to the sacred Paéz lagoon and Tierradentro.

Finally, changes in the symbolic construction of territory made it possible to corroborate how

Rappaport's previous description of "*tierrafuera*,"⁴⁶⁵ despite not being recognized by contemporary Nasa-Paéz, becomes a territory that is dangerously affected by the external relationships in which the community lives. The decolonizing political and territorial structure and self-governing *Nasa-Kiwe* is threatened, due to inappropriate interactions in a territory in constant conflict, affecting their own social, political and cultural dynamics.

Decolonizing Place-World

Displacements as a result of natural disasters like the avalanche of the Paéz river, and violence due to armed conflict as mentioned earlier, have caused countless difficulties and required the development of strategies based on the Nasa-Paéz vision of dwelling and place.⁴⁶⁶

As part of the resistance to all of these external factors "where local communities have seen no other alternative, violence is selectively used as a form of self-defense,"⁴⁶⁷ as David D. Gow points out, has been a definitive factor in creating policies of decolonization to safeguard the culture from external agents and create a new self-governing context of symbolism to define the reality and resistance.

Facing physical and cultural displacements and prompted by mutation, the factual aspects of their difficult reality have generated singular strategies for resilience and preservation of values through the symbolic construction of territory, which may extend to the notion of the Nasa-Paéz "place-world," and its relationship with the spiritual and territorial structure.⁴⁶⁸

The setting of boundaries around the *resguardo*, along with the range of other Nasa-Paéz

⁴⁶⁵ Rappaport, "Territory and Tradition", 334-335.

⁴⁶⁶ Brett Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement in Southwestern Colombia: Land Violence, and Ethnic Identity*. (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2015), 91; David D Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and The Moral Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 63.

⁴⁶⁷ Gow. *Countering Development*, 14.

⁴⁶⁸ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 13.

“connectivities” – from the *tulpa* and *Yat* – establish the notion of place as world, which has socio-cultural and even ritualistic implications. Nasa-Paéz collective memory, in terms of building the territory as big house, has evolved, yet remains part of the ancestral memory embodied in the *Nasa Yat* and *Nasa Kiwe* taken as a single unit: house, territory and world.

Proyecto Nasa, stemming from their concern for recovering and preserving their territory, shows the continuing respect the Nasa-Paéz have for it. The *Yat* becomes the basic unit of a structure for resistance that is at once political, cultural and mythological.⁴⁶⁹ The *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, provides terrestrial and mythological elements and connects architecture and beliefs to form a cohesive community decolonizing the territorial structure as expressed in the vision of research from the hearth.⁴⁷⁰ In this context, contemporary policies endow the Nasa-Paéz with resilience and vitality.

It is important to recognize that the Nasa-Paéz have adapted to changing circumstances, but the new forms of culture they develop are inevitably associated with their Indigenous identity. This process of adaptation and creation of a decolonizing place-world is not a submissive one; it is a process of constructive agency where the essential, the harmonious and holistic understanding of territory and its components are tied in their essence to decolonize *resguardo* policies.

In particular, the ritual of the *minga*, so essential to constituting the *Nasa Yat*, is a living example of how building the Nasa-Paéz “place-world” requires collective effort and community participation. The *Yat* seems at first glance to be just a house, a plot of land and an orchard. In reality, it is a reciprocal project of community building; an inheritable and sustainable one. Such reciprocity is present in the Nasa-Paéz relationship not just with *Nasa Kiwe*, but also with mythology in an all-encompassing manner, and with the wisdom of the elders, which is never overlooked.⁴⁷¹

Throughout the Toribío *resguardo*, there is evidence of the significant effort by the

⁴⁶⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121.

⁴⁷⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 19-20.

⁴⁷¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 40-41.

community to actively use traditional ways to protect the territory, architecture and the once-threatened *Nasa Yuwe* as a way to identify and defend Indigenous origins.

The following testimony by Herney Largo, an Indigenous leader from Toribío, is a case in point: “I studied with the priests in Caloto and it was impossible to speak any language other than Spanish. *Nasa Yuwe* was looked down upon; it was the language of the “*Indios*,” although I am an “*Indio*”, I didn’t want my classmates to notice it. My parents didn’t speak to us in *Nasa Yuwe*, which is why I speak only a few words of it. Nowadays it’s different, I am not ashamed of being Nasa.”⁴⁷²

In particular, Largo’s testimony about his personal experience with the difficulties that the Nasa-Paéz had in the past and the different ways in which reconciliation is now somehow present, show how decolonized process even threatened due to “the desire to live like settlers,”⁴⁷³ are important to consolidate. Particular experiences is what I believed are important messages for decolonizing process.

In *mingas*, the voice of elders and the community is revived during the community meetings and its testimonies promote particular ways to face their reality. Largo’s and Poto Julicué testimonies are part of the communication structure that the community use in favor to generate decolonizing process. The prominence of decolonizing place-word in *mingas* is visible in Figure 2.41 & 2.42, where the message made sure to capture the *Nasa-Kiwe* as a big house and place for *mingas*.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² My translation. The original in Spanish: “Yo estudiaba con los curas en Caloto, y allá era imposible hablar otra cosa que no fuera Español. Hablar la lengua Nasa en esa época era mal visto, eso era lo que hablaban los Indios y aunque uno era un indio no quería que el resto de los de la clase se diera cuenta mucho. Mis papás no nos hablaban en *Nasa Yuwe* así que yo solo se unas palabras. Ahora es diferente ya no le da pena a uno ser Nasa.” Herney Largo, Interview by author, Toribío- Cauca. February 14, 2015.

⁴⁷³ Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural –INCODER and Centro de Estudios Interculturales de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana – Cali, *Proceso de Fortalecimiento Territorial a Consejos Comunitarios y Capitanías* (Bogotá: INCODER Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2013), 18; Colciencias y Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. *Cartilla de Español para Indígenas Nasa*. Bogotá: Colciencias, 2008; Fernando Romero, et al. *La Enseñanza del Español Como Segunda Lengua*. Pereira: Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, 2008; Roció Nieves. “Morfología del Predicado en Nasa Yuwe”. *Bulletin del IFEA*, 23, 3, (1994): 539-566; Mariana Slocum and Gerdel, Florence. *Diccionario Páez Español Páez*. Bogotá: Editorial Townsend, 1983.

⁴⁷⁴ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca CRIC, VII Regional Minga “*Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial*.” CRIC, 2021.

The foreground of the image is the new generation of Nasa-Paéz wearing the traditional *mochilas* and staff of command in constant dialogue with the territory and elders, and the background is the Andean central mountain range and geometrical figures representing Nasa-Paéz belief. The invitation to participate in the VII regional *minga* “*Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial*” encourage political movements, traditional education and social places to vindicate tradition.



Fig. 2.41, Illustration showing Nasa-Paéz youth inviting to participate in *minga* to promote traditional education. VII regional *minga* “*Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial*”, CRIC, 2021.



Fig. 2.42, Illustration showing Nasa-Paéz elders and youth promoting the political and territorial decolonization. VII regional minga “*Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial*”, CRIC, 2021.

Cultural shifts thorough *mingas* and testimonies also bring changes in their approach and understanding of Nasa-Paéz place-world as a big house. In Toribío, some Nasa-Paéz conserve the traditional symbolic construction of territory through ritual with the spiritual guidance of the elders, using traditional forms and materials. In other cases, often in proximity to contemporary urban areas and settlers, certain traditional elements and practices survive despite outside influences; the ideology of living in a traditional dwelling, in a *Nasa Yat* with a *tull*, prevails over others, because that was how their parents and grandparents lived.

The housing pattern at the Toribío, San Francisco, Tacueyó and Nuevo Toéz is not homogeneous: some houses have more traditional features, while many others deviate from them. The blended morphology of the architecture contrasts with what is now promoted by community leaders as part of the cultural recovery project. Fig. 2.43 is one example of this mixture that reflects historical adaptations and responses to circumstances over time. Due to its closeness to settlers from Santander de Quilichao and Caloto town a non-traditional architecture has been developed.

One may draw a parallel between the traditional *Nasa Yat*, which persists in the collective memory, and the house that has actually been achieved in more recent times. Even though contemporary proposals respond to an hybridized context, the need to promote the use of traditional features (materials and rituals) in juxtaposition with contemporary building methods has been prioritizing from the Indigenous councils and policies for new housing developments.⁴⁷⁵



Fig. 2.43, Non-Indigenous architecture at Nuevo Toéz *resguardo*. Photo by author.

Deeply tied to territory, *Nasa Kiwe* is a web of signifying elements: terrestrial and celestial, mediated by the mountain, which is sacred in their vision. This Nasa-Paéz place-world gives them a position to build a world from their understanding of a notion of place.

In this perception, the *Yat* is a basic unit of the all-encompassing notion of *Nasa Kiwe*. The *Nasa Yat*, have a twofold but unitary dimension in their structure: physical and symbolic. Conceiving

⁴⁷⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 122.

architecture in a poetic manner becomes a medium to put into practice perceptions linked to beliefs and tradition.

These meanings correspond to “poetic” associations, central to the dwellers’ awareness, through the Nasa-Paéz origin of the word.⁴⁷⁶ By means of the *minga* ritual, and oral tradition from the elder and women, the community has handed down knowledge and brought awareness of ancestral wisdom and meaningful cultural practices.⁴⁷⁷ The purpose is to “open” the Nasa-Paéz to different dimensions of being and living in *Nasa Kiwe*, so that wisdom does not reside only in words, but also in actions such as recovering traditional culture and education, walking, planting, weaving and inhabiting, which are the “spaces and times” for the Nasa-Paéz vision and social interaction.⁴⁷⁸

For the Nasa-Paéz, seeing the territory is just one dimension of knowing it. I maintain that physical entities – more than merely visual stimuli – interconnect and pertain to other properties and meanings, significantly nonphysical ones; thus, the representation of place-world as a big house acquires a higher dimension. It is precisely by virtue of its physicality as evidenced on Fig. 1.1 that building traditional structures and walking in the territory, for instance, works as an action to safeguard culture and tradition; memory and wisdom are embodied in it. Fig. 1.1 also shows a map connecting urban and rural areas. Upon visualizing the traditional constructions, questions arise regarding how *Yatzungas* are defenders of culture and preservation of borders.

We can certainly use Fig. 1.1 of recent traditional constructions as a starting point for the panoramic view of the territories where Nasa-Paéz belong. This is a policy that date backs from the mandates of the *caciques nuevos*, where the Indigenous territory was created by roaming across it in continuous ambulatory *mingas*. The practice that was developed during the Colonial period to establish the limits of the *resguardo*, and which currently through the *Proyecto Nasa* endures as a

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

⁴⁷⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 16.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 17.

way to defend the physical and cultural boundaries confirm the Nasa-Paéz *resguardo* expansion.

León's testimony shows how the protection of *Nasa Kiwe* is essential for ensuring its strength: "Just like before when our parents cared for the land, now we also have to do it. Yesterday I walked from ten o'clock at night until five in the morning gathering sticks and caring for the territory because there are people who want us to leave here,"⁴⁷⁹ thus *Nasa Kiwe* is devoted to the Nasa-Paéz, and the *Nasa Yat* that represents the union of the different visions and beliefs of which its culture consists.⁴⁸⁰

These visions come together in the process of decolonizing Nasa-Paéz Identity, which is the *Yat* itself, the inhabited place, where architectural elements and practices through the hearth recreate the phenomena of resilience (Fig. 2.44). All of this is passed down from one generation to another, for instance through "teaching and learning" from research from the hearth.⁴⁸¹

The symbolic construction of territory therefore occurs in interaction with the surroundings. Place, understood this way, leads to a series of actions involving the multidimensional elements of reality: that is, understandings and perceptions of a dwelling generating interaction with *Nasa Kiwe*. What Nasa-Paéz call "*vision integral Nasa*" where the holistic vision must not be viewed simply as an attitude of awareness of the territory and culture, but also as an interpretation of the Nasa-Paéz world.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ My translation. The original in Spanish: "Igual que cuidaban el territorio nuestros padres ahora nos toca a nosotros hacerlo ahora también. Ayer caminamos desde las diez hasta las cinco de la mañana cogiendo palos y vigilando porque eso aquí hay mucha gente que nos quiere fuera." Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, Toribío-Cauca. May 29, 2017.

⁴⁸⁰ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 25-56.

⁴⁸¹ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 17.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 41.



Fig. 2.44, Rituals in the *tulpa* as symbology of the construction of territory thorough decolonizing practices. Photo by author.

More than just rhetoric from the elders and women, this understanding seems to be ingrained in their lived experiences from birth, when the burial of a newborn's navel ritual is viewed as the most important symbol of their connection to place.⁴⁸³ Therefore, the *Nasa Yat* and research from the hearth, becomes the place of origin; from this the Nasa-Paéz law of origin stems; it nurtures countless relationships between the inhabiting being and the inhabited territory, a relationship between architecture and dwellers called "rituals of human birth."⁴⁸⁴

Consequently, decolonizing place-world begins in the territory, in the sacred mountain from

⁴⁸³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 136.

⁴⁸⁴ Gilma Mosquera, Interview by author, Cali – Valle del Cauca. February 13, 2015.

which beliefs and tradition is represented in the *Yat* the big house. The Nasa-Paéz place-world entails several connections bound to the land; hence, decolonizing Nasa-Paéz identity fundamentally generates reciprocity and balance between dweller and dwelling through the *tulpa* as the connector of those relationships. Place-world must be respected through action.

Contemporary *resguardos*, rituals and beliefs have thus become the sole instruments for peaceful preservation of ancestral tradition and for achieving meaningful resistance and resilience: inhabiting while caring for and protecting their place of origin.⁴⁸⁵ The *Yat* as a political institution binds together multiple links that appear in diverse ways, not only political and social, but also in architecture, ritualistic practice and mythologies that represent a web or imaginative (poetic) language of cultural connections, and which define *Nasa Kiwe* as a reality.

Finally, in reference to this holistic relationship, Castro's has emphasized the importance of the permanence and holistic interconnectedness of Indigenous culture and housing: "Through analogy they are able to explain all existential aspects of their world,"⁴⁸⁶ promoting among related Indigenous communities –as Nasa-Paéz– the continuity and preservation of identity based on decolonizing process between cultural objects and practices. I want to conclude this chapter by acknowledging that the same violent conditions exposed on Australia Poto's testimony, led to a new perception of how Nasa-Paéz decolonize contemporary *resguardos* in order to evolve into an autonomous and resilient community, building the symbolic construction of Nasa-Paéz territory.

⁴⁸⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121.

⁴⁸⁶ As quoted in Ricardo L. Castro, "Sounding the Path: Dwelling and Dreaming". *Chora 3: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*. Edited by Alberto Pérez Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1999), 37.

Chapter 3 The Great House — Traditional Manifestations: Voices for Descendants

Chapter three places the concept of the great house for the *minga*, and the *Yatzunga* as a space for research, in relation to each other. It analyzes how cultural, social and political elements are adopted by the Nasa-Paéz community, to transform a territory riven with conflict into a harmonious place.⁴⁸⁷

The chapter examines how tradition and culture are preserved through beliefs and the promotion of shared pedagogical strategies based on the law of origin and weaving of life.⁴⁸⁸ As we have seen, mural art was evidence of the consolidation of territory through cultural endeavour: deploying peaceful action and tradition through the representation of a new reality, leaving behind the violence they have known.

A key motivation for Indigenous artistic practices is to reaffirm identity by displaying their heritage in urban areas.⁴⁸⁹ Muralism has been one such means of opening up a new peaceful perspective on Nasa-Paéz recognition.

The chapter also documented how *umya* ' or weaving empowers the women of the Nasa-Paéz *resguardo* through *mingas* which consolidate their presence, as well as fostering greater female participation in the political and social processes. Their empowerment through weaving is analyzed as an act of women's cultural resistance.

Through weaving Nasa-Paéz women promote processes of passive Indigenous resistance. The intent is to underline their degree of influence in the Indigenous movement, and their contribution to the expansion of *Nasa Kiwe* through symbols and the emancipation of women.

⁴⁸⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22. See also: Claudia Composto, and Lorena Navarro. *Territorios en Disputa*. Ciudad de México: Casa de Ondas, 2014.

⁴⁸⁸ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 154 – 155.

⁴⁸⁹ Candice Hopkins, We are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice. *Art Journal*, 76, No, 2, (2017): 39–47.

This chapter analyzes how the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, and the relationships and encounters that occur within such spaces, facilitate actions and strategies for cultural construction and development in the context of a belief system centred on *Nasa Kiwe*.⁴⁹⁰

The understanding and the being of the Nasa-Paéz is constructed not only in social action but in physical space: in the architecture of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research. These serve not merely as physical shelters, but as essential elements of the symbolic construction of an imagined territory.

Understood as seeds, voices, and manifestations of culture which give rise to the notion of Indigenous territory, I believe these structures become new “opportunities” for “emerging practices” in which the Nasa-Paéz seek new places and spaces for the construction and establishment of the great imagined house: *Nasa Kiwe*.

Finally, as a result of the understanding of *Nasa Kiwe* laid out in this dissertation, I will propose “new” relationships to consolidate contemporary rituals we can imagine arising in the coming years: architecture as a weaving of encounter in the great imagined house that, I suggest, must be considered a future practice.

⁴⁹⁰ María Patricia Farfán S., “The Nasa Kiwe: Cultural Preservation, Resistance and Recognition Through Nasa-Paéz Territory, Architecture, and Beliefs”. *Conference Presented at the Sixième Colloque Étudiant du RÉLAM (Réseau d’Études Latino-Américaines de Montréal) Revendications et Solidarités : L’Amérique Latine en Mouvement*. Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, 2021.

3.1 Resistance, Tradition and Art.

Gonzalo Rivera's Testimony

The students begin to believe in what they really are, to recognize themselves as Indigenous, which is the most important thing, at least to me as a teacher here [CECIDIC]. It has been part of our culture to feel others' denial of our culture, and even more so now that many people wrongly assume that we are part of any illegal arm group; that's not good because, first of all, people out there don't know our real situation here because what is seen from Bogotá is not the true picture. Also, they think that because we live in the midst of conflict, then we must participate in it, which is not the case. We have never wanted to be in such a situation, and in fact, we want to be far away from it, because here we are already tired of this [...].

Tradition must be seen from all sides, all values must be combined in order to be strong and face all of the situations in front of us; that is why murals represent our values, and in this way we strengthen ourselves, we become visible and differentiate ourselves from the whites, because many here want to be like the whites, and we are not like that; we are different, we are Nasa, we have different beliefs and think differently, so we must remind those who really want to be Indigenous that there's nothing wrong with being the way we are; we must value ourselves and believe in who we are as something good [...].

That is what the murals show when one roams around a town or right here at this school; what you see are good things, things that happened in our history, our truth that is good, things we want to show because they are the mandates of the *chiefs*, the story of Juan Tama, and Father Alvaro's legacy; and you also see the territory, so they know that we come from the mountains and no other place, and it is here in the mountain that we must stay because we will not get anything good by leaving to go elsewhere: to Santander, or Cali because there, we are nobody.

As a leader and teacher, I am committed to giving my students not only basic knowledge but I must convey what I know, which is my culture. [...] I like to bring my students here to the *tull*, because this is a better classroom than an enclosed one with walls and a roof. Here, in contact with the land, they learn more, learn the true meaning of being Nasa, since the Nasa must be in contact with the land to really understand that this is theirs, and that it is for this land that they must peacefully struggle. All this makes it very interesting, because many options open up, different ways to be able to belong here in the community. Students are given options and learn to see the meaning of murals and learn about us, because it is very important that they appreciate what they have, which is an important story to protect as they are the only ones who will be able to continue this tradition. That is why mural work and traditions must be preserved and the *cabildos* must work on this.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹¹ My translation. The original in Spanish: "Los estudiantes empiezan a creer en lo que realmente es, a reconocerse como indígenas, eso es lo más importante por lo menos para mí que soy profesor acá (CECIDIC). Ha sido parte de nuestra cultura sentir la negación a nuestra cultura y más que ahora muchos nos dicen que somos de algún grupo ilegal, eso no es bueno porque la gente de afuera primero no conoce la real situación que aquí vivimos porque usted

By acknowledging their own culture, the Nasa-Paéz begin to appreciate the value of tradition and open themselves up to the possibility of a social project focused on equality and social justice.

Gonzalo Rivera's testimony is an example of commitment to a community in which a process of autonomous, communitarian and pedagogical work is taking place through collaborative artistic activities. Nasa-Paéz contemporary tradition is used to transform societal perception of the principles for building a cultural identity.

With such understanding, and diverse architectural and artistic interpretations of the great house for the *minga*, and the *Yatzunga* as a space for research, the community engages in peaceful, harmonious and creative actions protecting them from both cultural alienation and involvement in the pervasive armed conflict of the region.⁴⁹²

si bien sabe que lo que se ve en Bogotá no es la verdadera situación de lo que pasa acá, y por otro lado pues piensan que porque vivimos en medio de la guerra pues piensan que también participamos y eso no es así, nosotros nunca hemos querido esa situación, es más, queremos estar lejos de eso porque acá ya estamos cansados de esa situación [...]. La tradición debe ser vista desde todos los aspectos, todos los valores deben unirse en uno para así poder ser fuertes y hacerles frente a todas las situaciones que se nos presenten, por eso los murales representan nuestros valores, así nos hacemos fuertes, nos hacemos visibles y nos diferenciamos de lo blanco, porque aquí muchos quieren ser como los blancos y nosotros no somos así, nosotros somos diferentes, somos Nasa, tenemos creencias diferentes, pensamos diferente por eso debemos recordar a los que si quieren ser indígenas que no hay nada de malo de ser como somos, que debemos valorarnos y creer en lo que somos como algo bueno [...]. Eso es lo que se ven en los murales cuando uno va por algún pueblo o acá mismo en el colegio, lo que se ve pues son cosas buenas, cosas que pasaron en nuestra historia, nuestra verdad que es buena, son cosas buenas las que queremos mostrar porque son los mandatos de los caciques, la historia de Juan Tama y el padre Álvaro, y además de eso también se ve el territorio, para que sepamos que venimos de las montañas y no de ningún otro lugar, y es aquí en la montaña que debemos quedarnos porque no sacamos nada yéndonos para otro lado, para Santander o Cali porque allá no somos nadie. Como profesor, tengo el compromiso de darles a mis estudiantes no solo el conocimiento básico sino debo entregarles lo que conozco que es mi cultura. [...] a mí me gusta traer a mis estudiantes acá al *tull*, porque este lugar es un mejor salón de clase que uno encerrado en un salón con paredes y techo, aquí en contacto con la tierra aprenden más, aprenden el verdadero sentido de ser Nasa, porque el Nasa debe estar en contacto con la tierra para que realmente sepa que esto es de él, que esto le pertenece y por esta tierra es que se debe luchar de manera pacífica. Eso hace muy interesante que se vean diferentes opciones, diferentes formas de poder uno pertenecer aquí a la comunidad, se les dan opciones a los estudiantes y ellos aprenden a ver el significado que tienen los murales y así aprenden de lo nuestro, porque es muy importante que ellos aprecien lo que tienen que es una historia importante que se debe proteger y ellos son los únicos que van a poder continuar con la tradición. Por eso la labor del mural y de mantener las tradiciones es en lo que el cabildo debe trabajar.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. June 19, 2014.

⁴⁹² Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi "La Metamorfosis de la Vida"* (Toribío Cauca: Cabildo Etnoeducativo Proyecto Nasa, 2010), 136. See also: Jean-François Côté. “From Transculturation to

I first met Gonzalo Rivera during my first field research. On February 8, 2014, while returning from Toribío to Cali, I had planned a short interview in Caloto with Rivera. The town hall had been informed of my presence in the territory and had scheduled an interview so that we could get to know each other and set up future accompaniment to the CECIDIC to discuss aspects of their contemporary traditional education.

Rivera, who is a Nasa-Paéz community leader and a traditional professor at the CECIDIC, is recognized by the community for his pedagogical strategies that involve the study of Nasa-Paéz culture based on the *tull* as a connector with the territory, was waiting for me in Caloto. That afternoon when I met Rivera, he was giving a class to the Nasa-Paéz about their traditional culture, at a Catholic school. This enabled me to recognize the two realities in which the Nasa-Paéz live their daily lives. They are close to their Indigenous roots because of the *resguardo* structure, and at the same time they are close to external culture because the Huellas and Nuevo Toéz *resguardos* are near important urban centers such as Caloto and Santander de Quilichao.

In this first visit, I remember *Don* Gonzalo (as Rivera is called and recognized in the Nasa-Paéz territory) as a calm person, who speaks tranquilly and is full of knowledge of their traditions. The emotional way in which he answered my questions about the significance of the “house” for the Nasa-Paéz enabled me to understand that, beyond asking about their architecture as an object of construction, I must start by understanding and looking more closely at the true meaning of inhabiting a territory with the specific connotations relating directly to their beliefs and traditions.⁴⁹³

This meeting with Rivera would be the first of numerous field research trips between the *resguardo* of Huellas, Nuevo Toéz, Toribío, Santo Domingo, Tacueyó and San Francisco, in which

Hybridization: Redefining Culture in the Americas”. *Transcultural Americas/Amériques Transculturelles*, Ottawa, Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, (2010): 121-147. Marco Franco, and Liana Calero. *Thul Nasa Huerto Casero Tradicional, Modelo de Desarrollo Alternativo*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2011.

⁴⁹³ Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. June 19, 2014.

his companionship and wisdom made my interest in the Nasa-Paéz culture grow with ever more intensity.

From those walks, I recall particularly the second time that I met him, in June of 2014, which was also my first visit to the CECIDIC. He was waiting for me in the upper area where the *tull* is, in one of the agroecological school sites where the students take their classes. When I met with Rivera in those classrooms, the first thing he mentioned was that we ought to leave that place and go look at the murals outside. Until then, for me, the murals did not represent anything special; they were simply images that one could see throughout the territory but without any special significance.

Rivera began the conversation by explaining a mural, on the left side of which was a typical scene of an Indigenous family pointing towards the right-hand side. They were pointing toward a figure from Nasa-Paéz mythology that is half human and half mythological, its head in the form of the moon and its hand as an extension of the sun (Fig. 3.1). Rivera explained the significance of the images, providing a context for the oral tradition and the law of origin that governs the Nasa-Paéz territory. He mentioned the legend of the origin of the Nasa-Paéz and the importance of their beliefs for this community, in this case concerning the origin of life and of the Nasa-Paéz world, which recounts how the union between the sun and the moon gave birth to the *Sa't* or chiefs.⁴⁹⁴

Finally, Rivera stressed the importance of the moon and the sun as creators of *Kiwe*, pointing out the inscription on the lower part of the mural. He concluded that for the Nasa-Paéz, everything revolves around territory: respect, admiration, creation and defense. This first visit to the CECIDIC made me focus definitively on understanding the different processes woven around their beliefs of the Nasa-Paéz: as ways to promote their own culture and the true meaning of the murals as promoters of identity, facilitating an approach to the meaning and reality of dwelling and dwelling-place in *Nasa Kiwe*.

⁴⁹⁴ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 25.



Fig. 3.1, *Sek Ate Kiwe*: the sun, the moon and territory, CECIDIC mural. Photo by author.

Connection of Identity

The Elders, when creating the world, life and beings, pointed to a horizon, a path for living in *Nasa Kiwe*; that is why they lead the way. They gave us the rules, which are guidelines for dwelling and for moving harmoniously, in equilibrium with the territory. We and the beings must comply with and respect them. If we do not comply, we cause conflict, problems, chaos, sickness and death. From these rules, we must emphasize our mandates, the laws of nature, and the concept of life necessary for understanding our rights and our ways of making justice.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ As quoted in William Paredes López and Carlos Alberto Rincón Oñate, *Cartilla Nos Juntamos Para que Nuestro Futuro Sea Hoy* (Santander de Quilichao: ACIN-DIAKONIE, 2010), 21. My translation. Original in Spanish follows: “Los mayores al crear la vida, el mundo y los seres indicaron un horizonte, un camino para vivir en Nasa Kiwe, por eso ellos van a delante. Ellos nos dieron las normas que son las orientaciones para estar y movernos de forma armónica, en equilibrio, en el territorio. Los seres y nosotros debemos acatarlas y cumplirlas. Si no lo cumplimos ocasionamos el conflicto, el problema, el caos, la enfermedad y la muerte. De estas normas hay que distinguir nuestros mandatos, las leyes de la naturaleza y el concepto de vida necesario para entender nuestros derechos y nuestras formas de hacer justicia.”

Nasa Yat has different characteristics depending on whether its location is rural or urban. Dispersed across the territory, the rural family *Nasa Yat* still maintains its own ancestral elements and characteristics. In contrast, its urban equivalent, the family house as located in the three southwestern urban centers of the *resguardo*, is framed within the Spanish colonial grid and morphology.

The core of the urban structure is the main square where the city hall and the church are located.⁴⁹⁶ Descriptions of the urban arrangement of the houses located in the frame of the Spanish grid spread from the main square outwards, in a pattern that is typical throughout Colombia. In contrast, and specifically in the Toribío *resguardo*, the urban house arose without grand architectural or political pretensions. Tacueyó was initially founded under the name of Tunibio, and today's Tacueyó was Cuetauc in *Nasa Yuwe*. This confirms that these towns were developed under Tunibio and Tacueyó Indigenous influence.⁴⁹⁷ It is likely that, in its early stages, this urban architecture shared many features with the vernacular *bohío* of Putumayo and Amazonas.

From 1543 to 1586, Indigenous communities resisted different Spanish incursions until Captain Hernando Arias de Saavedra in 1586 managed to enforce an interlude of peace, however briefly.⁴⁹⁸ In 1700, chief Manuel de Quilo y Sicos, who ruled the Toribío chiefdom, organized the community based on the colonial laws and requests for Indigenous and territorial autonomy as shown in Fig. 3.2.

⁴⁹⁶ Naftaly Mung'athia Matogi, *El Equipo Misionero de la Iglesia Católica del Norte del Cauca y el Plan de Vida Comunitario en los Resguardos Indígenas de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco: 1980 – 2010* (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2013), 31.

⁴⁹⁷ Aimer Alberto Marín Lozada and Rubén Andrés Marlés Burgos, *Escolaridad e Identidad Indígena en Jóvenes Nasa Exploración Desde la Psicología Cultural* (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2009), 42.

⁴⁹⁸ For colonial urban consolidation in Cauca see: Adriana Paredes, *Liberación de la Madre Tierra en Kisgo*. Popayán: Universidad de Cauca, 2010.

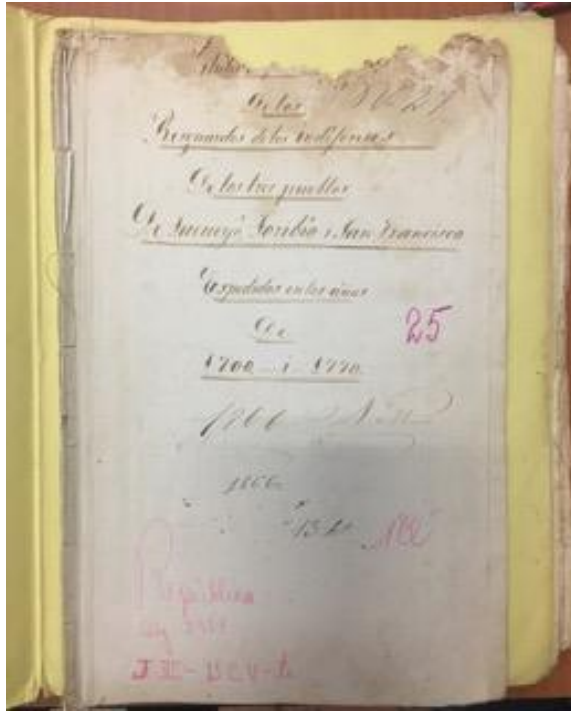


Fig. 3.2, *Real Audiencia de Quito* Titles: Tacueyo, Toribio and San Francisco 1700-1770. Photo by author.

Chief Manuel de Quilo y Sicos obtained colonial titles for the territory comprising Toribío, San Francisco and Tacueyó, in response to a formal request made by him:

The Chiefs of other tribes, towns or other individuals shall submit intensely, even to the point that some masters [or inheritors] of these territories may be referred to as their rightful owners, and they may not deny the right we have. I believe that only your Highness has the right to assign land to the white individuals, and this without prejudice to the tributary Indians, because additionally we have the right and preference, because, as we are dependents [of the Crown] and we are legitimate Americans who do not come from other strange places, it seems to me that this is more a right than being an owner. Now, since his Majesty governs what he has conquered and has an absolute right, we beg him to look first at us as his submissive taxpayers and secondly, out of justice to us as worthy holders of this land that our ancestors left to us and from whose origin and principles have come our own.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁹ As quoted in Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, *Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos. De las tierras de los indigenas de los pueblos de Tacueyó, Toribío i Sn Fco Espedidos en los años 1700 – i- 1770* (Quito: Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, Archivo General de la Nación, 1866). My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Los Caciques de otros pueblos u otros particulares se someterán intensamente, i hasta podrán llamarse como propietarios dueños unos absolutos señores dueños de estas tierras, i no podrán negar el derecho que nosotros tengamos.— Yo creo que solo Vuestra Alteza tenga el derecho de ceder tierras a los individuos blancos, i esto sin perjuicio de los Indios tributarios, porque a más de esto tenemos derecho i preferencia, porque como nosotros dependemos i somos legítimos Americanos i no somos venimos de otros lugares extraños, me parece que asista todo un derecho para que a más de ser unos dueños. Ahora, como su Majestad es quien gobierna lo que

The difference between the Toribío *resguardo* and other *resguardos* is that the *caciques nuevos* requested the foundation of their own *resguardo* from the Spanish crown.⁵⁰⁰ That petition made in colonial times was the first of many proposals at different historical moments made in quest of freedom and autonomy for the Indigenous people.

Rivera refers to a continuous historical situation: “Requests for land by the *caciques nuevos* made to the Spanish constitute the same situation that we have when we ask for more land from the Colombian government. At that time our ancestors needed more land, and nowadays we also need more; the territories that once belonged to us must be recovered to support our community.”⁵⁰¹

This demand emerges as a connection with identity out of a new sense of proclaiming one’s own territory; this persists today with respect to legalizations of the *haciendas* and attempts to deal with conflicts within the territory, in which Rivera emphasizes that “these situations must occur quickly.”⁵⁰² The connection between the “new chiefs” and contemporary leaders is clear: the *caciques nuevos* resisted various Spanish incursions, and consolidated their territories in face of them; contemporary Indigenous leaders and communities, too, are struggling against political and cultural incursions from settlers on several fronts. Urban architecture is a case in point.

That defense against incursion is developed in urban centers through collective activities drawing on shared memory. These urban expressions raise once again the voices of the *caciques nuevos* to consolidate the *resguardo* today.

conquistó i tiene derecho absoluto, suplicamos nos prefiera mirándonos primero como a sus sumisos tributarios i en segundo lugar, como justicia como a dignos acreedores a las tierras que nuestros antepasados nos dejaron y de quien procedemos por nuestro origen i principios”.

⁵⁰⁰ Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa: La Construcción del Plan de Vida de un Pueblo que Sueña* (Bogotá: PNUD, 2005), 45.

⁵⁰¹ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “La petición de los caciques nuevos a los españoles es la misma situación que tenemos hoy en día cuando pedimos al gobierno más tierras. En esos tiempos nuestros abuelos necesitaban más tierra y nosotros hoy tenemos la misma necesidad, debemos recuperar lo que nos pertenece para nuestra comunidad.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas – Cauca, February 8, 2014.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

Urban Expressions

In contrast to other colonial urban centers, in the Toribío *resguardo*, the Spanish grid did not develop immediately. The urban grid appeared later on, by the mid 1700s, when Presbyter Lucas Rojas de Velazco required that the Popayán government establish a mayor in Toribío. The aim was to consolidate the *resguardo* as an urban centre, in order to maintain stronger relationships between the chiefs and the colonial government; and particularly for the authorities of Popayán and Caloto to preserve good relations between the *resguardo* and Quito.⁵⁰³

This emerging *resguardo* not only fostered the beginning of a stronger political institution, but also the advent of a new urban consolidation incorporating Spanish architecture appropriate to the colonial governmental presence. The Nasa-Paéz ability to inhabit the territory in a traditional way up until 1770 enabled their architecture and rituals to endure longer than in other *resguardos*.⁵⁰⁴

Since then, for the Nasa-Paéz, living in an urban centre has had implicit connotations: the uprooting of cultural practices, and distancing from *Nasa Kiwe* and cultivated land in the contemporary *tull*. After the agrarian reform, disputes over territories led to multiple uprisings by small farmers seeking vindication of their rights and tillable lands.⁵⁰⁵ This situation directly affected the increasing urbanization and growing number of inhabitants in the towns. Movements by small farmers to urban regions led not only to the arrival of outsiders in these sectors, spurring activities different from local ones like agriculture, but also brought a new architecture and development more

⁵⁰³ Carlos Cuervo, *Estudios Arqueológicos y Etnográficos Americanos. Prehistoria y Viajes Americanos* (Madrid: Editorial América. 1920), 16-17.

⁵⁰⁴ Marco Palacio and Frank Safford, *Historia de Colombia: País Fragmentado, Sociedad Dividida* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2002), 38.

⁵⁰⁵ Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1830-1936* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986a).

closely tied to the development of urban form consistent with Spanish tradition and the urban grid (Fig. 3.3 & 3.4).



Fig. 3.3, Two-storey house in Toribío between the urban centre and rural areas. Photo by author.



Fig. 3.4, Two-storey house in the Toribío urban centre. Photo by author.

This same development occurred in the *resguardos* of the Department of Cauca. The *resguardo* in the municipality of El Tambo are a case in point. Due to the land reform of 1930 and because of their proximity to important urban centers of the region, government policies reduced the number of *resguardos* through agreements with the Indigenous council, to promote agricultural activity through crops such as coffee.⁵⁰⁶

The urban grid, whose function and intention is to consolidate urban centres, therefore limits the authentic Nasa-Paéz approach to interpretation and inhabitation of *Nasa Kiwe*, tied to the territorial tradition extending across the Andean central mountain range. Contact with *Nasa Kiwe* as a living entity was not, and is still not, addressed in urban areas. Western techniques and materials did not, and still do not, accommodate Nasa-Paéz cultural practices into account.

The *Nasa Yat* is an important cultural artefact for the Nasa-Paéz; it represents their understanding and ritualistic experience of their territory along with their appreciation and respect for the land that is still evident in current *resguardo* policies. However, I argue that this struggle to sustain a culture has had different outcomes depending on the geographical area they inhabit – whether rural or urban. In rural areas, traditions have continued with less disruption, while in urban ones they have disappeared almost entirely.

This becomes clear if we compare the rural and urban *resguardo* in the context of attempts to develop and apply policies promoting cultural expressions. Today, Nasa-Paéz who live in the urban centers of Toribío, San Francisco or Tacueyó still search for traditional connections through their façades. Their houses make symbolic connections to tradition, with characteristics of Nasa-Paéz culture incorporated in murals; their ancestral history is told through painting.

⁵⁰⁶ Brett Troyan, *Cauca's Indigenous Movement in Southwestern Colombia: Land Violence, and Ethnic Identity*. (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2015), 65-66.

According to contemporary Nasa-Paéz beliefs, the *Nasa Yat* is the centre of a spiral in which the law of origin, the source of ancestral culture, resides within the *Yat*. Murals on residences in the urban areas of the *resguardo*, which articulate connections to the culture and the territory, become an important expression for validation of the sacred territorial and community connection.⁵⁰⁷

If the *Nasa Yat* is not attached to the land and embedded in the territory, it is no longer a true *Yat*. As seen in my field work, this is how urban painting nowadays becomes an important connection to identity. The law of origin is a point of departure for cultural recognition and the amalgamation of Nasa-Paéz wisdom and *Nasa Kiwe* autonomy. Hence, we could say that the law of origin is a way of a living expression, of inhabiting the “territory of the beings.”⁵⁰⁸ Thus there is much more at stake here than just the representation of Indigenous expressions on painted walls.

Coincident with this, through CRIC policies, autonomy and beliefs, the Nasa-Paéz create a particular reality for their community, which runs in parallel between contemporary tradition and western culture. Their symbolic understanding of territory enables them to experience, and us to understand, their way of conceiving of a dwelling place, whether rural or urban, within *Nasa Kiwe*. Geometrical figures, such as the rhomboid representing the mountain, and the spiral of the law of origin woven into the fabrics of *mochilas*, *chumbes*, and in the *Nasa Yat* itself, illustrate how geometry and art become a meaningful language in this context.

Attempts have been made in urban areas to explicitly include these symbolic representations in façades, mural paintings or window and door ornaments, as a way of combining ancestral tradition with contemporary architecture. But there is still a cultural distance expressed in Toribío, Tacueyó and San Francisco urban centres. Urban houses that are not built following *Nasa Yat* traditional

⁵⁰⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 141. See also: Olga Portilla Dorado, “Toribío el Museo al Aire Libre en el Cauca”. *El Nuevo Liberal*. September 25, 2016. Web. *El Nuevo Liberal*. 04 de mar. 2019. <http://elnuevoliberal.com/toribio-el-museo-al-aire-libre-en-el-cauca/>. Accessed on June 02, 2019.

practices, and without following *minga* rituals or using traditional materials, result in deep cultural alienation from their ancestral roots. Furthermore, accultured Nasa-Paéz architecture abruptly breaks with the new chief's ancestral vision and mandates.

Promoting current movements through the *Proyecto Nasa* and activities involving the community, like those spearheaded by the Tacueyó Governors – for example the recovery of the *Yat*, and mural *mingas* – are contemporary examples of connecting with the great house: “The *casa ‘cosmocentrada’* (cosmo-centered house) is equivalent to a series of houses, some immersed in others, that have the body as their main inspiration. There we can associate the residential house with the center of a spiral that opens up into the garden, the community and the *resguardo*, and which corresponds to houses of living beings that include animals and plants.”⁵⁰⁹

It seems nevertheless somewhat contradictory to claim that such interconnections are more intensely present in rural than in urban areas. Colonial urban architecture is evident in the archetypical housing found along the roads leading to Toribío. Urban centres such as Caloto, a city once highly important in the colonial hierarchy, and Santander de Quilichao among others, to some extent fostered the implementation of blended architecture in this *resguardo* as seen in Fig. 3.5. This undoubtedly gave rise to a hybrid type of Indigenous and colonial architecture in Toribío, which first appeared in the mid-Seventeenth Century, due to its importance and proximity to Caloto, considered one of the most important political and administrative centers during the colonial period.

⁵⁰⁹ As quoted in Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos, *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios en el Diseño y Construcción de la Nasa Yat, Cauca-Colombia* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca. 2013), 127. My translation. The original in Spanish Follows: “La casa “cosmocentrada” equivale a una serie de casas, unas inmersas en otras que tienen como fuente principal el cuerpo humano. Allí se puede relacionar la casa de habitación en la medida que caminamos por una espiral que se abre hacia la huerta, la comunidad, el resguardo que corresponden a casas de seres vivos que incluyen animales y plantas.”



Fig. 3.5, Caloto central square and town hall, following Spanish colonial models of architecture and urban structure. Photo by author.

Colonial architecture was initially made of *bahareque*, one storey high in most cases and with thatched roofs.⁵¹⁰ The prevailing typology was rectangular, consisting of one or two bedrooms and an area for socializing or a living room. The layouts of the houses increased in complexity according to the economic and social status of those who inhabited them. The most important houses were located around the main square behind the church and the town hall. *Bahareque* houses were gradually replaced by masonry ones in colonial style, as early as the eighteenth century.

A second storey was occasionally added, with clay tiled roofs and a layout that in most cases was centered around a courtyard.⁵¹¹ Colonial architecture initially included Indigenous features, and

⁵¹⁰ Clara Eugenia Sánchez Gama, "La Arquitectura de Tierra en Colombia, Procesos y Culturas Constructivas". *Apuntes. Revista de Estudios Sobre Patrimonio Cultural* 20, no. 2 (2007), 242. See also: Orozco., et al. "La Nasa Yat, Territorio y Cosmovisión". *Antropología Universidad de Antioquia*, 28, núm. 46, (2013): 244-271.

⁵¹¹ Julian Haynes Steward (ed.), *Handbook of South American Indians: The Andean Civilizations*. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1946), 1284.

gradually transformed into what was known as Republican architecture, which was recognized as “the first reaction to the traditional colonial language.”⁵¹²

As previously mentioned, colonial architecture in Toribío was unpretentious. Such simplicity is still evident in the *resguardo*, along with the influence of Indigenous materials in the earlier architecture: the use of traditional techniques such as *bahareque* is a case in point. It is important to analyze how urban or non-traditional houses are evolving – as a result of *resguardo* policies, educational programs and contemporary community actions – into a more inclusive Nasa-Paéz traditional architecture. Materials such as *bahareque* are still attractive to the Nasa-Paéz because according to their beliefs earth, the prime material of this technique, brings closeness to *Nasa Kiwe*; for example through the *Txiwe Tudya*’ ritual tie Nasa-Paéz to the territory.⁵¹³

As clearly shown during my field research, two typologies are evident in the Toribío *resguardo*: a type of traditional Indigenous *Yat* typical of the rural areas, and the regular colonial urban house. Between these two, there seems to be a hybrid type of architecture between the traditional and the foreign: while the former is tied to *Nasa Kiwe*, the latter is not.

Yet such a situation of divisiveness within the *resguardo* does not fit with Nasa-Paéz traditional beliefs, nor with the guidelines of the ACIN, CRIC and the *Proyecto Nasa*, which are committed to defend traditional restoration. The development of educational programmes through the Indigenous councils, PEC and the CRIC, which has established policies and actions promoting autochthonous elements in urban architecture, consistently promote cultural identity through urban expression.

⁵¹² Juan Carlos Pérgolis, “El Deseo de Modernidad en la Bogotá Republicana, un Ejercicio Sobre Comunicación y Ciudad”, *Revista de Arquitectura*, no. 13 (2011): 7.

⁵¹³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 151. For traditional *bahareque* construction see: Asociación Colombiana de Ingeniería Sísmica. *Manual de Construcción Sismo resistente de Viviendas en Bahareque Encementado*. Bogotá: Asociación Colombiana de Ingeniería Sísmica, 2017; Wilfredo Carazas and Alba Rivero. *Bahareque - Guía de Construcción Parasísmica*. Villefontaine: FUNDASAL, 2002.

Along with the material aspects of urban housing, other significant changes have taken place in façade treatment. Significant features speak of cultural vindication, a message that is conveyed through mural art as an urban expression.⁵¹⁴

Peaceful Resistance

Mural art in the Toribío *resguardo* began as part of a process of education and resistance, in which the community works to reclaim their culture and values in everyday life. Former Toribío Mayor Ezequiel Vitonás, one of the main promoters of this cultural proposal, was convinced of the importance of changing the violent image external society tends to have for the *resguardo*, through murals that have the same social meaning as what has appeared in Colombia, but which are more informal.

This has occurred in public zones through mural art that are the expression of the people, and which represent historic moments: the *caciques nuevos*, traditions such as the staff of command and sacred places such as the Paéz and Juan Tama lake (Fig. 3.6). He went on to say that “nowadays, murals contain the same social sense with which they appeared elsewhere in Colombia, but in an informal manner; it has taken over public spaces through graffiti as an urban popular expression.”⁵¹⁵ Vitonás thus asserts that “the Toribío *resguardo* uses CRIC and weaving of life projects to promote the creation of murals as a way to preserve their culture, particularly in urban areas.”⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁴ About muralism in Colombia, see: Diego Arango, “Textos y Notas Sobre Arte Escritos por Pedro Nel Gómez”, *Artes La Revista*, vol. 7, no.13 (2007): 65.

⁵¹⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “En estos días, los murales tienen el mismo sentido social como el que apareció en Colombia, pero más informal, se han hecho en zonas públicas como los grafitis que son la expresión del pueblo.” Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by author, Caloto – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

⁵¹⁶ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Acá específicamente por medio del CRIC y los tejidos de vida se está promoviendo los murales como forma de mantener la cultura.” Ibid.



Fig. 3.6, Mural representing Indigenous woman leader holding the staff of command at the Town Hall of Toribío. Photo by author.

Recognizing ancestral knowledge was the premise of the first mural *minga* in Toribío *resguardo*, entitled “*Toribío no es como lo pintan, es como lo pintamos*,”⁵¹⁷ a plan of the *proyecto* “weaving of life”.⁵¹⁸ The project was organized by the CECIDIC and *proyecto Nasa* from the municipality of Toribío on 2013 and 2016.⁵¹⁹ The *mingas* involved a new visual and architectural concept, modifying urban aesthetics, and using iconic moments in history to open the way to a new artistic expression of what it is to be Nasa-Paéz.

Images recreating Nasa-Paéz traditions, mythical origins, *caciques nuevos* and contemporary political leaders created a new architectural interpretation of place. Mural representations are living

⁵¹⁷ Drawing on the idiomatic expression “como lo pintan,” or “how they make it out to be / how they say it is,” this slogan means literally “Toribío is not like they paint it, it’s how we paint it” and means “Toribío is not like it’s made out to be, it’s how we paint it / how we say it is.”

⁵¹⁸ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario*, 105; Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 234.

⁵¹⁹ CECIDIC (Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad), “Minga Muralismo del Pueblo Nasa 2016”, *Ya’ja Tejiendo en Comunidad* Edición Especial (Septiembre 2016): 1-42.

testimonies, which, according to the new policies for traditional education, become a simple and direct way to transmit *Nasa Yat* ancestral culture into “foreign” architecture.

The organizational processes promoted and implemented by the CRIC, and its different initiatives in education and cultural practice, were essential for implementation of this type of art, which appeared not only in urban housing, but also in public buildings such as town halls and community and traditional educational centres.

Reaffirming the need to show their heritage in urban areas was therefore a key motivation for implementing muralist practices in diverse buildings. After years of community stigmatization of the Nasa-Paéz as a subversive Indigenous people, muralism opened up a new peaceful perspective on how they want to be recognized (Fig. 3.7 & 3.8).



Fig. 3.7, Indigenous guard and *cacique* Quintin Lame mural in Tacueyó. Photo by author.

Fig. 3.7 exemplifies this search for peaceful defense in the *Nasa Kiwe* territory. On the left-hand side, we observe an Indigenous Guard or *Kiwe Thegnas* looking both vigilant and defiant as he

watches over and cares for the territory. In the center of the mural, there is the CRIC symbol, which says “*Unidad, Tierra y Cultura*” (Unity, Land and Culture). On the right-hand side of the mural is the portrayal of *cacique* Manuel Quintín Lame at the upper part of the Paéz lake, who is also vigilant, but here the connection with the lake suggests special care for the tradition of the *caciques nuevos*. It refers specifically to chief Juan Tama who, according to legend, is the son of the sacred lake in Mosoco and who initiated the movement for protection and cultural revival.



Fig. 3.8, CECIDIC mural on one of the dorm walls. Photo by author.

The mural on the façade of the CECIDIC dorms. Fig. 3.8 shows the image of father Álvaro Ulcué in a defensive position, with a handkerchief on his face as used by the Indigenous guard to suggest protection for the Nasa-Paéz, but here based on their culture and traditional education through art. The stigmatization of this Indigenous community as subversive stemmed from the political situation involving armed groups as well as the geographical location of the community, which has always lived amidst the Colombian armed conflict. Even though the Nasa-Paéz have the Indigenous

guard, a peaceful force to take care of the *resguardos*, it is believed that the Nasa-Paéz promote and have participated in rebel insurgent groups.⁵²⁰

The new initiative to tell their history from their own point of view through art has enabled the community to vindicate itself before contemporary Colombian society, which has hitherto been misinformed and uninterested in Indigenous affairs. By creating awareness of the social confrontation that has lasted for centuries, art became a point of departure for peaceful civil resistance, while simultaneously encouraging cultural *resguardos*, because oral history and iconography are essential links in the contemporary transference of ancestral knowledge.

Fostering recognition and acknowledgement of their Nasa-Paéz name as “people of peace” became one of their most vital projects. 2013 was the year of the first mural *minga*; after briefly playing the role of positive media protagonists, the Nasa-Paéz returned to their daily lives to deal with territorial conflict and illegal crops. The mural *minga* was thus a short-lived moment that nonetheless allowed them to exhibit an artistic and non-conventional means of cultural transmission. Through this artistic initiative, the Nasa-Paéz ventured into a new and imaginative path for conveying their own identity and tradition. Vitonás describes how the mural *minga* encouraged the exercise of cultural identity:

When painted, the murals enabled people to know about our past, to know our history as told by the elder to the rest of the community, to the young people at home or around the *tulpa*. It is important for our community to know where we come from, to know and respect our traditions. In this way, the young people will not feel ashamed and will learn from their ancestors, all of their leaders and ancestors, and their struggles.⁵²¹

⁵²⁰ See: Daniel Ricardo Peñaranda, et al, *Nuestra Vida ha Sido Nuestra Lucha: Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca Indígena* (Bogotá: Organización Internacional para las Migraciones - OIM- Misión Colombia, 2012), 329.

⁵²¹ My translation. Original in Spanish follows: “Los murales permitieron cuando se pintaron que la gente de afuera conociera nuestro pasado, conociera las historias que los ancianos cuentan al resto de la familia, a los más jóvenes en la casa o en la tulpa. Es importante que la comunidad sepa de dónde venimos, que conozca y respete la tradición. Que los jóvenes no se avergüencen de ser indígenas y que aprendan de sus antepasados, de todos los líderes y sus luchas.” Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by author, Caloto – Cauca. February 7, 2014. See also: El Espectador. “Toribio No es Como lo Pintan, es Como lo Pintamos”: Minga de Muralismo. *El Espectador*. August 11, 2016. <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/toribio-no-es-como-lo-pintan-es-como-lo-pintamos-minga-de-muralismo-articulo-854684>. Accessed on July 12, 2018.

From the above excerpt, the purpose of the *minga* can be understood as a way to show the general public a different and positive Nasa-Paéz ideology and identity. Different depictions of traditional Nasa-Paéz culture were reproduced on a number of façades throughout the Toribío *resguardo*. There is clear evidence of the armed struggles between illegal groups and the Colombian Army in the bullet marks on the façades themselves.

Of particular importance to the *resguardo* struggle, the community decided to bring a new expression of tradition and meaning to this simple architecture eroded by weathering and traces of guns and bombs. The *minga* not only brought a new type of art to Toribío, but also a new awareness of a better place to live in accordance with Nasa-Paéz beliefs, as seen in Fig. 3.9, a traditional scene of a mother and child representing *Maama'Kiwe*.



Fig. 3.9, Nasa-Paéz tradition as expressed through façades of urban houses at Toribío. Photo by author.

In this mural, we see *Maama'Kiwe* – half women and half mountain – as a representation of territory protecting the Nasa-Paéz by means of the *chumbes* hung from their traditional hats, creating a textile that extends throughout the mountain. It expresses the symbolic construction of *Nasa-Kiwe* in the contemporary *resguardo*, with the word *Nasa*, meaning people of peace, inscribed on the lower part.

As a result of this cultural *mélange*, the Nasa-Paéz have replaced a type of urban architecture without character, transforming it with a new image that expresses political, social and cultural change. Nasa-Paéz principles of Indigenous culture, history and politics, framed by the CRIC, have given rise to a broader understanding of their participation in, and response to, contemporary struggles beginning in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

Apart from issues already presented here, such as territorial recovery and expansion of the *resguardos*, a new concept of cultural and heritage preservation through academic practice has come to express the different meaningful modes of inhabiting and dwelling in the *Nasa Yat*, with all its variations: from the traditional *Nasa Yat* to the urban house that displays Nasa-Paéz beliefs through art.⁵²² Mural art is nevertheless not new to the Nasa Paéz. This art form bears a resemblance not only to their textiles like *mochilas* and *chumbes*, but also to the *Nasa Yat* itself, which incorporates different geometric forms filled with specific meanings involving *Nasa Kiwe* relationships.

The meaning of geometric forms –like spirals– crafted in textiles and in the house, a singular language shared by the community, seems to have encouraged the Nasa Paéz to expand their art beyond textiles and traditional housing to include contemporary housing through the mural *mingas* that promote traditional knowledge, not only among other Nasa-Paéz but also nonindigenous inhabitants.

⁵²² Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *¿Qué Pasaría si la Escuela? 30 Años de Construcción de una Educación Propia* (Popayán: Fuego Azul, 2004), 21-30.

There is a historical precedent for not only the visual but also the narrative culture at play here. The Nasa-Paéz have conveyed their culture via oral tradition through the words of the elders and their rituals, and the symbology of the *Ya'ja* or *mochilas* and “the *Yat* as a family” have also been embedded in written form.⁵²³ Therefore, taking tradition and translating it into urban places through mural façades seems to have come quite naturally.

This urban intervention was a clear example of the cultural, educational and political processes promoted by the *Proyecto Nasa* and weaving of life to enable ancestral wisdom to persist and be passed on to the young through *Nasa Kiwe*. Rivera points out how support from the community is an important factor; without their commitment, it would have been impossible to enhance the façades of privately-owned homes:

Well, when they told us about the murals, it was kind of important because it is better for us to have paintings of our leaders and not just a brick house painted any old color and that's that. I have to live in Huellas, and I cannot have a place to farm or have my house on the land [...]. It is important for me to know that when the young people pass by on their way to school, without any effort, just by looking at the walls of the CECIDIC, this gives them information about the community to which they belong, so they will not feel ashamed of being Indigenous.⁵²⁴

On the other hand, before the *minga*, the CECIDIC had already exhibited murals made by its students and community members under the leadership of the Nasa-Paéz artist and professor, Edgar Pazú, from the CECIDIC. León mentions the importance of encouraging students and the community

⁵²³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 185-186.

⁵²⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Pues cuando nos dijeron de lo de los murales pues fue importante porque es mejor para nosotros tener las pinturas de nuestros líderes y no solo una casa de ladrillo pintada de cualquier color y ya. A mí me toca vivir acá en Huellas y no puedo tener un lugar para sembrar ni para tener mi casa en tierra [...]. Es importante para mí saber que pasan los jóvenes para el CECIDIC y sin tener que hacer nada solo miran a la pared de la tienda y ya esta les da una información del pueblo que pertenecen para que no les de pena ser indígenas.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC San Francisco – Cauca. February 9, 2014.

to create a better image of what it means to be Nasa-Paéz: “It is professor Pazú who has encouraged students to create the murals, although this is nothing new here.”⁵²⁵

Leon thus shows how the first Toribío *minga* mural demonstrated a new peaceful side of the community. The high level of participation by artists at this *minga*, in which nearly thirty local, national and international artists captured the identity of the Nasa-Paéz through art, transformed the representation of the community in the eyes of the public: it made their culture the referent for this community, instead of the violence.⁵²⁶

Art and Culture Perception

The mural *minga* created a space in the community for cultural recovery and vindication. More than just a process in an academic framework, it was arguably a transformative practice in which the community was able to see and understand themselves, and become visible as well. The experiment took place during two history-drawing *mingas*—not an unfamiliar method for the *resguardo*—and was undertaken to induce a transformation of the Nasa-Paéz’ perceptions of territory, in the context of the situation of conflict they had been experiencing.

This initiative, which had begun as a project under the rubric of “weaving of traditional education,” arrived in (then mayor) Ezequiel Vitonás’ office during one of several critical periods of violence that have afflicted the community. As one interlocutor put it: “The *minga* was implemented in part to give us a pause amidst the clashes (between illegal armed groups) when the walls were

⁵²⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El profe Pazú es el que ha motivado acá a los estudiantes a hacer los murales, eso no es nuevo acá.” Ingrid Dayana León, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 16, 2017.

⁵²⁶ Laura Aguirre, *Muralismo en Toribío, Hacia un Arte Comprometido Procesos Artísticos y Estructuras Sociales una Mirada Interdependiente* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2015), 41-47.

completely pockmarked with bullet holes and we could not simply leave things as they were, so I would say that in part that's why the murals were born."⁵²⁷

Along with the idea of changing the appearance of those walls, which at that moment depicted violence, came the notion of promoting art as a change of perspective, thus making the artist the voice of Nasa-Paéz culture. Intervention in the urban area of the *resguardo* then began to gain social space and meaning, and became not only an aesthetic position but a historical one.

Cultural vindication based on Nasa-Paéz beliefs, ancestral wisdom, and rituals became a foundation for cultural action and culture-building. From the first of those *mingas* until today, when they appear in the *resguardo* periodically, each mural portrays ancestral practices as a form of cultural dignity.

Mural painting is strengthened through its acceptance by and the response of the community. It legitimizes their place of origin in an artistic context which conveys a participatory message throughout *Nasa-Kiwe*; and it invites all members of the community to resist the particularly strong dynamics of the prevalent armed conflict.

Minga as traditional practice is a celebration of a collective project for the benefit of the community. Thus, muralist *mingas* become projects in search of a new symbolism that can associate life with a more harmonious and meaningful context in response to the cultural deterioration that comes with modern political and economic violence and even from architectural alienation.

One thing is for certain: mural art promotes protection, defense, and the recovery of culture and territory in the new political context of the *resguardo*. Favouring the relationship between artists and the community was the first step in achieving a deep understanding of needs and aspirations, and the willingness to interpret them based on their beliefs.

⁵²⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: "la *minga* en parte se llevó a cabo para que pudiéramos tener un respiro en medio de los enfrentamientos, acá llegó un momento que las paredes estaban llenas de huecos de las balas y eso no se podía dejar así, por eso yo podría decir que en parte lo de los murales nació por eso."⁵²⁷ Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, Interview by author, Toribío– Cauca. February 7, 2014.

The traditional character that is clear in every mural in the *resguardo* recognizes the beliefs of the Nasa-Paéz: textile references, mythology and the ever-present image of the mountain as an element differentiating those who inhabit *Nasa-Kiwe*. I argue that the network of murals in the Nasa-Paéz territory not only speaks of their history and tells their stories visually, but also constitutes a pragmatic improvement of their built environment: walls previously damaged when not completely destroyed by bullets and bombs give way to a new inhabitable image of what the Nasa-Paéz aspire to in cultural recognition beyond violence and conflict.

I stress that such efforts aim not only for social reconciliation but also towards a constant process of culture-building in Nasa-Paéz society; a process that transforms a foreign or alienating architecture through art and integration with *Yat*: “The mural *minga* was created as an open-air museum, open to the community in general to show local culture and prevent its loss.”⁵²⁸ Therefore, each mural painting is woven into the territory in this way; it connects members of the community by recreating a story (and history), gathering together and representing the meaning and purpose of place.⁵²⁹ Ul Ascué points out:

The mural *minga* was really born here at the CECIDIC; here the students are encouraged to tell their own stories through figures on *mochilas* and everywhere. That is why in 2010 at the 4th cultural meeting promoted by the town hall and the CECIDIC, we proposed to create the murals so that in Toribío, for instance, which is more modern, we could have a representative sample, images to show people who come here that this is not just an ordinary town; that’s why the *minga* initiative has been carried out.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “La minga muralista se creó como un museo al aire libre abierto a la comunidad en general para poder mostrar la cultura propia y que esta no se pierda.” Ibid.

⁵²⁹ CECIDIC, *Minga Muralismo del Pueblo Nasa* 2016, 1-42.

⁵³⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Realmente lo de los murales nace del CECIDIC, aquí se impulsa que los estudiantes cuenten la historia propia por medio de las figuras en las mochilas y en cualquier lugar, por eso para el 2010 en el IV encuentro cultural que promovemos nosotros aquí desde la alcaldía y el CECIDIC se propuso que se hiciera esto de los murales para que en Toribío por ejemplo que es más moderno hubiera una muestra que nos representara, unas imágenes que mostraran a las personas que vienen que este no es un pueblo común, por eso se hizo lo de la Minga.” Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author. Toribío, Cauca, October 20, 2016.

All of the murals that I have had the opportunity to analyse during my field research, without exception, express traditional knowledge and contemporary policies in which community members are portrayed as true fighters for territorial and cultural consolidation. As a tribute to the community, in my work as a professor, I have tried to promote Indigenous design projects with my students, with the inclusion of art and murals. Fig. 3.10, 311 & 3.12 illustrate such a collaborative academic strategy between students and Toribío town council.⁵³¹

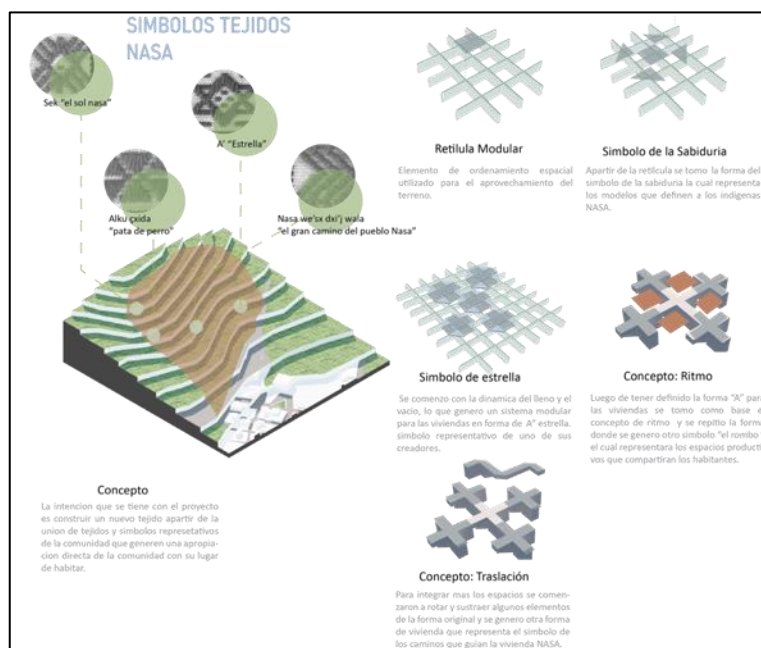


Fig. 3.10, Design proposal following Nasa-Paéz weaving patterns. Sofía Montaña. *Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.

⁵³¹ Collaborative Urban and architectural design projects between the School of Architecture at the Piloto de Colombia University and Toribío Town Council. The thesis *Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe* was developed in *minga* following the policies and beliefs of the community in Putumayo and Cauca. Internal advisors: Maria Patricia Farfán, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz from Piloto de Colombia University and External advisor Wuilson Úl Ascué from the Toribío *resguardo*. Sofía Montaña. *Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021. For more academic and Nasa-Paéz architectural proposals see: Serrano 2021; Moreno 2021; Córdoba 2021; Escobar 2019; Fajardo 2019; Bernal 2019; Moreno & Arismendi 2019; Romero et al. 2018; Sánchez et al 2018; Echeverry & Masmela 2018; Reina et al 2018; Gómez et al 2017; Córdoba & González 2017; Clavijo et al. 2016; Quintero 2016; Eraso et al 2016; Ramírez et al. 2016; Virguez 2015; Quecano et al. 2015; Cubillos 2013; Aguilar and Jiménez 2012; and Gutierrez 2011.



Fig. 3.11, Urban proposal following weaving patterns. Sofía Montañó. *Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Paéz: Reserva Kiwe*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.

Fig. 3.10 & 3.11 shows an urban project following the weaving pattern of *mochilas* and *chumbes*. The urban structure was developed through a *minga* process, in which the community was involved in the development of the proposal.⁵³² The scheme was focused on the work that women do in the community; hence the design incorporates a circular *Yatzunga* for weaving as a main architectonic building.

Following the theme of weaving patterns was important to the community, who emotively requested these patterns be incorporated in the final design. So the urban structure itself became an important way to create bonds between modernity and tradition.

Fig. 3.12 shows how architectonic proposals can incorporate in their facades traditional murals promoting Nasa-Paéz beliefs. The image of the mural was also developed in a *minga*. The

⁵³² *Minga Virtual* Socialización Proyectos Arquitectónicos Universidad Piloto de Colombia – Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. July 09, 2021.

murals depict the *caciques nuevos* and women in traditional garments. The image of women in the murals was essential to promote the visibility of women and to create a meeting place where they could weave and get together.

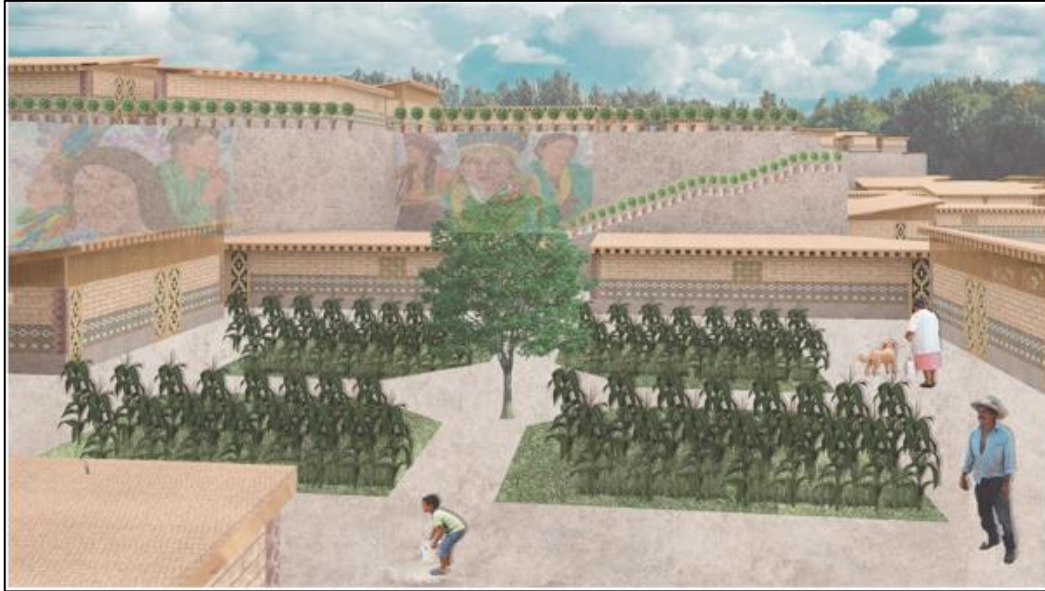


Fig. 3.12, Mural façades as part of design projects. Sofía Montaña. *Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2021.

I vividly remember the first mural that Rivera took me to see and interpreted for me (Fig. 3.1). It was the mural of the sun and the moon *Sek Ate Kiwe* at the CECIDIC; a mural painting which at first glance did not appear to me to be particularly relevant, was in reality a representation of the Nasa-Paéz “place-world.”

This memory is one of the reasons that, as a professor, I incorporate Indigenous tradition in architecture and the academy. Even though I work with non-Indigenous students, the collaborative process is essential for non-Indigenous students to understand Nasa-Paéz culture, and I believed it helps the Nasa promote resilient projects and processes that visualize the symbolic construction of their territory.

When oral history completes the process of understanding, when it is heard and communicates meaning, what is expressed orally and visually (that is, symbolically) connects with people. The work and words of artists, elders and women speak of life and tradition in the territory. Rivera asserts that murals are a peaceful way to become noticeable:

We began the murals here in the CECIDIC before the *minga*, but it was always with the idea that they must display Nasa content because, in the past, our walls were full of illegal groups propaganda, and that was not good for us, so we decided to paint our walls with our own images [...] Because we had invited people who were not from here for the *minga*, the *Thê'walas* gave them talks about what was important for us, and this was also done here at the CECIDIC, where a harmonization ritual was performed so that everything would go well. Here we painted the moon and the sun to show our origins, where we come from.⁵³³

Unfortunately, the Toribío *resguardo* continues to deal with situations of violence that increase in intensity every day. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated violence increased in the territory. The number of murders of Indigenous leaders between 2019 and 2020 reached 155, of which 68 have taken place in this Nasa-Paéz territory and 7 in Toribío.⁵³⁴ In 2021 alone, according to INDEPAZ, 47 Indigenous citizens were murdered, 16 of them in the Cauca department in Santander de Quilichao, Caldonó and Toribío, and 22 Indigenous murders from January to September 2022.⁵³⁵ The influx of people from outside the community struggling for control over drug trafficking has

⁵³³ My translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Acá en el CECIDIC iniciamos con los murales antes de la *Minga* pero siempre se han pensado en que deben tener un contenido Nasa porque antes teníamos las paredes llenas de propagandas de grupos ilegales y eso no era bueno para nosotros así que se decidió pintar las paredes con imágenes nuestras [...]. Para la minga como había gente que no era de acá pues los *Thê'walas* les dieron unas charlas para que supieran que era lo importante para nosotros y luego se hicieron aquí mismo en el CECIDIC un ritual de armonización para que todo saliera bien. Acá se pintó la luna y el sol que son nuestros orígenes, de ellos venimos.” Gonzalo Rivera, Interview by author, CECIDIC San Francisco – Cauca, February 9, 2014.

⁵³⁴ Leonardo Gonzalez, “Líderes Indígenas Asesinados,” *Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz - INDEPAZ*, June 2020. <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/L%C3%ADderes-ind%C3%ADgenas-asesinados.pdf>

⁵³⁵ Observatorio de DDHH, Conflictividades y Paz, “Líderes sociales, defensores de DD.HH y firmantes de acuerdo asesinados en 2021,” November 14, 2021. <http://www.indepaz.org.co/lideres-sociales-y-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-asesinados-en-2021/>, <https://indepaz.org.co/lideres-sociales-defensores-de-dd-hh-y-firmentes-de-acuerdo-asesinados-en-2022/>.

particularly affected Indigenous and social leaders, who seek territorial protection despite the post-pandemic situation.

This takes place on top of the unstable political situation and resurgence of violence, the change of government in 2019 which resulted in the office of the Mayor of the municipality of Toribío passing into the hands of a non-Indigenous administration, and unstable conditions provoked by the pandemic. Political change in the Toribío *resguardos* has resulted in significant setbacks in cultural processes. Among the most detrimental of these is a lack of continuity for the *minga muralista*, and loss of some of the most emblematic murals when the new administration decided to erase Nasa-Paéz history by once again painting over the façades in white (Fig. 3.13a & 3.13b).



Fig. 3.13a & 3.13b, 2015 and 2020 Toribío town hall façade. Photo by Tomás Bolaños.

3.2 Nasa Kiwe House of Weavers

Carmelina Yule Testimony

We are gathered together here to show what we Nasa women do. [...] we have always done weaving, weaving has always been with us because the Nasa weave not only their *mochilas* but everything, the lives of all of us are a weaving. They are ways of seeing life and that is how we as Indigenous people see and live life. I mean look, from the day we are born, they wrap us in the *chumbe*.

These weavings protect our newborns, and from that moment on, a Nasa is united with or connected to the woven fabric. When a Nasa is born, he or she is wrapped in the *chumbe* because that way they are protected and can also be carried everywhere. This weaving is special because it is with us throughout our lives. So, you see, from birth, the *chumbe* always accompanies us and because it is like a part of us, if we don't have our *chumbe* or *mochila*, it's as if we were missing a part of our body.

[...] I remember that in my house, my mother and grandmother were always there weaving. It was they who taught me to weave, because weaving is part of us as women. That work is very important, because you know that there are reasons for weaving, weaving has words, the woven textiles communicate messages and this is what we must really learn well, because anyone can learn to weave but you have to learn the meaning of the symbols because, by putting them together, you create a message that can be read and which will endure as these *mochilas* can last a lifetime.

At home when I was young, the women stayed home, the land was being cultivated and so we didn't go to school [...]. I only finished first grade and that was it, the rest of the time I was at home, helping in whatever had to be done and learning to weave. [...] we have different weavings and they all have a purpose, *mochilas* for carrying groceries, a *mochila* for one's possessions, a *mochila* for the *coca* leaf, the *cuentadera*, a *chumbe* to carry on one's hat, one to tie the *anacos*, which are the traditional women's skirts, or for the staff off command of the Indigenous guardians.

What I was saying about the staff off command for the guardians is also significant because the spirit talks to us and those words then become a woven fabric that will protect the guardians when they walk with their staff off command, and the *chumbes* protect the territory and all of us. In other words, there is variety and each woven textile has its particular use. Now, we are making small *mochilas* as keychains for gifts for people like you who come to visit us.

[...] The weavings communicate messages, which is why we have to be fully aware of what we feel and of our dreams because the Nasa communicate with spirits through their dreams and the spirits show us what we must weave, which is how our communication functions. To be good weavers, we have to be open to receiving the messages, because that is how we begin to weave. If we are not open, then nothing will happen. Learning to receive the messages is

something we are taught by our mother, because it is she who teaches her daughters the meaning of weaving and how to weave. It is also important not to lose the knowledge of our grandparents so that we can pass it on to the young people.

That is why this house is here. The teaching of weaving has been promoted by the Indigenous council because young people today do not want to do it, they're lazy because it requires a lot of attention and young people can't do that anymore. The youngest only want to wander around but they don't want to do many traditional things, so we must seek out these spaces so that the tradition will not be lost and we women can share our lives, so we can talk and propose activities. This house is also here so that women who are far away from Toribío can have a place to weave their *mochilas* and sell them, so we have labeled each *mochila* with a name to enable us to know who wove them.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁶ My Translation. The original in Spanish follows: “Acá pues estamos ahora reunidas tratando de poder mostrar lo que nosotras las mujeres Nasa hacemos. [...] Esto de los tejidos ha sido de siempre, el tejido ha estado con nosotros toda la vida porque el Nasa teje no solo la mochila sino todo, la vida misma de todos nosotros es un tejido con formas de ver la vida y así es como nosotros como Indígenas vemos la vida y vivimos la vida. Es que mire usted, desde el primer día que uno nace se le envuelve a uno en el *chumbe*. Estos tejidos son los que protegen al recién nacido y así desde ese momento el que es Nasa está unido al tejido. Cuando un Nasa nace, se envuelve en el *chumbe* porque así está protegido y así uno también lo puede cargar para donde uno vaya. Ese tejido sí que es especial porque está presente toda la vida. Fíjese que desde que nace, está el *chumbe* y lo acompaña a uno siempre porque es que es como parte de uno, si uno no tiene el *chumbe* o la mochila, es como si le faltara a uno una parte del cuerpo. [...] Yo recuerdo que en mi casa pues siempre estaba mi mamá y mi abuela que vivía con nosotros tejiendo. Ellas fueron las que me enseñaron a tejer, pues tejer es parte de nosotras como mujeres. Esa labor es muy importante porque usted sabe que esto de tejer no es porque sí, el tejer tiene palabras, el tejido da mensajes y eso es lo que hay que aprender bien porque cualquier puede aprender a tejer, pero hay que aprender bien el significado de los símbolos porque al unirlos, usted da un mensaje que se puede leer y que perdura porque estas mochilas le pueden durar toda la vida. En la casa cuando yo era joven, las mujeres se quedaban en la casa, se trabajaba cultivando y pues uno no iba a la escuela [...]. Yo solo estude la primaria y nada más, el resto estuve en la casa, ayudando en lo que tocara hacer y aprendiendo a tejer. [...] Nosotros tenemos diferentes tejidos y todos tienen un propósito, *mochilas* para cargar el mercado, la mochila para las cosas de uno, la mochila para la coca, la *cuentadera*, el *chumbe* para llevarlo envuelto en el sombrero, para amarrar el *anaco* que es la falda tradicional de la mujer o para los *bastones* de los guardias. Estos que le digo de los *bastones* para la guardia también son bien significativos porque son como el espíritu le dice a uno y esas palabras que se convierten en tejido van a proteger a los guardias y ellos caminando con el bastón y los *chumbes* pues protegen el territorio nos protegen a todos. Mejor dicho, eso lo que hay es variedad y cada tejido tiene su uso. Mire hasta ahora hacemos *mochilas* pequeñas como llaveros y como para regalos, así como para personas como usted que vienen a visitarnos. [...] Los tejidos dan mensajes, por eso hay que estar bien pendiente de lo que uno siente y de los sueños que uno tiene porque el Nasa se comunica con los espíritus por medio de los sueños y ellos indican que es lo que uno debe tejer, así es que funciona nuestra comunicación. Para uno ser una buena tejedora, tiene que estar bien dispuesta a recibir el mensaje pues es ahí donde uno puede comenzar a tejer. Si uno no tiene la disposición, pues eso no sale nada. Esa enseñanza de aprender a recibir los mensajes se lo enseña a uno la mamá pues es ella la que se encarga de enseñar a sus hijas el sentido y como se teje. También es importante uno conocer bien su cultura, uno debe estar bien pegado a lo de uno porque así no se pierde el conocimiento de los abuelos y así también lo puede uno pasar a los más jóvenes. Fíjese usted que por eso es que esta esta casa acá. Desde el cabildo se ha promovido enseñar a tejer porque ahora los jóvenes ya no lo quieren hacer, ya les da pereza porque se requiere mucha atención y eso ya les parece difícil. Los más jóvenes ya solo quieren andar por ahí de un lado para otro, pero no quieren hacer muchas cosas tradicionales entonces pues hay que buscar estos espacios para que la tradición no se pierda, para que podamos compartir nuestras vidas, podamos hablar y proponer actividades. Esta casa también está para que las mujeres que están lejos de acá de Toribío puedan tener un lugar para poder tejer sus mochilas y poder venderlas entonces acá las tenemos todas cada una marcada con el nombre con eso yo sé quién la tejió.” Carmelina Yule, Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío Cauca. July 28, 2018, and March 21, 2019.

I first met Carmelina Yule, coordinator of the *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*⁵³⁷ (Territory of the Great People Women's Weavings) in Toribío on July 28, 2018, on my return from community work in Loma Linda. Before arriving at the CECIDIC, we stopped in Toribío to carry out field research; we were studying the increase in construction of non-traditional houses. To carry out this research, I walked to various places while taking photos and making architectural comparisons between the traditional and modern houses.

On the way to the central square, I saw a traditional house made of *bahareque* with the door half open so that I could see various *mochilas* hanging from its walls. Upon closer inspection, I saw a woman carrying a baby who became aware of my presence and invited me to step inside her home (Fig. 3.14).



Fig. 3.14, Interior of the *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe* House. Photo by author.

⁵³⁷ ACIN-CRIC. Programa Mujer Indígena *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*. <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/>. Accessed on November 30, 2021.

Upon entering, I asked her if the *mochilas* were for sale, because ever since I began my studies, I have always sought *mochilas* from the different Indigenous communities that I visit and conversed with the weavers to understand their meaning. The woman said yes, and invited me to come in and appreciate the work. Inside, there were a variety of weavings, hats and different kinds of *mochilas* and *chumbes*. This place was like a great archive for me; in each corner of the house, I could see the varied forms of the typical weavings, full of messages inscribed with symbols of the different figures of which they consisted.

On one side, there was a traditional loom and a *chumbe* that was being worked on, along with a poster hand-painted on fabric that was hanging on the wall and which portrayed a *mochila* with a traditional loom, and whose carrying strap depicted the staff of command and a traditional flute (Fig. 3.15).



Fig. 3.15, Interior of the “*Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca*” house and traditional loom with a *Chumbe* in the process of creation. Photo by author.

The poster bore the inscription “*Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca*” (Women Weavers of Life of Toribío Cauca). I instantly realized that this was not an ordinary home, but was actually a meeting place for Nasa-Paéz women.

Carmelina entered a few minutes later, greeting and welcoming me to the house, and then began to talk about the different weavings it contained. She explained how this was a house for women weavers, part of the *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe* promoted by the Indigenous council as a venue for socialization and for teaching about traditional practices among women. She also mentioned that the house was a space to promote traditional weaving and for women’s *mingas* about matters that are important for them and their families.

Carmelina mentioned the importance of weaving in the *resguardo*. I remember that when she began to explain the significance of the images being woven on the loom, she talked about “reading” and “understanding” what is being woven.⁵³⁸ Thus, by reading and understanding the significance of the territory through weaving, the Nasa-Paéz remain united, with their territory and with their roots. During this conversation, she reflected upon the significance that the house and weaving have for them, as a unique and very important space for Nasa-Paéz women, asserting that without venues and places like this, the community would surely lose its true essence manifested in the daily activities of being an Indigenous person.

Women Weavers: Passing the Political Barrier of Invisibility

Contemporary debates on Indigenous peacebuilding among the *Nasa Kiwe* show an increased emphasis on inclusive processes. They have begun to advance new approaches, such as

⁵³⁸ Carmelina Yule, Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío Cauca. March 21, 2019.

foregrounding the role Nasa-Paéz women play with respect to traditional beliefs and practices.⁵³⁹

Weaving is a key such practice, and exemplary of the role women play in processes of “passive resistance.”

Indeed it is through the practices of women weavers that the Nasa-Paéz find a key point of connection to traditional symbolic practice. Weaving is a model of the considerable role quotidian activity can play on the processes of symbolic construction of territory. Fig. 3.16 represents an image promoting the day of Indigenous women (September 5) in Santander de Quilichao.



Fig. 3.16, Illustration in the interior of the “*Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca*” house showing an invitation to celebrate the international Indigenous Women day. Photo by author.

⁵³⁹ The work of Annmarie Adams examines the agency of the role of women power as social subject. See: Annmarie Adams, “The Place of Manliness: Architecture, Domesticity, and Men’s Clubs,” in *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*, ed. Peter Gossage and Robert Rutherford (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2018); Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred, *‘Designing Women’: Gender and the Architectural Profession* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

Fig. 3.16 reads: “We Women and Men remember our daughters, mothers, sisters and companions who have given their lives for the defense of our rights and for the freedom of our ancestral peoples.” This shows how the role of women has given rise to a political and social process of great importance within the contemporary Indigenous movement, leading to a change of dynamics in the *resguardo*, which makes it possible to not only work for the visibility of women’s labour but also to address matters of inequality and violence.

In the Toribío *resguardo*, there have been considerable shortcomings in the support of actions to dignify the role of women in general. As figure 3.16 shows, the recognition of women has progressed in recent years as a strategy for resisting violence, both through *Proyecto Nasa* generally and the creation of a special chapter dedicated to empowering women: *Mujer Originaria Memnxi Kiwe* (Ancestral Women *Memnxi Kiwe*).⁵⁴⁰

New initiatives through contemporary policies of the *Proyecto Nasa* and weaving of life have led to a strengthening of such actions and the development of new principles and expectations. Efforts have been focused on seeking greater visibility and equitable social, political and cultural conditions for women in the Nasa-Paéz community, creating proposals based on the Nasa-Paéz woman’s own “voice”.

The *Proyecto Nasa*, through its objective of vindicating Indigenous rights, generated different organizational processes that included facilitating an organization focused on women. The vindication processes stemmed from analysis of evidence that showed the difficult situation faced by Indigenous women in the *resguardo* in terms of health, domestic violence and cultural deterioration.⁵⁴¹

Deficiencies within the political structure of the *resguardo* generated new dynamics for the consolidation of processes aimed at promoting strategies to resolve problems like those mentioned

⁵⁴⁰ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca. *Memnxi Kiwe Mujer Nasa*. Tejido de la Mujer Proyecto Nasa. CRIC, 2020.

⁵⁴¹ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*.

above, leading to creation of the “ACIN *Çxhab Wala Kiwe* women’s weaving.”⁵⁴² The ACIN *Çxhab Wala Kiwe* women’s weaving made use of the day-to-day activities and labors of Indigenous women in the *resguardo* as the starting point to generate a more solid structure around the female image. Fig. 3.17 for instance, represents the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research, with at its centre a woman.



Fig. 3.17, Mural inside Toribío Townhall in which the loom represents different traditional dynamics within the Toribío *resguardo*. Photo by author.

The woman wears typical Nasa-Paéz dress, and weaves different elements on her loom. These elements have special significance for the community: drums and weaving representing culture; the

⁵⁴² Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío Periodo 2011 – 2021* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011), 154.

sun, the moon and the spiral representing mythology and the law of origin; the mountain and Paéz Lake representing *Nasa Kiwe* and *Maama'Kiwe*; the beam representing the *caciques nuevos*; the snake representing the heritage and wisdom of the elders in their constant walks through the highlands and lowlands of Putumayo; and finally, the staffs of command, which represent the defense of all that is described above.

Fig. 3.17 enables us to conceptualize the role of Nasa-Paéz woman in the Toribío *resguardo*, a role that confirms how, as the center of Nasa-Paéz culture, she promotes harmony in other political, social and cultural structures. She is central to the conception of the great house for the *minga*, and the *Yatzunga* as a space for research. Both of these are tied to the cultural, social and political agendas adopted by the Nasa-Paéz community to transform and defend their territory. That transformation is achieved through practices focused on the house as an element for visualizing and realizing the Nasa-Paéz construction of territory, but specifically as a place where the actions of Nasa-Paéz women – in particular weaving – are central to the goal of establishing territory and reaching territorial equilibrium.⁵⁴³

Moreover, we can read into Fig. 3.17 the notion of the law of origin, as the mother creator of *Nasa Kiwe*, and we can consider how the local dynamics represented therein help develop a path to a sustainable peace in a conflicted territory. Since the *minga* Congress of Caldono in 2005 ratified its “self-government” and established the weaving of life as “an operational entity whose function is to put into practice the policies defined by the organizational process,”⁵⁴⁴ the representation of the Indigenous woman has reinforced the visualization and strength of the Nasa-Paéz culture.

Conceptualizing this phenomenon as a pragmatic opportunity for new adaptive answers helping to generate political processes that enable vindication of the Nasa-Paéz, suggests that

⁵⁴³ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁵⁴⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “una instancia operativa cuya función es poner en práctica las políticas definidas por el proceso organizativo.” Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 154 – 155.

traditional actions and awareness of the role of the *Proyecto Nasa* in territorial construction is the mechanism by which the community can sustain harmony and reconciliation.

It does so by strengthening capacities embedded in the Indigenous context through the ideals derived from the plans or weaving of life.⁵⁴⁵ In the process of establishing the weaving of life, it was felt that “the Indigenous peoples must have a comprehensive and communitarian view of practical life, full of cosmogonic and diverse dreams different from the western world.”⁵⁴⁶ The central image here, weaving, is a role and a skill specific to women in Nasa-Paéz culture.

This ancestral dream to which Niño refers as “respect for the structure of the cosmogonic vision without trying to impose thinking that does not belong to their beliefs,”⁵⁴⁷ is the same dream imagined by Father Ulcué in the *Proyecto Nasa*, giving autonomy to the community, It is the dream to which Wilches-Chaux refers as “equivalent to the ideal of participatory democracy or community leadership,”⁵⁴⁸ a self-expression of cultural respect. Thus, the *proyecto Nasa*, promoted by liberation of the ancestral dream and through the weaving of life, came about in response to the need to continue the peaceful struggle for liberation as “a perfect example of emergent behavior.”⁵⁴⁹

In the above-mentioned view, the methodology focusing on education and training in traditional activities generated and organized by the community has made it possible to strengthen and legitimize the process of construction of the organizational system of the *resguardo* based on the concept of “emergent behavior” as a process for equality among all of the actors to “share the same dream” from the Nasa-Paéz perspective.⁵⁵⁰ The constructive political process in *Nasa Kiwe* has

⁵⁴⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 234.

⁵⁴⁶ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 155.

⁵⁴⁷ Carlos Niño Murcia. “Territorio Chamánico, la Construcción del Territorio Colombiano”. *Conference presented at the Conversatorio Facultad de Arquitectura y Artes*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Teams Platform, September 11, 2020.

⁵⁴⁸ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 69.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 76. See also: Gilberto Villaseñor. “The Politics of Indigenous Social Struggle in Colombia”. *Proyecto de Grado*, De Paúl University, 2014.

therefore supported decisions made in the various Indigenous councils in which community organization is consolidated through projects enhancing Indigenous authority and achieving conditions for autonomous development of the community.⁵⁵¹

Moreover, the Nasa-Paéz organizational principles expressed through the ACIN in defense of their autonomy further the principles of the CRIC and the ONIC through the weaving of life: “spirituality, reciprocity, comprehensiveness, respectful use of the land, and organizational principles of unity, territory, culture and autonomy,”⁵⁵² all of which are promoted through the act of weaving.

These organizational principles in the different proposals from the “weaving of life,” comprise a political and cultural structure developed through community work represented in the act of weaving and expressed as such in the Nasa-Paéz political plan: “weaving of economic and environment, weaving of justice and harmony, weaving of the defense of life, weaving of communications and external relations, and the weaving of people and culture.”⁵⁵³

The weaving of people and culture promotes family identity and stresses the value that women have for the Nasa-Paéz community as sources of traditional education (another kind of “weaving”), and through *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*. This is represented in Fig. 3.18, where the mural depicts a woman weaving a *chumbe* with five rhomboids, geometrical figures representing the five projects or weavings of the Nasa-Paéz political plan. One can also infer the intrinsic power that women have in Nasa-Paéz political structure, with their wisdom and voice shared through weavings.

⁵⁵¹ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 94.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁵³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “*tejido económico ambiental, tejido de justicia y armonía, tejido de defensa de la vida, tejido de comunicación y relaciones externa y el tejido pueblo y cultura.*” Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 105; Corporación Autónoma del Cauca. *Caracterización Ambiental Plan Departamental de Aguas y Saneamiento Básico*. Cauca: Corporación Autónoma del Cauca, 2010.



Fig. 3.18, Mural in Toribío representing the woman and *chumbes* as carriers of wisdom and protectors of the Nasa-Paéz political structure. Photo by author.

Although political participation by Indigenous women is associated with a patriarchal model inherited from colonial times that obscures women's contributions to politics and society, I argue that broader participation by women in the contemporary *resguardo* through the “weaving of people and culture” is increasingly necessary, because it has recently become clear how the policies of the *Proyecto Nasa* have left gender issues behind.

The Nasa-Paéz woman has an important role in Indigenous society as the creator of life and carrier of knowledge through the “weaving of life” of the *proyecto Nasa*, which considers Nasa-Paéz women equal to the elders as carriers and generators of knowledge. For instance, the value of women in strengthening a sense of Indigenous identity within each Nasa-Paéz family – which requires the wisdom of the Nasa-Paéz elders and oral tradition, and also that transmitted by and embodied in the participation of women in day-to-day activities – has enabled their important participation in a variety of processes of cultural recovery. Women so empowered pass the political barrier of invisibility, and the practice of weaving is one means by which this is achieved.

The different weavings which make up *Proyecto Nasa* have facilitated the community's understanding of itself; this takes place through the *mingas* which build potential for pursuit of traditional practices, thereby strengthening the community.⁵⁵⁴ The dynamic of creating policies has demonstrated the essential work of women in the community, in which their important role as traditional professors of Nasa-Paéz cultural and academic education – in particular through promotion of *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe* – led to a strengthening of these activities.⁵⁵⁵

The promotion of traditional academic processes such as the CECIDIC and the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project has facilitated connections between beliefs and peaceful resistance through respect for the political structure of traditional education.

However, the process of peaceful resistance against violence directly affects the purpose of the “weaving of life” and its organizational principles of unity, territory, culture and autonomy.⁵⁵⁶ Constant violence prevents fulfillment of the dream described in the *Proyecto Nasa*, altering the dynamics inherent to the *resguardo* and undermining the concept of the Nasa-Paéz as a community of people of peace in a territory of peace, as articulated in the expression “*Toribío caminando en unidad por la paz territorial*” (Toribío walking in unity for territorial peace).⁵⁵⁷

In order to deal with the situation and strengthen their political processes, methods and strategies have been created to strengthen the strategy of resistance within the *resguardo* as mentioned in the Nasa-Paéz political plan:

Strengthening autonomy through community planning, health and education plans, exercise of their rights [...]; making the life plan (*plan de vida-tejido de vida Kwesx Ksxa 'wtx*) visible as an alternative in the midst of conflict through the weaving (*tejido*) of communication and

⁵⁵⁴ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 104-106.

⁵⁵⁵ ACIN, “Tejido Mujer” accessed June 20, 2020, <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/#>

⁵⁵⁶ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 104.

⁵⁵⁷ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Informe de Gestión 2016-2018 Toribío Caminando en Unidad por la Paz Territorial. Alcibíades Escué Musicué Municipal Mayor 2016-2019* (Toribío Cauca, 2019).

external relations; protecting the *plan de vida*, the territory and its people through the *minga* of resistance and the *minga* of the peoples.⁵⁵⁸

From the above excerpt, we can infer how actions through the community weaving as resistance process are recognized as peaceful generators of strategies to enable collaboration in the *minga* to strengthen Indigenous autonomy in a territory in dispute. To conclude, the *Proyecto Nasa*, as a policy for territorial recovery and tradition since its creation, has worked through the different weaving of life, which are implemented based not only on the needs of the Indigenous community in general but also in accordance with the needs of each of the *resguardos* that make up the Nasa-Paéz community.

Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe is the backbone facilitating development of proposals to strengthen gender-related (and general) equality. This contribution is under-recognized. The political actions and day-to-day acts of Indigenous women are what lead to cultural changes that help overcome the barrier of invisibility.

Weaving and Walking the Word

The weaving of life of the Nasa-Paéz is a process of communication inside and outside of *Nasa Kiwe*. It is implemented through the different *mingas* carried out in the territory, convoked not only by the

⁵⁵⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: "Fortalecer la Autonomía a través de la planeación comunitaria, planes de salud, educación, el ejercicio del derecho propio [...]; Visibilizar el *plan de vida* como alternativa en medio del conflicto a través del *tejido* de comunicación y relaciones externas; proteger el *plan de vida*, el territorio, y su gente a través del programa *minga en resistencia* y la *minga de los pueblos*." Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 106. For more information on Indigenous resistance see: Sistema Nacional de Atención Integral a la Población Desplazada - SNAIPD. *Política Pública para Protección de los Derechos Fundamentales de las Personas y los Pueblos Indígenas Desplazados por el Conflicto Armado o en Riesgo de Desplazamiento Forzado*. SNAIPD, 2010; Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca ACIN. *Cartilla Reconstruyendo el Derecho Propio*. Cauca: ACIN, 2007. Alejandro Llano. "Centros de Etnoeducación para el Fortalecimiento del Plan de Vida Nasa: Tejiendo Resistencia". *Prospectiva Revista de Trabajo Social e Intervención Social*, 15, (2010): 491-518; Ministerio de Cultura. *Panorama del Conflicto Armado Interno*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2014; Naciones Unidas. *Declaración de las Naciones Unidas Sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas*. New York: Naciones Unidas, 2008.

governors and elders, but also by women when they walk from one place to another while weaving and carrying a message.

The women's organization has been a platform encouraging political and social participation, assuming responsibilities previously preserved exclusively for the elders. The message carried by women walking and weaving has started to influence policies focusing on their needs, such as programs for the family, health and protection against domestic violence, in particular the role of *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*.⁵⁵⁹

As mentioned earlier, the symbology and interpretation of the law of origin in *Nasa Kiwe* becomes clear in the “great house,” where *Maama'Kiwe* is visualized as existing. The Nasa-Paéz and *Nasa Kiwe* establish the web of relationships that make up the law of origin, part of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as places for community growth.⁵⁶⁰ This relationship permeates not only the family but also the community as a whole, visualized as a spiral coverings and growing into their territory.⁵⁶¹ This spiral has particular significance in the context of weaving of life.

For the Nasa-Paéz, place and the law of origin define political, cultural and historical relationships, which guide internal processes and develop through a variety of dynamics to become, in essence, weavings in movement. Fig. 3.19 shows how the spiral is not only represented in the form in which the *mochilas* are woven, but also in spatial features of great value for the community such as the *tull* or contemporary traditional garden: in the garden the spiral literally grows into the territory.

⁵⁵⁹ ACIN, “Tejido Mujer” accessed June 20, 2020, <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/#>

⁵⁶⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁵⁶¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 121.



Fig. 3.19, Representation of the spiral on the *mochilas* and in the *tull* in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project, showing cultural and territorial expansion in the San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.

Through such diverse interpretations of the spiral, “weavings” demonstrate the symbolic construction of the territory through movement and territorial and cultural expansion. This expansion is also generated as a visual construction of territory, as is manifested in Fig 1.1.

Based on collaborative work between the Nasa-Paéz community and university students, design projects have been developed to enhance the visibility of traditional architecture, often recreating the symbology of the spiral and demonstrating how this form expands through *Nasa Kiwe*.⁵⁶² Fig. 3.20 & 3.21 show how this territorial expansion can be represented through architecture. The proposal, developed in *mingas*, incorporated the symbology of the law of origin and established

⁵⁶² Collaborative Urban and architectonical design projects between the School of Architecture at the Piloto de Colombia University and Toribío Town Council. The thesis *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*, was developed in *minga* following the policies and beliefs of the community in the *resguardo* Toribío. Internal advisors: María Patricia Farfán, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz from Piloto de Colombia University and External advisor Wuilson Úl Ascué from the Toribío *Resguardo*. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

the intention of visibility through the expansion of the spiral into traditional architecture serving traditional schools.

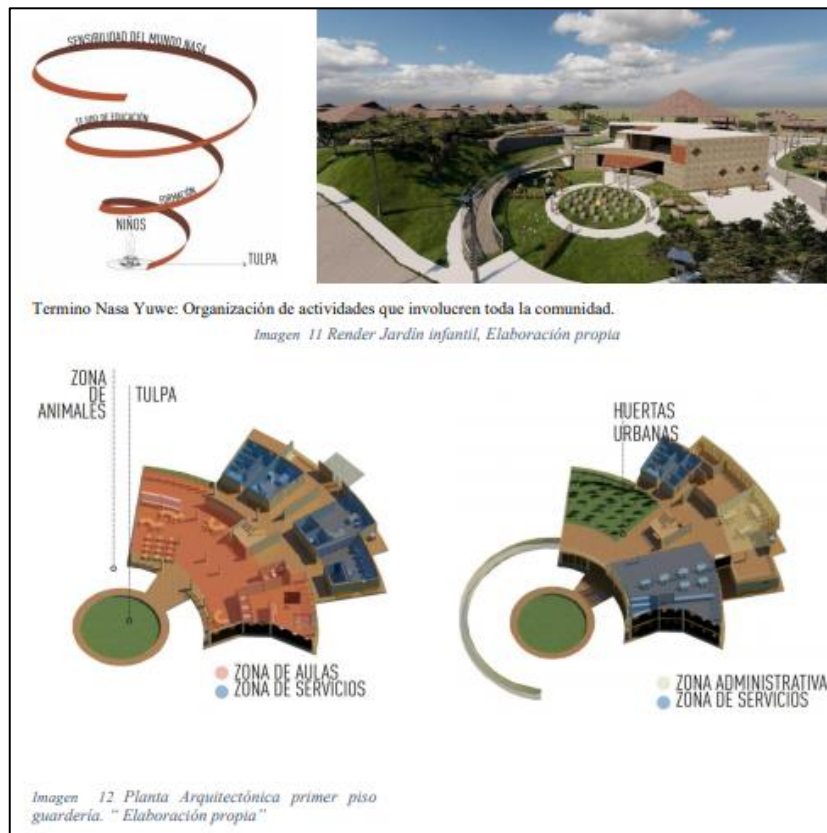


Fig. 3.20, Design proposal following the spiral pattern of the Nasa-Paéz law of origin. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

The design project depicts a *tulpa* as the place from which the project is to be developed. The *tulpa* as a turning point creates a spiral expanding through *Nasa Kiwe*. The law of origin, represented by the spiral, signifies the birth of the Nasa-Paéz in a territory which they must defend if they are to inhabit it.⁵⁶³ The actions of defending and inhabiting are carried out by weaving and roaming *Nasa Kiwe*. The process of communication while in motion is recognized as “walking the word,” and is

⁵⁶³ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 136.

undertaken not only through the wisdom and words of the elders but also through the words and weavings of the women.⁵⁶⁴



Fig. 3.21, Design proposal following the spiral pattern of the Nasa-Paéz law of origin. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

According to the law of origin, if *Kiwe* is to be defended and respected, it must be inhabited and expanded. I maintain that the defense of *Nasa Kiwe* through traditional architecture and peaceful policies becomes a matter of active processes of reconciliation, expressing a new concept of inhabitation for the Nasa-Paéz. A symbolic structure of defense is illustrated in Fig. 3.21: a wall-spiral is developed through the action of “walking the word,” recovering historic cultural processes, and bringing to the contemporary *resguardo* a symbolic architecture of communal houses – *Yatzungas* – for female weavers and young students.

In Nasa-Paéz mythical perception the law of origin is a spiral, in which the center is the inhabited place and the upper part is the spiritual world. The *tulpa*, as the point of departure for the

⁵⁶⁴ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 104-106. For more on territorial perception see: Rebecca Solnit. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. Penguin Group, 2001.

law of origin, is also the point of departure for “walking the word” of the elders and of the women through their weavings.⁵⁶⁵ Fig. 3.20 also suggests how the snake – represented in spiral movement – and the act of weaving support these beliefs and practices, facilitating the communication of cultural roots and traditions.⁵⁶⁶

These forms and their relationship to the representation of the snake also signify the law of origin as a symbol of protection. The spiral walls of the design proposal thus articulates the connection between the spiritual world and human beings, bringing protection in a territory where violence is endemic. The spiral as an embodiment of knowledge through weavings and architecture is thus the source of the contemporary expansion and protection of *Nasa Kiwe*. Fig. 3.22 shows how the continuous movement of the spiral in the weavings, particularly in the *chumbes* made by the women of the community, represent the community’s union around its beliefs and traditions.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, *Cartilla Somos el Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa* (Bogotá: Fundación Panamericana Para el Desarrollo, 2016), 4-5.

⁵⁶⁶ Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Taw Nasa “Chumbe Nasa”, Kwe’sx Üusu Yahxcx Pwisnxi “Memoria y Sentido de Nuestras Imágenes, Símbolos”, Kwe’sx Ju’gwe’sxñ nxa’üus pwisnxi, “Imágenes, Pensamientos de Nuestros Ancestros”* (Toribío, Cabildo Indígena de Toribío, 2015), 56, 112-113.

⁵⁶⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*, 183.



Fig. 3.22, weaving in the form of *Chumbe* in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx*, symbol of the Nasa-Paéz cultural and territorial expansion. Photo by author.

In this image, we see a 120-meter-long *chumbe* from the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project, used for rituals, dances and *mingas*: “The *chumbe* symbolizes permanence and movement in the territory and the intention to recover tradition and lost land.”⁵⁶⁸

In addition, weaving and walking the world – which can be understood as the voice of women expressed in the weaving and symbology of *mochilas* and *chumbes* – enables the transmission of wisdom, what Wilches-Chaux refers to as “connectors of the different dimensions of Nasa life.”⁵⁶⁹ I maintain that the spiral and footprint to which Wilches-Chaux refers represent the weaving of territory. Walking through and moving around the territory, becoming one with it, is an experience of appreciation and understanding the symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe*. This is facilitated by the role

⁵⁶⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El chumbe simboliza permanencia y movimiento en el territorio, y la intención de recuperar la tradición y el territorio.” Luis Fernando Poscué Juli, Interview by author, *Minga* Centro de los Niños, Toribío Cauca. March 22, 2019.

⁵⁶⁹ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 93. Quoting Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*.

of women, which may only be understood and valued through a community awareness deeply oriented toward the expansion of territory through “walking the word”.

Uma and Tay

According to Nasa-Paéz mythology, the *cacique Cxapik* was in charge of teaching how to weave. The word *umya*’ in *Nasa Yuwe* (weaving) refers to “the word *Uma*, the first female being molded by the grandfather, the companion of *Tay* “sun” [...], who when seeking out her father, thunder, became separated, fell to another place and became *Yu*’ or “water.””⁵⁷⁰ These words demonstrate that this mythology is part of the initiatives aimed at cultural conservation.

If *Uma* and *Tay* are according to contemporary tradition the progenitors of *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*, they have also played a role in the growing perception of the role of arts and tradition in the continued expansion of the territory. They help fulfill one purpose of the *proyecto Nasa*: to show women’s importance in the political construction of the contemporary *resguardo*. *Umya*, in addition to being an action, is the woman represented in the weavings who uses her knowledge to pass her wisdom from generation to generation: “*Uma* is the female being, our grandmother who facilitates reproducing life and the species.”⁵⁷¹

Umya’ also reinforced connections between gender, culture and policies. I maintain that the process of expressing the needs of the *resguardo* and of the culture through its symbology has been based on a cultural exchange in which women have a particular connection with *Nasa Kiwe*. Through their crafts they convey ancestral wisdom learned from the elders, which promote knowledge while at

⁵⁷⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish: “la palabra *Uma*, el primer ser femenino moldeado por el abuelo, compañera de *Tay* “sol” [...], que al momento de buscar a su padre el trueno se desprendió y cayó a otro espacio y se volvió *Yu*’ “agua.”” Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 23. Quoting Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*.

⁵⁷¹ My translation. The original in Spanish: “*Uma* es el ser femenino, nuestra abuela que permitió reproducir la vida, las especies.” Ibid., 23.

the same time generating a legacy for the community. I argue that *umya'* and women not only engender memory, thought and wisdom but also promote active and visible participation in the social and cultural policies of the *resguardo*.

Fig. 3.23 shows Carmelina Yule “generating memory” by explaining the symbols contained in the different weavings in the house of “Women Weavers of Life of Toribío Cauca.”⁵⁷² These symbols, which transmit knowledge, tell a story. But more than this, they enable people – from and outside of the community – to know about and understand the principles and struggles of the contemporary Nasa-Paéz from the perspective described by Wilches-Chaux as “sharing the same dream.”⁵⁷³



Fig. 3.23, Carmelina Yule explaining the symbology of the figures and colors of the *chumbe* in the house of “*Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca*.” Photo by author.

⁵⁷² Carmelina Yule. Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío Cauca, March 21, 2019.

⁵⁷³ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 23. Quoting Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*.

The connection between the Indigenous woman and *umya*’ is a celebration of abundant knowledge of the Nasa-Paéz culture through activities involving training, sharing knowledge and constructing weavings of community empowerment and improvement of the quality of life of the women of the *resguardo*.

In my field research, I have noted the dichotomy between scarcity and abundance. Abundance because it is a territory that, with its own organization through the *proyecto Nasa*, has been able to allocate resources for traditional projects of cultural protection aimed at “sharing the same dreams.” On the other hand, scarcity is evident in the distancing of governmental policies at the national level – policies which should be aimed at a better implementation of essential projects supporting the role of Indigenous women and cultural survival amidst the violence.

The fact that their own activities are not duly recognized by the national government and their traditional activities are not culturally visible or economically profitable leaves the Indigenous communities at the mercy of more lucrative alternatives, such as planting illegal crops, or forces them to move away in search of better opportunities.

The symbolic construction of territory through beliefs, art and tradition thus becomes the most effective strategy to reach out to the younger Nasa-Paéz generations as “weavers of life.”⁵⁷⁴ As Yule points out, “this house is a shelter for women; here we take care of everyone’s children, we care for ourselves and we make sure that tradition is not lost.”⁵⁷⁵ Indeed, Yule’s testimony shows that the house – as *Yat* or great house as a place for weaving – more than just a physical space, is a symbolic architecture and instrument of reconciliation and protection for the woman, her family and her culture.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Esta casa es un refugio para las mujeres, aquí cuidamos de los hijos de todas, cuidamos de nosotras y cuidamos que la tradición no se pierda.” Carmelina Yule, Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío Cauca. March 21, 2019.

Thus, the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research, becomes an essential space for women's community work, promoting a symbolic architecture of communal houses or *Yatzungas* of female weavers, not only to create knowledge and strategies for the common good, but also as a space for the integrity and safety, creating a space for cultural reconciliation and protection against domestic, political and social violence.⁵⁷⁶

The Nasa-Paéz community, due to its history and political development, is aware of its internal familial and communal needs. Weaving facilitates different perspectives on these situations: “weaving enables us to observe the territory in different directions and thus learn and acquire wisdom and knowledge.”⁵⁷⁷

Furthermore, the way “knowledge is woven” engages the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research, which are linked to cultural, social and political issues to transform a territory through actions.⁵⁷⁸ This becomes clear not only in the concept of the *Nasa-Kiwe* as an element conceiving Nasa-Paéz territorial construction through *Uma* and *Tay* mythology, but also as a place where Nasa-Paéz women as “weavers of life” promote actions through *umya*’ “as female being and grandmother” to achieve the empowerment of women.

Nasa-Paéz Women's Equality and Leadership

The social structure of the *resguardo*, inherited from the colonial period, developed laws that treated Indigenous women and men differently. Despite the resistance of women to the processes of conquest

⁵⁷⁶ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁵⁷⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “El tejer nos permite observar el territorio en diferentes direcciones y de esta manera hago aprehensión y formo un saber y conocimiento.” Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 24. Quoting Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*.

⁵⁷⁸ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 21 – 22.

and colonization, as described in colonial chronicles, the rigor of and subjugation by colonial institutions gave rise to a new social organization.⁵⁷⁹

Such institutional biases together with significant influence by religious missions imposed a social order in which women served in different competences than those typical of Indigenous people. Their relationship to the territory and to the roots of the community receded due to the institutionalization of actions aimed at activities closer with Catholicism, in which women must be subordinated in society through their dedication to household labour.

Preconceptions about women's activities, together with adverse social and cultural norms, generated gender gaps in access to economic and cultural goods. Failure to be more involved in activities that could provide the women of the *resguardo* with social independence generated forced displacements. For example, Indigenous women, having been denied their regular traditional activities (on and in relation to their territory), turned to domestic work on *haciendas* neighboring the *resguardo*, and subsequently in nearby cities.

Prior to the 1991 Colombian Constitution, Indigenous people were effectively denied the opportunity to take part in political activities, among other activities. Even though they had a protected *resguardo*, in reality they had no control over it. Governments and strategies involving the settlers and expansion of the *haciendas* in this region generated situations of suffering, in which alcoholism, especially among women, led to cultural impoverishment, damaging not only the territory but their own tradition.⁵⁸⁰

Nowadays, the phenomenon of Indigenous women going to work outside the borders of the *resguardo* because of lack of opportunities and the demand for housekeepers leads to cultural loss, because the great majority of women who leave the physical borders of the Nasa-Paéz *resguardo* do

⁵⁷⁹ Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 45 – 46. For more information on *resguardo* policies see: INALI. *Compendio de Normatividad de los Resguardos Indígenas en Colombia en Relación con la Información Estadística*. Ciudad de México: INALI, 2015

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 57

not return.⁵⁸¹ As Valentina Davila points out, “Today, the large population of Latin American domestic workers embody a second form of colonization that operates through ghettos, dislocation, low wages, and the perpetuation of architectural traditions meant to segregate,”⁵⁸² thus cultural breakdown has increased opportunities to undermine women’s social and economic empowerment.

Proyecto Nasa, through Father Álvaro Ulcué’s work to restore the actions and mandates of the *caciques nuevos* (unifying Nasa-Paéz territory, empowering the community and reviving their culture) generated a concept of change in which Indigenous women have begun to play an important role in the process of territorial and cultural vindication and recovery. In this respect, the *Proyecto Nasa* framed the dimension of gender as an asset deriving from and attuned to cultural struggle rather than as a process divorced from the Weaving of Life project: “The Nasa woman is a generator of dialogue and a mediator in search of family harmony and equilibrium, a transmitter of the culture.”⁵⁸³ Therefore, the Nasa-Paéz woman is viewed as a unifier, not only in family counseling processes but also in initiatives for cultural and political resistance.

Fig. 3.24 shows how Father Álvaro Ulcué’s work shed light on the role of women, where through weavings he helped create a symbolic territory and language. Niño describes this as “a loom on which thoughts are woven and the weaving involves transformation associated with the female; weaving is the uterus that gives life and weaves the different elements together, so that tradition is renewed.”⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸¹ Alba Rodríguez Pizarro and Lady Betancourt Maldonado, “Cristina Bautista Taquinás Mujer Indígena Nasa, Trabajadora Social, Lideresa del Norte del Cauca, Colombia.” *Prospectiva. Revista de Trabajo Social e Intervención Social*, no. 30 (2020): 312-313.

⁵⁸² Valentina Davila, “From the Back of the House to the Back of the City: Venezuelan Domestic Workers and the Acquisition of Architecture”. *Paper Presented at the 72nd Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Providence, RI, April 2019.

⁵⁸³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “La mujer Nasa es generadora del dialogo y mediadora en procura del equilibrio y la armonía familiar, es transmisora de la cultura.” Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 131.

⁵⁸⁴ Carlos Niño Murcia, “Territorio Chamánico”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.



Fig. 3.24, *Mochila* with the image of Father Ulcué “*Nasa Pal*” referring to the unifying vision of the *proyecto Nasa* in the house of “*Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida Toribío Cauca*.” Photo by author.

The *Proyecto Nasa* emphasized the importance of traditional education and heritage through history, beliefs and architecture in shaping gender progress. It argues that “this is not the first time that women occupy high-ranking positions in the Indigenous communities, whose memory conserves, among other names, that of chief Gaitana, chief María Mandyhuahua and chief Angelina Guyumús,”⁵⁸⁵ referring to women who, during the conquest, the colonial period and in the present generate processes of resistance and consolidation of the Nasa-Paéz *resguardo*.

⁵⁸⁵ My translation. The Original in Spanish: “No es la primera vez que las mujeres ocupan posiciones de alto rango en las comunidades Indígenas, cuya memoria conserva entre otros los nombres de la *cacica* Gaitana, de la *cacica* María Mandyhuahua y *cacica* Angelina Guyumús.” Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa*, 131. See also: Susana E. Matallana Peláez, “Desvelando a la Cacica Gaitana”. *Revista la Manzana de la Discordia*, 2021, pp. 7-21; Norberto Insuasty. “La Gaitana Mito y Realidad”. *ABC del Huila*, no. 10. (2017): 82-85.

I maintain that the concept and role of the female chief in Colonial history is currently viewed by the contemporary Nasa-Paéz woman as a model to be followed. This has become clear not only through *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe* as part of the *proyecto Nasa*, previously mentioned in Yule's testimony, but also in the different "women's movements" created by Nasa-Paéz women in search of gender autonomy.⁵⁸⁶

A case in point is the "*Hilando Pensamiento*" (Weaving Thoughts) project in Toribío created by Cristina Bautista Taquinás, who left the *resguardo* when she was only twelve years old to work as a housemaid in Corinto and Cali.⁵⁸⁷ After a difficult life in the cities and having finished her university studies, Bautista Taquinás returned to Toribío to work in the *resguardo* on projects to mitigate violence against women, to the dislike of many. Tragically, her voice was silenced with her murder in Tacueyó in 2019, but her ideals as expressed in the "Weaving Thoughts" project live on as part of the *Plan de vida Nasa*.⁵⁸⁸

It appears somehow contradictory that in the midst of peaceful projects, the violence continues. As previously stated, violence has been part of the Toribío *resguardo* since before its boundaries were even set. That is why the promotion of social processes to unify the community no matter the consequences, and which value the work of women in Indigenous society through *umya*, is increasingly necessary. The mural in Fig. 3.24 commemorates women who have been murdered in the process of vindicating women's political and social presence in the *resguardo*. The mural is a representation of Cristina Bautista Taquinás, and states: "Movement of Nasa women Colombia; one is killed, a thousand are born – Cristina Bautista."⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁶ ACIN, "Tejido Mujer" accessed August 10, 2020, <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer>.

⁵⁸⁷ Rodríguez and Betancourt, "Cristina Bautista Taquinás Mujer Indígena Nasa", 312 – 313. See also: Luis Reyes. *El Pensamiento Indígena en América*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2008.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 318; Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 235 - 236.

⁵⁸⁹ CRIC, "Yo Estoy de Paso... Si no Cuidamos el Territorio Vamos a Terminar Mendigando en Cali. Cristina Bautista," 2021. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/yo-estoy-de-paso-si-no-cuidamos-el-territorio-vamos-a-terminar-mendigando-en-cali-cristina-bautista-hermana-mayor-y-vuelo/> Accessed on November 13, 2021.



Fig. 3.25, *Hilando Pensamiento* CRIC project Mural. CRIC 2021.

If the Nasa-Paéz woman has been associated with *Nasa Kiwe* as a generator of life, it is through her life and its loss that this connection is visualized, encouraging respect not just for life itself but also for Indigenous processes. *Umya'* and women generate wisdom. Their union is an acknowledgment of the culture and creation of “weavings” not only as bearers of territorial strength, but also to generate processes of gender resilience, empowerment and political autonomy. Through women, life continues.

Ending all forms of discrimination and violence against Nasa-Paéz women is crucial for an inclusive symbolic construction of the territory. Widespread gender difference affects women’s social prospects by making it difficult to express themselves and their needs, and to participate actively within the *resguardo*. Although the situation has been changing in recent years, much remains to be done. *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*, promoting the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and the *Yatzunga* as a space for research, must continue to be strengthened in face of violence against women. Thus, *umya'* presents an opportunity to increase political inclusion through women’s

mingas. *Umya'* strives for full participation by women at all levels of decision-making in Nasa-Paéz political, social and cultural life.

Expanding Influence and Leading Change

The daily activities that involve Nasa-Paéz women in the *Yat* and *Nasa Kiwe* have facilitated new and increasingly developed venues for their own economic activities. This is achieved by making use of the communal lands of the *resguardo*, and agricultural activities promoted through *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*. As previously mentioned, the Nasa-Paéz family structure is established within the guidelines of the *resguardo* as a unified society that works for the common good. That concept, which has its origins from the time of the *caciques nuevos* in a territorial organization promoting family organization and the *Nasa Yat* as the place of origin of their culture, shows how each Nasa-Paéz household is an essential component of Nasa-Paéz symbolic construction and expansion of territory.

The lifecycle of the Nasa-Paéz family is based on the different stages of life, which determine certain very specific family structures of Indigenous context that differ from other rural or urban zones, and of different periods of life for the members of each family. The classification of households in the Department of Cauca shows how, in rural zones, the role played by women in society is ever larger and more evident.⁵⁹⁰

In my field research, it was clear that family structure, along with low levels of education of the members of Nasa-Paéz families (regardless of whether that education is traditional or not), leads to situations of vulnerability in conditions of poverty and violence. It is important to analyze how,

⁵⁹⁰ Andrés Mauricio Gómez Sánchez, et al., “Composición de los Hogares y Niveles de Gastos en Bienes y Servicios Básicos en el Departamento del Cauca, Colombia” *Semestre Económico*, vol. 18, no. 38 (2015), 78.

even though Nasa-Paéz households are immersed in the collective structure of the *resguardo*, Indigenous women tend to be isolated from community activities. They reject this separation and the violence associated with it, strengthening the autochthonous structures that empower their participation and habitation in *Nasa Kiwe*. Fig. 3.26 is an example of how, by incorporating the image of weaving as part of traditional education, communication is sought with women which will stand for neither gender violence nor discrimination.



Fig. 3.26, Image in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project, which shows weaving the *mochila* as an element for protection against violence in the *resguardo*. Photo by author.

This image shows manual work by students of the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project; the inscription reads “walking and accompaniment in violence.” Thus, from an early age, women and girls learn how the action of weaving generates support networks that can mitigate social or domestic violence. The image also shows how, through community work, and particularly through *Tejidos de la Mujer Cxhab Wala Kiwe*, strategies are generated from the act of weaving to consolidate the use of traditional education in addressing situations of inequality arising in the *resguardo*.

If we return to the testimony of Australia Poto Julicué, we can see that her work as traditional professor in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project shows how a lived experience of cultural subjugation can lead to the creation of cultural projects that make women generators of new processes for traditional education and visualization, relevant to younger generations: “[...] the most important thing is that here they will learn to value their roots and never feel ashamed to say they are Indigenous.”⁵⁹¹

The work of the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* pilot project, in addition to being an essential element in traditional education, also focuses its efforts on carrying out an analysis of the political role played by Indigenous women in the community. Construction of the territory through more public female participation, specifically to understand the dynamics that have remained hidden and which merit recognition by society, are elements that generate gender empowerment. Oral processes for gathering memory and implementation of projects through the act of weaving contribute to a knowledge-building which increases recognition of how the dynamics of the Indigenous movement are based on a vision specific to women.

The women of the Toribío *resguardo*, however, have reached these conclusions based on their own specific needs, which differ from the situations of women in rural areas or in other Indigenous contexts than the Nasa-Paéz. These differences are set forth in the 2011-2021 environmental plan, in which their beliefs and customs are used to promote traditional education through their beliefs, which the women must follow according to the family life cycle moment in which they find themselves.⁵⁹²

An example of this tradition consists of beliefs and rituals during pregnancy or regarding child development through education in the hearth: “from the *tulpa* where experiences are shared

⁵⁹¹ My translation. The original in Spanish: “[...] lo más importante es que aquí van a aprender a valorar sus raíces, a que nunca les de pena ni miedo decir que son indígenas.” Australia Poto Julicué, Interview by author, *Minga* San Francisco – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

⁵⁹² Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 39.

along with their own values, they are guided through advice and are inculcated with respect for nature, the elders, territory, authority, beliefs and customs [...].”⁵⁹³

At this point, it is interesting to ask to what extent tradition is a definitive part of the construction and expansion of *Nasa Kiwe*, allowing it to freely develop in support of Nasa Paéz women; and to what extent it continues to be linked to other traditions that fail to reflect and ameliorate the reality of the contemporary *resguardo*. That is, does tradition work for the emancipation of Nasa women, or do some strains of tradition work against it? For me, is essential to determine how weaving, and traditional education through the PEC (Communitarian Learning Project) and PEBI (Bilingual and Intercultural Education Program)⁵⁹⁴ can generate “new” more effective dynamics for consolidation in accordance with the specific situations of the contemporary *resguardo*.

Thus tradition can be made to work for progress, even if it may not always do so. Approaches to tradition inflected through the experience and needs of women is more appropriate to the current historical moment than is, say, the recovery of ancestral traditions focusing on rigid guidelines for activities implemented during a specific lifecycle period.

I believe that weaving must engender a new concept of women, not only from the cultural perspective but to enable them to contribute more actively and visibly to building a territory in peace through new dynamics more analogous to politics than to tradition. Although my intention is by no means to denigrate the role played by tradition in the visualization and empowerment of women, I nonetheless think that the difficult situation of violence in the *resguardos* of Toribío, San Francisco and Tacueyó, calls for more forceful strategies to give voice to the clamor of a people, in particular women, for a territory in peace.

⁵⁹³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “desde el fogón donde se compartían experiencias, valores propios, se orientaba a través de consejos y se inculcaba el respeto a la naturaleza, a los mayores, territorio, autoridad, creencias y costumbres.” Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 39.

⁵⁹⁴ CECIDIC, *Guía de Investigación*, 28.

***Umya'*: Imagined Resistance and Practice**

It was during my field research on the Weaving of Traditional Education of Santander de Quilichao on July 27, 2018 that I first met Marcos Yule Yatacué, pedagogical coordinator of the only Indigenous higher education institution promoted by the CRIC ethno-education projects, recognized in Colombia as the Universidad Autónoma Indígena Integral or UAIIN.

This meeting focused on an explanation of the weaving in Nasa-Paéz life and how this relates to territory viewed as the “great house.”⁵⁹⁵ In this *minga*, Yule Yatacué mentioned the importance of weaving as a mediator between academia and the Nasa-Paéz in the decolonization process.

I must admit that this was the first time during all my travels in this territory that I heard the word “decolonize.” I think that this term, instead of referring to processes in search of autonomy, on the contrary has an ambiguous significance. “Decolonize” immediately brings to mind “colonizer”; in the *mingas* in contrast speakers always make sure to use words emphasizing “tradition, strength, resistance or struggle for what’s yours.”

Yule Yatacué told about how the proximity to and influence of Father Álvaro Ulcué enabled him to take a peaceful approach to the struggle for cultural vindication through tradition and education: “[...] I worked a lot with Father Álvaro, I learned many things from him and here is the result,”⁵⁹⁶ referring to his publications of traditional literature and in particular *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi* “*La Metamorfosis de la Vida*” and “*Taw Nasa Chumbe Nasa*.”⁵⁹⁷

This literature, which I consider definitive for understanding contemporary Nasa-Paéz thinking, was the beginning of a conversation that revolved around the significance of the act of weaving and the product of weaving in building *Nasa-Kiwe* through their beliefs.

⁵⁹⁵ Marcos Yule Yatacué, Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao – Cauca, July 27, 2018.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi’zenxi*; Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Taw Nasa “Chumbe Nasa”*.

It is common to observe how Nasa-Paéz women weave not only at home, but also carry their weaving wherever they go and weave as they walk, in *mingas*, rituals or at any moment in their daily lives. In addition to weaving while they undertake other activities, not only the women but also the men carry *mochilas* and *chumbes* as traditional and everyday elements that they use for their daily tasks or to identify as Indigenous people.

Bearing in mind that “weaving” is a form of ancestral knowledge, its promotion among contemporary women is of vital importance. When I say this, I refer not only to knowledge transference in and of itself, but also the visibility that the action of weaving has inside and outside the *resguardo*. Weaving is done in every traditional household, in the place where the family gathers, and where the knowledge of the elders and/or the women is passed on. Weaving is part of the “architecture” of the *Nasa Yat* as shows on Fig. 3.27.



Fig. 3.27, Traditional weaving in the Huellas *resguardo*. Photo by author.

Therefore, weaving, as previously mentioned, “walks” and the word wanders through the territory, promotes processes for cultural as well as territorial expansion and visibility. The *Kwesx Ksxa'wtx* of the Nasa-Paéz is a process for communication inside and outside of *Nasa Kiwe*, in which women through their weavings carry their message to different places.⁵⁹⁸ Fig. 2.12 is an example of how the weavings move or “walk” in *Nasa Kiwe*, extending throughout the territory on market days.

In the process of integrating and interpreting the meaning of the weavings, life itself is viewed as a weaving. Given that life originates in the law of origin Nasa-Paéz, we can understand how a weaving made step-by-step by a woman unrolls like the spiral that is born in the *tulpa* as it moves throughout *Nasa-Kiwe*. Thus, the symbology of the spiral enables us to understand the true importance of women, in which, when the community inhabits a common territory, situations and actions of permanent interaction arise.⁵⁹⁹ These situations and actions may be interpreted in relation to different moments that range from the lifecycle to the evolution of weaving of life undertaken on behalf of the common good.⁶⁰⁰

Weaving also facilitates social evolution. Times of change, not only in lifecycles but in the situations that the Nasa-Paéz have historically experienced until now, generate dynamics that must be part of the evolution of the community itself. Weaving goes beyond an action for transmission of beliefs to become something more important, in which weaving is used to promote projects that encourage more active participation by women through “transformation, as a natural change.”⁶⁰¹

Traditional projects foster peaceful strengthening of the community, and often do this through representations of the surroundings – even through representations perceived in dreams. During the *minga*, Yule Yatacué emphasized how “when life is woven using images seen through dreams while

⁵⁹⁸ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 104-106.

⁵⁹⁹ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁶⁰⁰ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 154.

⁶⁰¹ Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Taw Nasa “Chumbe Nasa”*, 15.

going to sleep, those images also represent conscious nature and the surroundings.”⁶⁰² This quotation demonstrates the importance of weaving in conveying images with an important meaning for Nasa-Paéz life conceived as the great house. Yule Yatacué continued:

Weaving is like knowing how to read and write, all of which guides us and revives our memory [...]. Knowing how to read and interpret the symbols on the *chumbes* is like conversing and helps guide the family. That is why we use a *mochila* to carry the seeds that we will plant; the *mochila* represents the woman’s uterus, because it is she who carries the seed of our people and without her we do not exist.⁶⁰³

Thus, weaving, more than just a symbol of the great house as space for research, indicates the path that the community must follow in its communal, familial and personal purposes. The symbology also promotes a space to enable women to express through the weavings what they often cannot say. Weaving is therefore not just a means of dreaming, understanding, interpreting and recreating reality, which brings together the different spiritual dimensions of *Nasa Kiwe* – represented by the law of origin, the spiral, and the territory as dwelling and dwellers. It is also a means through which the woman is dignified through her work as a carrier of knowledge and a forward-looking political leader of the community.

Finally, the strength of the symbolic construction of territory as a political process facilitates continuous communication with the roots of traditional practices. Collective participation becomes a means of rekindling the actions of community processes, converting “walking the word” into a voice and a guide to mobilize, teach and build the modes of interaction which will ensure the survival of the Nasa-Paéz culture as a “great house” integrating its own, socially crucial, dynamics.

⁶⁰² My translation. The original in Spanish: “cuando se teje la vida por medio de imágenes que se presentan en el momento de dormir por medio de los sueños, esas imágenes también representan el entorno y la naturaleza despierta.” Marcos Yule Yatacué, Interview by autor, Santander de Quilichao – Cauca, July 27, 2018.

⁶⁰³ My translation. The original in Spanish: “tejer es como saber escribir y leer, todo eso nos orienta y revive la memoria [...]. Saber leer e interpretar los símbolos de los chumbes es como conversar y ayuda a orientar a la familia, por eso en la mochila guardamos las semillas que vamos a utilizar en las siembras, la mochila representa el útero de la mujer, porque ella es la que lleva la semilla de nuestro pueblo, sin ella no existimos.” Ibid.

3.3 The Great Imagined House: Weaving Resistance.

Testimony of Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué

The work of the Indigenous government aims to strengthen the role of culture through architecture. I have brought with me the studies and knowledge that I acquired as an architecture student at the Universidad del Valle here to Toribío, without wanting to impose things that are not ours, but instead to use the architectural profession to collaborate with the processes that arise from the cultural recovery to which Ezequiel refers [referring to former Toribío mayor Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga].

We are now formulating proposals for architectural projects in which we can include tradition in contemporary housing because, even though there are people who want to continue to live in a *Nasa Yat*, there are also younger people who have had more contact with the other culture and wish to live like them, so that it is important for new processes to arise that combine both parts [...].

The designs that I have proposed include the *Yatzunga* of Juan Tama. It is very special because the traditional *Yatzunga* has always been of a single story but in Juan Tama, we built it with two stories, which means that we can have contemporary buildings that nonetheless have significance for us. Now everyone recognizes that *Yatzunga* and it has become a point of reference for the community.⁶⁰⁴

I got to know Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué on my first visit to Toribío in 2014. At the end of one of my meetings with Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga, he introduced me to Ul Ascué because of my interest in projects from the Toribío planning office.

⁶⁰⁴ “El trabajo que se ha realizado desde la alcaldía es poder reforzar la parte de la cultura por medio de la arquitectura. Los estudios y el conocimiento que adquirí en mis estudios de arquitectura en la Universidad del Valle los he traído acá a Toribío sin querer imponer cosas que no son nuestras sino poder tener una ayuda desde la profesión de la arquitectura a los procesos que se están generando en cuanto a la recuperación cultural a la que se refiere Ezequiel [Haciendo referencia al anterior alcalde de Toribío Ezequiel Vitonás Tálaga]. Ahora estamos haciendo propuestas de proyectos de arquitectura en que podamos evidenciar la tradición en una vivienda contemporánea porque, aunque hay gente que quiere seguir viviendo en un *Nasa Yat* también hay personas, los más jóvenes que ya tienen más contacto con la otra cultura y quieren vivir como ellos entonces es importante que surjan procesos que mezclen las dos partes [...]. Dentro los diseños que he propuesto esta la *Yatzunga* de Juan Tama ese es bien especial porque la *Yatzunga* tradicional siempre ha sido de un piso, pero en Juan Tama lo hicimos de dos pisos, eso significa que podemos tener construcciones contemporáneas pero que tengan significado para nosotros. Ahora esa *Yatzunga* todo el mundo la reconoce y es un punto de referencia para la comunidad.” Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

That same day in the mayor's townhouse, Ul Ascué showed me his architectural graduate thesis (Fig. 3.28 & 3.29). The images were hung on the walls of the town hall. I clearly remember that they depicted a project for a community center, and I could see a traditional architecture conveying forms and meanings that were completely new to me.⁶⁰⁵

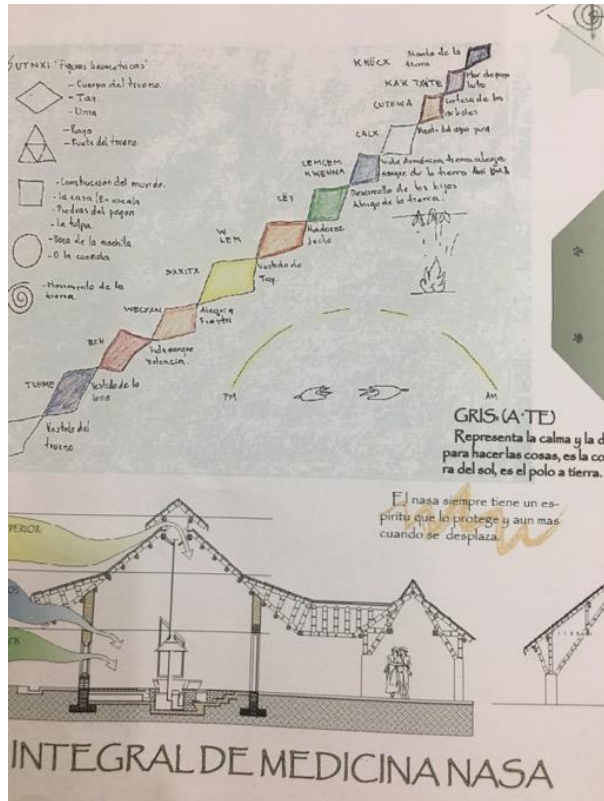


Fig. 3.28, Image of the *Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa* in the Toribío town hall by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.

⁶⁰⁵ Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. *Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa – Resguardo de San Francisco*. Universidad del Valle, Cali 2012.



Fig. 3.29, Image of the architectural Project *Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa* in the Toribío town hall by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.

That was the first time I was exposed to the Indigenous notion that the “great house was a house for everyone, a territory that is in the process of recovery.”⁶⁰⁶ From that moment on, Ul Ascué has accompanied my process of understanding and research into the traditional *Nasa Kiwe* perspective. At every point in my subsequent field research, I was in consultation with him. Given his position as an Indigenous architect and director of the Toribío planning office, and mine as an architect and researcher, we developed a collegial relationship through collaborative work focused on the place of tradition in academic and architectural exploration.

I fondly remember when Ul Ascué invited me on two subsequent visits: to see the *Yatzunga* of Juan Tama in Santo Domingo, and to see Ul Ascué’s own paternal home in San Francisco. On the first visit, as happens in every *minga*, the process of learning about the architectural purpose and

⁶⁰⁶ Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

significance of the *Yatzunga* was accompanied by a celebration with food and conversation (Fig. 3.30).



Fig. 3.30, Two-story *Yatzunga* of Juan Tama in Santo Domingo by Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Photo by author.

This two story *Yatzunga* has definitely fulfilled its purpose of bringing the community together, because whenever I was in Toribío, most of the *mingas* for reflection were held in this marvelous setting with its emblematic architecture and Andean surroundings.

The second visit to which I refer was to the Ul Ascué family home. They welcomed me with the friendliness characteristic of the Nasa-Paéz, offering food and inviting me to see their plot of land. The house was of traditional architecture and included the *tulpa* (Fig. 3.31). It was there that we talked about the difficult situation of violence in the *resguardo*, which had forced him to resign from some of his community activities.



Fig. 3.31, Traditional house of the Ul Ascué family in San Francisco. Photo by author.

Next to the traditional house, Ul Ascué had built a second one for himself and his family (Fig. 3.32). The exterior of this second *Yat* was non-traditional, but its interior spaces drew heavily on Nasa-Paéz culture, with a significance on a par with that of the *tulpa* and *mingas*.



Fig. 3.32, Second house of the Ul Ascué family in San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.

The relationships found in such examples of hybrid architecture – drawing on different traditions – show the sociocultural changes to which the community has been exposed. The importance of projects that seek cultural vindication through daily life – the *Yat*, the *minga* and the *tulpa*, unifiers and preservers of culture and tradition – is all the more noticeable in such conditions.

The Great Imagined House

In Toribío, the influence of the projects by the CRIC, *Proyecto Nasa*, and community initiatives has facilitated local cultural developments that put hybrid architecture at the centre of the construction and recovery of territory. Such proposals have permeated the social and cultural life of the *resguardo*; they have focused on and strengthened community action. Nonetheless, the Nasa-Paéz have not been spared social, political, economic and cultural challenges, surrounded as they are by nearly constant violence. This has meant that while these projects carry on, they are not yet complete; they remain a work in progress as was the case of Ul Ascué family due to difficult situations.

Initially, limitations to progress in such projects were largely a result of implacable opposition in national policy, influenced by the *hacendados*, to the idea of Indigenous people recovering their lands, traditional culture, and associated political power. Because of state negligence, violence has been fostered through the increase of the illegal groups which have seized on this region as a strategic corridor for narcotrafficking.

In response, the Nasa-Paéz have worked tirelessly to promote structural changes strengthening their political position, to give greater visibility to their territory and their claims to it, to demand recognition of their identity, and to develop the potential of this place of conflict as a generator of social change. The violence has thus fostered architectural and political processes and

generated changes which have vindicated, empowered and made visible Indigenous culture in ways that would probably not have occurred, much less been implemented, otherwise. One result of the threat of territorial violence, as it threatens to overshadow the Nasa's efforts to live for and dream of an autonomous territory, has been an accentuation of the Indigenous relationship with *Nasa Kiwe*.

This relationship, and the desire for the territory due them by right, is made only stronger by restrictions on its access. I argue that this is the result of silencing the political historicity of the Indigenous communities, in which their forced or natural displacements, marginalization and cultural and territorial struggles have provoked, beyond proclaiming their own Indigenous territory, a thirst to define and construct how they see themselves, how they self-identify, and how they can exist in alignment with their beliefs. The advancement of seeing, understanding, identifying and being Nasa-Paéz is built not only in social action but in physical space: in the hybrid architecture of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research, illustrated in Fig. 3.33.



Fig. 3.33, Great house for the *minga* and *Yatzunga* in Tacueyó. Photo by author.

The hybrid architecture of the great house for the *minga*, and the *Yatzungas* in Toribío, serve not merely as physical shelters for *mingas*, but as essential elements of the symbolic construction of an imagined territory: *Nasa Kiwe*.⁶⁰⁷ These places – as the case of the UI Ascué houses – are associated with daily life, but also with ritual and social action. We have seen this in Fig. 3.30 & 3.33, where the imagined house is constructed around the community. Hence, the relationship between physical and symbolic space on the one hand, and social and cultural activity on the other, aligns with and supports a specific mode of governance: self-determination.⁶⁰⁸

Beliefs and traditional knowledge support Indigenous sovereignty. This is one end of the Nasa-Paéz's construction, and defence of a relationship, proper to their own culture, between dweller and dwelling, and between people and territory. That construction, which relates to a form of “frontier expansion,” is visible in the contemporary *resguardo*, where contested lines of property ownership and questionable political divisions have limited Indigenous cultural and territorial evolution.⁶⁰⁹

The recognition and political power that the Nasa-Paéz have tried to consolidate through architecture serve to make them active participants in an imagined place, whose aims include a *resguardo* at peace. This is a fundamental mechanism for self-identification: the desire to be recognized as members of a community seeking to establish itself through an autonomous community.⁶¹⁰

Different *cabildos* have dealt in specific ways with this situation. The vindication and strategic positioning of the Nasa-Paéz has become an inspiration for other Indigenous communities, in effect for their own political and cultural struggles. As a result, Nasa-Paéz identity no longer

⁶⁰⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁶⁰⁸ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío Periodo 2011 – 2021 Congreso de Caldonó 2005* (Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011), 154.

⁶⁰⁹ LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1850-1936*, 163.

⁶¹⁰ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío. *Memoria Reciente Agropecuaria en el Pueblo Nasa, Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011, 69.

remains a historical imposition. The Nasa-Paéz have been able to open their own process of self-recognition, making themselves visible, through the internal projects and social dynamics generated in the *resguardo*.

The Nasa-Paéz attitude, more than just a reflection of a historical context of struggle, resistance and organization, is an expression of cultural values based on the Indigenous experience in the struggle for territorial rights.⁶¹¹ Their visibility has been conceived on the basis of beliefs that refer to the great imagined house as an instrument for access to such rights.⁶¹² The heart of that dream continues to be the idea of an extended family inhabiting the great house: “An integrated and cared for family, a family that lives in tolerance, a family that protects cultural identity, a family with autonomy and a family that is educated and educates.”⁶¹³

What is perhaps most sought is a condition of freedom in which the Nasa-Paéz would not need to negotiate with the national government, nor with the illegal groups. Achieving such visibility, such recognition, must be – in the words of Father Ezio Guadalupe Roattino – “a labor that has its own life, that enables this people to be visible through their culture and through the efforts to build a place where everyone may develop and live in harmony and respecting each other.”⁶¹⁴ Fig. 3.34 is a clear example of how the *Nasa Yat* and the *Yatzungas* are essential elements of this strategy.

⁶¹¹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 238.

⁶¹² Ibid., 234.

⁶¹³ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Informe de Gestión 2016-2018 Toribío Caminando en Unidad por la Paz Territorial. Alcibíades Escué Musicué Municipal Mayor 2016-2019* (Toribío Cauca, 2019), 21. My translation. The original in Spanish: “Familia integrada y cuidada, familia que vive en tolerancia, familia que protege la identidad cultural, familia con autonomía y familia que se educa y educa.”

⁶¹⁴ Father Ezio, current chaplain of Toribío, and who worked closely with Father Álvaro Ulcué Chocué, has continued his legacy. My translation. The original in Spanish: “un trabajo que tenga vida propia, que permita que este pueblo sea visible por medio de su cultura y por el esfuerzo de construir un lugar en donde todos puedan desarrollarse y vivir en armonía respetándose los unos a los otros.” Father Ezio Guadalupe Roattino. Interview by author, Toribío Cauca, June 29, 2017. For more on Christian communities in Cauca, see: Luis Barros. *El Acompañamiento Misionero de las Comunidades Cristianas de Toribío-Cauca*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Javeriana, 2015.



Fig. 3.34, Prototype of *Nasa Yat* at the entrance to the Tacueyó *resguardo* to promote and make visible traditional architecture. Photo by author.

Fig. 3.34 depicts a *Nasa Yat* prototype developed strategically at the entrance of the Tacueyó *resguardo* specifically to promote and make visible traditional architecture. This is a busy road that goes to the sacred Paéz lake, and Tierradentro. This continuous participative work among different traditional organizations opens the opportunity for *mingas* for reflection, and thus for an opportunity in which symbology not only contributes to a change in the political landscape but also to a change in thinking.

This is evident when inhabiting the great imagined house through the hybrid architecture of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, which engage the dream to be recognized as an autonomous and peaceful community. Ezequiel Vitonás says: “if our people want to change the way they are seen and wish to expand their territory, they must send messages not only to us as Nasa but to those

outside.”⁶¹⁵ By this he means that in order for there to be changes, they must not just come from inside the community but also have to be clear to the rest of the population.

These strategies do not necessarily imply a radical change in the notion of being Indigenous, understood as actions aimed at underlining ethnic difference. On the contrary, they are aimed at dignifying and exalting the capacities of Indigenous people to transform and adapt. From that perspective, the manifestations of culture previously mentioned by Vitonás are generated “to send messages to be seen,”⁶¹⁶ messages that – as depicted in Fig. 3.34 – make architecture the messenger, a seed and a voice guiding future generations.

Understood as seeds, voices, and manifestations of culture giving rise to the notion of Indigenous territory, I believe architecture becomes a new “opportunity” for “emerging practices” in which the Nasa-Paéz seek new places and spaces for the construction and establishment of the great imagined house: the *Nasa Kiwe*.

Weaving of Encounter

The *Nasa Yat*, *Yatzungas* and *Nasa Kiwe* are conceived as complementary spaces; they depend upon each other and are intertwined to form a place shared through beliefs. The spaces of the *Yat* are elements of *Nasa Kiwe*, as are rivers, lakes, mountains, animals and seeds (which are represented in the *tull*, upon which the *Nasa Yat* depends). When I refer to a space here, I am not referring to a human territory that belongs to its inhabitants, but rather a space in which all living beings and inert

⁶¹⁵ My translation. The original in Spanish: “si nuestro pueblo quiere cambiar la forma de cómo es visto y quiere expandir su territorio debe mandar mensajes no solo a nosotros como Nasa sino a los de afuera.” Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by author, Caloto – Cauca, February 7, 2014.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

things establish relationships – a space that weaves these entities together. Within the *Yat*, such are the relationships of the great house for the *minga* and the *Yatzunga* as a space for research.⁶¹⁷

For the Nasa-Paéz, the *mingas* constitute important events that require elaborate preparation and are to be achieved through ritual and tradition as shown in Fig. 3.35. The weaving of relationships that takes place at such events is referred to as “*El Manto de Mama Kiwe*,” (the weaving of mother earth) in which traditions are made present in the territory in the form of ritual and beliefs.⁶¹⁸



Fig. 3.35, *Mingas* as part of tradition and ritual. Photo by author.

⁶¹⁷ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22. For more on territorial relationships, see: Robert Sack. *Human Territoriality. Its Theory and History*. Cambridge University, 1986.

⁶¹⁸ Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca -ACIN-, *El Manto de Mamá Kiwe* (Santander de Quilichao – Cauca: ACIN), 85.

In my field research, I was able to determine that at the moment when the *minga* begins, although on one level simply a time to start the meeting (with a short welcoming ritual), other elements of great importance are woven together which merit analysis. The weaving of actions, as referred to in contemporary Nasa-Paéz literature on traditional practices, seeks well-being and the promotion of new activities to be carried out in the community.⁶¹⁹

I aim to analyze how these actions of great importance can begin to weave “new” relationships which consolidate emerging rituals – relationships that I will call “weavings of encounter,” in which architecture and daily activities can be considered as a future practice.

The word “weaving” in Nasa-Paéz tradition is focused on the different spaces (and actions) that compose and support history and tradition consistent with the vision of the *Proyecto Nasa*. The *Manto de Mama Kiwe*, for example, refers to actions which help build a community with a more solid organizational base: “Only then will it be possible for the wisdom of our elders, the struggle of so many centuries and the efforts of all of our leaders and communities to fertilize our identity and strengthen our autonomy.”⁶²⁰ This “weaving of encounter” is not a ritual as such but is instead an action and interpretation. I aim to show how the initial moment of union and sharing in the *minga* is deployed around symbology and actions whose connotations demonstrate another way of understanding the construction of *Nasa Kiwe*.

Based on the conception visualized in his architecture and denoted by Ul Ascué where the “great house is a house for everyone,”⁶²¹ the weaving of encounter in the great imagined house – mediated through hybrid architecture – could be considered in two components: a first “weaving to welcome the encounter” and a second “weaving to prepare the encounter.”

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

⁶²⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Solo así será posible que la sabiduría de nuestros mayores, la lucha de tantos siglos y el esfuerzo de todos nuestros líderes y comunidades fertilicen nuestra identidad y fortalezcan nuestra autonomía.” ACIN, *El Manto de Mamá Kiwe*, 58. For more on territorial organization, see: Juan Houghton. *La Tierra Contra la Muerte*. Bogotá: CECOIN, 2008.

⁶²¹ Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

Weaving to Welcome the Encounter

The first ritual that the Nasa-Paéz use in the contemporary *resguardo* to welcome visitors is a greeting celebrated between the host and the guest. This ritual is called harmonization. I will use the term “welcoming” to describe the act and rituals associated with this reception. The term will serve as an approximation of this experience.

For these welcoming encounters the elder is in charge of the blowing ritual or *puthya'* in which he chews maize or coca leaves, sips chicha or aguardiente and then blows them in different directions.⁶²² This ritual, which is celebrated on the borders of the *Nasa Yat* or *Nasa Kiwe*, symbolizes expelling the dirt from the people who take part in the ritual to harmonize the energies of the place (Fig. 3.36).



Fig. 3.36, Blowing ritual or *puthya'* in the house of harmonization or *Kfxizenxi'Yat*. Photo by author.

⁶²² Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 139.

In this house of harmonization, the guest's head is bathed with a mixture of water and sacred plants from the highlands, and a toast is made to the spirits with a sip of *chicha* or *guarapo*, symbolizing access to the community and welcome for a person or persons into the *resguardo*, to a *Yatzunga*, *Nasa Yat*, and *Nasa Kiwe*.

This ritual can be interpreted as cleaning, refreshing and offering, individually or in a shared manner. It governs interactions, and thus relationships. The construction of Nasa-Paéz territory as a process goes hand-in-hand with the construction of relationships between Nasa-Paéz rituals and the community.⁶²³ Such actions must be followed to show respect for the community; access to the *resguardo* depends on them.

The ceremony, as shown in Fig. 3.36, is a living manifestation of the notion of the “*Yat* as dwelling of the spirits and (the) Nasa-Paéz, and *Yat* as the territory,”⁶²⁴ in which constructing territory through hybrid architecture and ritual involves actions of respect and acknowledgment through “signs” – as it were, footprints or visual markers – of the various modes of perceiving and inhabiting the sacred territory.

From the first day in which I was given access to this *resguardo*, and on each of my subsequent visits, this harmonization ritual was carried out (Fig. 3.37). I remember each of them, some large – if I may refer to them in this way – and others more intimate. In my experience during field research, I saw that other activities were customary upon arrival at a *minga*, a festivity or a ritual.

⁶²³ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 49. For more on territory and spirituality, see: Vincent Scully. *The Earth, The Temple, and The Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture*. Yale University, 1962; Vincent Scully. *Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade*. St. Martin's Press, 1991.

⁶²⁴ Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos, *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios en el Diseño y Construcción de la Nasa Yat, Cauca-Colombia* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca. 2013), 27 – 28.



Fig. 3.37, Author participating in a ritual of harmonization at the entry to the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*. Photo by Tomás Bolaños.

These other actions include sharing food, singing, dancing, greeting or simply enjoying access to these community venues, an experience which promotes solemn or considered actions between participants. I also experienced that architecture was a crucial part of this “action.” These actions gives shape to what I call a “weaving to welcome the encounter.” Three personal experiences through architecture and ritual follow.

First Experience

Harmonization rituals are held at the entrance to the larger *mingas*, such as in the *Saakhelu Kwet Yu’ Thakwe Yu* which, as mentioned in Chapter One, takes place over three days of *mingas*, dances, rituals and political meetings dedicated to the unity of the community and harmonization with the spirits. This ritual, held every year, is of great importance and is attended by Indigenous people from every Nasa-Paéz *resguardo*.

When I attended the opening of this ritual in August of 2016, a series of large *Yatzungas* – in the style of a *maloca* – were the place of the welcoming (Fig. 3.38). These large houses for *mingas* can easily be seen before arrival at the place of celebration, not only because of the size of the imposing *Yatzungas*, but for the festive atmosphere: music, dancing, food and *chicha* are the hallmarks of a great festival.⁶²⁵



Fig. 3.38, *Yatzunga* for welcoming in the *Saakhelu* of Tacueyó. Photo by author.

What links and houses the community is a series of *Yatzungas* in which different activities are held. Some host the harmonization ritual, in others the food is prepared, while in others the elders meet. They are different sized *Yatzungas* with a variety of uses, which have the specific function of uniting the community and rendering it visible.

⁶²⁵ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22. For more information on food as connector of the Andean society see: Alison Krögel. *Food, Power, and Resistance in the Andes*. Lanham: Lexington Book.2011.

In this way, the architecture of the *Yatzunga* and the activities that occur within it become symbolic contributors of great importance to the celebrations, what I refer to as an architecture providing for the “weaving of encounter.” The creation of the meeting space facilitates actions of welcome in preparation for meeting.

Thus, “weaving to welcome the encounter” takes place at an array of times and places, and as parts of many different community activities and events. A case in point is the *Saakhelu*. Each year, the community travels to a place selected to participate in this ritual. Because the ceremony moves around between different *resguardos*, each time the ritual begins with the construction of new *Yatzungas*.

The construction of such houses is part of the visual expansion of Indigenous territory; the built environment stretches protectively across *Nasa Kiwe* like a *chumbe* weaving. This enables the Nasa-Paéz to be seen, understood and identified in the context of the symbolic construction of their imagined territory.⁶²⁶

Second Experience

A second “welcoming” that I attended – and which would be the last of my field research – was held in one of the *Yatzungas* of the CECIDIC in March of 2019. That same day, we had arrived at the CECIDIC, where we were to spend the night, and on arrival I was informed that that same day the ritual of extinguishing the hearth fire, or *Ipx Fxixxanxi - Çxhab Wala Kiwe*, was to be celebrated.

With the ritual of extinguishing the heart, “the fire is harmonized to control illnesses that arise in the territory and this implies taking the elders and the spirits of nature into account, to maintain

⁶²⁶ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío Congreso de Caldonó 2005*, 154.

harmony.”⁶²⁷ This ritual is held exclusively for members of the Nasa-Paéz, so I did not expect to join it. But after spending the entire day doing field research, that night when I returned to the CECIDIC, one of the Indigenous guards informed me that I had indeed been authorized to attend.

I recall that as I walked to the place where the ritual was celebrated, lighting my way with a flashlight, I thought it was strange not to see or feel the normal movement of a Nasa-Paéz celebration. I could hear neither drums nor music nor rejoicing, and in general there was no festive mood.

Upon arrival at the *Yatzunga*, I saw how the welcoming at this ritual was quite different from what I had seen until then. In effect, there was no music, no dancing, no food, just a large *tulpa* in the exterior part of the *Yatzunga* around which the community congregated (Fig. 3.39). Everyone was silent and one could hear only whispering by one of the elders, who spoke in *Nasa Yuwe*. This atmosphere of solemnity lasted for around an hour. Then, one of the elders rekindled the fire and, taking a last sip of *aguardiente*, used the blowing ritual to blow the liquid into the large *tulpa*. Thus, began the extinguishing of the *tulpa*.

The elder asked us to do the same, but this time to take a sip of water with some plants and blow it onto the hearth fire. After a few hours, when the fire had finally been put out, we all picked up the ashes with our hands along with some logs that remained, and threw them into a gorge near where the ritual had been held.

⁶²⁷ My translation. The original in Spanish: “Se armoniza la candela para el control de las enfermedades que se presentan en el territorio e implica tener en cuenta los mayores, y a los espíritus de la naturaleza para mantener la armonía.” Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 45.



Fig. 3.39. Ritual of extinguishing the hearth fire or *Ipx Fxixxanxi - Çxhab Wala Kiwe* in the San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.

When no trace was left of the logs and ashes, the elder gave permission to start the music, and through songs and celebrations allowed entry into the *Yatzunga* where the ritual were to start.⁶²⁸ The elders from the different *resguardos* entered first, carrying some logs, and were shown inside the great house to begin a new cycle through a new fire (Fig. 3.40). After the hearth had been lit, the rest of the participants entered, dancing in the form of a spiral. Thus began the celebration that lasted until dawn.

⁶²⁸ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.



Fig. 3.40, Ritual for lighting the new hearth in the San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.

This ritual for extinguishing the *tulpa* and bringing its ashes to the river represents the spirits' departure; it is believed that the ashes take with them all of the negative energies afflicting the Nasa-Paéz. Then, when a new fire is kindled in the *tulpa* of a new *Yatzunga* built specifically for this purpose, it represents the welcoming of young spirits, spirits full of energy who will enable the beginning of a new cycle in complete harmony. These cycles are represented in both actions: first, the action of farewell, taking the ashes to the stream whose waters descend to the lowest part of the mountain range; and second in the kindling of the new fire in the new *Yatzunga*, representing as it does an architecture that moves – like the mythological serpent wandering through the territory.

As previously mentioned, movement into the lowlands symbolizes a return to the mythological and historical place of origin. This is one aspect of the movement between the lowlands of Putumayo and Amazonas, and the Andes where the new Nasa-Paéz territory was to be

established.⁶²⁹ The movement of the ashes in the waters coincides with the rekindling of the fire in the ritual of extinguishing the fire, and the construction of a new *Yat*; it is one expression of the expansion of *Nasa Kiwe* through the territory.

It is not only the mythological serpent and the flow of the waters on their journey, part of the cycle of movement from Putumayo to the Andes, that acquire a mythological and historical connotation. The architecture, as an element contributing to the construction of beliefs through visibility, shares similar connotations.

Nowadays, the Nasa-Paéz descend not only through the proxy of the ashes of the extinguishing the fire ritual, but also through the foundation of new *resguardos* in Putumayo and Cauca. These new *resguardos* are a reclamation and a return to the lands which belonged to them ancestrally, and an expansion of *Nasa Kiwe*.

The lowland origins of the Nasa-Paéz and their beliefs are rendered visible in their traditional architecture and in the movement toward, walking around in, and inhabiting *Nasa Kiwe*.⁶³⁰ The building of new *Yatzungas* as shown on Fig. 1.1 confirms that the Nasa-Paéz have not ceased moving into and recovering lands.⁶³¹

That is how, through the *Yatzungas* built for the ritual of the extinguishing the fire, the “weaving to welcome the encounter” comes about. Unlike any other ritual, the ending of the fire begins with a farewell, and then celebrates a welcoming. The “welcoming” to the great imagined house encompasses both departure and arrival; it represents a spiral of the law of origin in which cycles rekindle the flame of the culture through tradition and the expansion of *Nasa Kiwe*: an

⁶²⁹ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 183. For more on migration in the Andes, see: Daniel W Gade. *Nature and Culture in The Andes*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1999; Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada. *Political Cultures in the Andes, 1750-1950*. Duke Univ. Press, 2005, Brooke Larson et al. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Duke University Press, 1995.

⁶³⁰ Rappaport, “Territory and Tradition”, 136 – 138.

⁶³¹ Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural – INCODER, *Acuerdo 024 - 029 de 2004* (Bogotá: INCODER, 2004).

imagined great house represented in the concepts of the great house for the *minga*, and *Yatzunga* as a space for research.⁶³²

Third Experience

A last representation of the “weaving to welcome the encounter” that I wish to mention is the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* pilot project. In this contemporary traditional centre of education, the welcoming is a fundamental entry into culture, and an important element of cultural expression. Elsewhere, rituals of welcome can invite one to the territory, to a ritual or to a *Yat*; in the case of this centre of education, the ritual is a welcome to traditional life, and an act of initiation.

Because the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* is a center dedicated to the traditional education of the youngest children, this process is an essential step in nurturing future processes of cultural resistance. Rituals of encounter and welcoming begin when the elder gives permission to enter a place that has sacred connotations. This welcoming begins on the outskirts of *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees* with the ritual of harmonization, which makes use of *totumos* (hollowed-out gourds) containing *chicha* (maize liquor), a bucket with water and sacred plants (Fig. 3.37).

Throughout the years that I traveled to the area, the elder Máximo Pavi, director of this educational center and Australia Poto Julicué traditional professor – and occasionally the children who attend it – authorized my entry through the blowing ritual and carried out “harmonization”. Only after harmonization was I permitted to enter the place, where various *Yatzungas* of different sizes and uses have been built. These communal houses, in addition to being landmarks, deploy traditional architecture to facilitate learning of traditional knowledge.

⁶³² CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

Upon entering the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*, the weaving of encounter begins along with the welcoming by the boys and girls. A large circle is formed by the guests, traditional professors, and students (Fig. 3.41). When the elder gives them permission, they begin their greeting with songs in *Nasa Yuwe* language. The ritual ends with a spiralling dance to the sound of drums and flutes.



Fig. 3.41, Welcome at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*. Photo by author.

Fig. 3.42 depicted how the bodies of the dancers move in a spiral around the guests and around the architecture of the site: the several *Yatzungas* built there. The children who carry out the greeting are welcoming not only the guests, but also themselves, as this is part of their traditional learning. Thus traditional architecture plays an important role, enacted in this ritual, in the process of initiation into Indigenous culture. Architecture is seen as protective of culture; access to it is restricted.



Fig. 3.42, Welcoming and moving around the *Yatzungas* at the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx Nees*. Photo by author.

The architecture of the *Yat* both provides a setting for, and in turn is activated by, such celebrations and authorizations of welcoming. Through its role in the “weaving of encounter” it supports the identification of the Nasa-Paéz as a people working actively for peace, as well as contributing to the contemporary construction of *Nasa Kiwe*. It also welcomes others to see and understand the world from the perspective of the Nasa-Paéz.⁶³³ It is an invitation to walk respectfully into the territory, becoming what might be seen as seed of culture – what Vitonás called the act of “sending messages to be seen.”⁶³⁴

The changes and projects in the life of a Nasa-Paéz from “their own attitude,”⁶³⁵ represented in weaving the construction of the territory, generate dynamics that must be part of the evolution of the community itself. The beliefs and rituals along with the weavings and the *Yat*, become more than

⁶³³ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁶³⁴ Ezequiel Vitonás, Interview by author, Caloto – Cauca, February 7, 2014

⁶³⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 238.

simple cultural actions and physical elements when they promote new actions that foster more active community participation.⁶³⁶

To conclude my interpretation of the “weaving to welcome the encounter,” I wish to point out that this experience is fundamentally about access to territory and access to culture. That access must be managed by the Nasa-Paéz themselves, as is made clear in their own writing and political agendas. One such is the Toribío Environmental Plan (Plan Ambiental de Toribío), which underlines that access to these spaces and rituals depends on the concepts of seeing, walking and planting from the perspective of “memory, body and territory.” According to this plan, these actions are formulated as “seeing” or recognizing Nasa-Paéz history; “walking” or gaining access to and appropriating space; and “planting” the seeds of actions of coexistence, caring and transformation.⁶³⁷

If the humanized territory serves as the basis of Nasa-Paéz interpretation and recreation of their own history through beliefs, vindicated through traditional architecture, the acts of meeting and welcoming are foundational to it. Through the weaving for welcoming they establish relationships – among themselves and also with respect to outsiders – that will enable the continued symbolic construction of territory in contemporary *Nasa Kiwe*.

As represented on the Ul Ascué houses, the notion of welcoming also contribute to the creation of images which symbolically represent (through ritual and architecture) processes for inhabitation and expansion of Nasa-Paéz culture and territory. As we have seen, these visual and material manifestations of culture can be as diverse as traditional architecture, murals, and weaving. They all are seeds, voices and manifestations supporting the inhabitation of the great imagined house, the *Nasa Kiwe*. The weaving of encounter is the gateway to all of this.

⁶³⁶ Marcos Yule and Carmen Vitonás, *Taw Nasa “Chumbe Nasa”, Kwe’sx Üusu Yahxcx Pwisnxi “Memoria y Sentido de Nuestras Imágenes, Símbolos”, Kwe’sx Ju’gwe’sx nxa’üus pwisnxi, “Imágenes, Pensamientos de Nuestros Ancestros”* (Toribío, Cabildo Indígena de Toribío, 2015), 15.

⁶³⁷ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 49.

Weaving to Prepare the Encounter

The “weaving to prepare the encounter” is developed around the preparation of *Nasa Kiwe*, for the meeting to take place at a specific site. According to the traditional literature on the *Manto* of *Mama Kiwe*: “the territory establishes a future scenario for its recovery that fosters community activities.”⁶³⁸ These community activities focus on respect for the mountain as the house of the Nasa-Paéz. They can be understood as an expression of the concept of “emergent behavior” referred to by Wilches-Chaux. Reclamation of territory goes hand-in-hand with the contemporary rituals of the *resguardo* and the organizational development which accompanies them. Territorial claims are strengthened and legitimized as a result of these actions, and “dreams.”⁶³⁹

This weaving is based on the concept of the great house for *mingas*; is the house in which the community and spirits congregate.⁶⁴⁰ Indeed, the “welcoming” upon inhabiting *Nasa-Kiwe* and the actions for unification of the community facilitate viewing its culture and its relationships with the territory and prepares this weaving of encounter and weaving to prepare the encounter through the *tulpa*, the *mingas* and the *Yat*. The Nasa-Paéz receive and congregate in the place of origin, which is the house and the *tulpa*; they congregate through *mingas*, and they meet in the *Yat*.

The Nasa-Paéz law of origin refers to four houses of the *Nasa Kiwe*. According to the *T'iwe N'hi' Yu'i Nasayak* myth (the origin of the earth and of man) described by Marcos Yule, all four houses are alive, and shelter both living and inanimate beings.⁶⁴¹ In this myth, the great spirit had a great house. That house was *Nasa-Kiwe*: the house of origin, the territory. From it, four paths led outward, encompassing all beings in the territory.

⁶³⁸ My translation. The original in Spanish: “el territorio establece un escenario futuro para la recuperación del territorio que fomenta en la comunidad actividades comunitarias.” ACIN, *El Manto de Mamá Kiwe*, 110.

⁶³⁹ Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, *Proyecto Nasa: La Construcción del Plan de Vida de un Pueblo que Sueña* (Bogotá: PNUD, 2005), 76.

⁶⁴⁰ CECIDIC, *Guía de investigación*, 21 – 22.

⁶⁴¹ See: Gustavo Wilches-Chaux. *Proyecto Nasa*, 39 – 40.

Walking in a spiral motion through the territory leads one outward to the mythical inscription of the house of the spirits or *Ksxa 'w Īkhwe'sx Yat*. The house of the spirits ties together the four houses, and this joining together the different “worlds.” Those worlds are clear invocation of the place where the “meeting” of the Nasa-Paéz takes place.⁶⁴² I believe this is the beginning of the “weavings of encounter.” At their center is the place of origin, or *Nasa Yat*, and from the center of the *Nasa Yat* radiates the “weaving of welcoming” and “weaving to prepare the encounter.”

A case in point took place in a *minga* for reflection in Toribío. There was an activity with the community in which each person made a drawing of the territory and the imagined house. Fig. 3.43 shows the interpretation by Ul Ascué of the traditional house as a place of origin and connector through a spiral with *Nasa Kiwe*.⁶⁴³ This interpretation of the great house from an imagined architecture depicts the “weaving to prepare for the encounter” in which the community unites, shares and harmonizes dweller and house.



Fig. 3.43, Interpretation by Eyder Wulson Ul Ascué of the great house through an imagined architecture.

⁶⁴² Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 122.

⁶⁴³ Eyder Wulson Ul Ascué Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2015.

The spiral form symbolizes the preparation for the encounter; and within it the image of a sacred mountain – inscribed in the architecture of the *Yatzunga* – signifies the entire culture. The act of welcoming – preparation for the encounter – ties the house to the territory. From the mythical imaginative pathways connecting the four houses, to the physical connections and manifestations of *Nasa Kiwe* within the house, the Nasa-Paéz obtain a unified understanding of the great house as a weaving for the encounter: “memory, body and territory.”⁶⁴⁴

In short, the different strategies of use and form, and the symbology of the *Yat*, unify territory and belief in the body of the great house as architecture and belief. The peaceful strategies of the weaving of encounter – preparing the community to come together, and sharing knowledge about how to conserve cultural expression through new ritual – are played out and consolidated in the *tulpa*, *minga* and *Yat*.

The Hearth of the Great House: Weavings for Intimacy

The weaving of life and the cultural strengthening they promote through the Proyecto Nasa are focused on the hearth as the center of the *Nasa Yat*, and the *Nasa Yat* and the *tull* as a center of *Nasa Kiwe*. The hearth is thus conceived as the centre of everything: “the heart of the house.”⁶⁴⁵ It is a place for reflection, and a place for thinking. It is the centre around which *mingas* are organized; thus it is the focal point for the quest to preserve identity, beliefs and the collective construction of the territory.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁴ Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 49.

⁶⁴⁵ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 54.

⁶⁴⁶ Heriberto Galeano Trilleras. *Tulpa de Pensamiento* (Popayán: FUP Fundación Universitaria de Popayán, 2016), 28.

Taking the “the heart of the house” as place of origin of the Nasa-Paéz, weaving of life knowledge and values radiate outwards in an array of proposals conveyed by community members, governors, and the voice of elders and women. As mentioned earlier, in a territory in constant conflict, pedagogical practices are welcomed by the community as gestures of peace that provide the opportunity to approach, recognize and value culture through tradition.

Fig. 3.44, 3.45 & 3.46 illustrate collaborative architectonic design projects developed in *minga* where the hearth is the focus for the housing and urban design as a place for family and community encounter.⁶⁴⁷ Preparation for the “weaving for welcoming” and “weaving to prepare the encounter” begins in the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzunga* and at the three stones that make up the *tulpa*; these represent the generations of grandparents, parents and descendants.

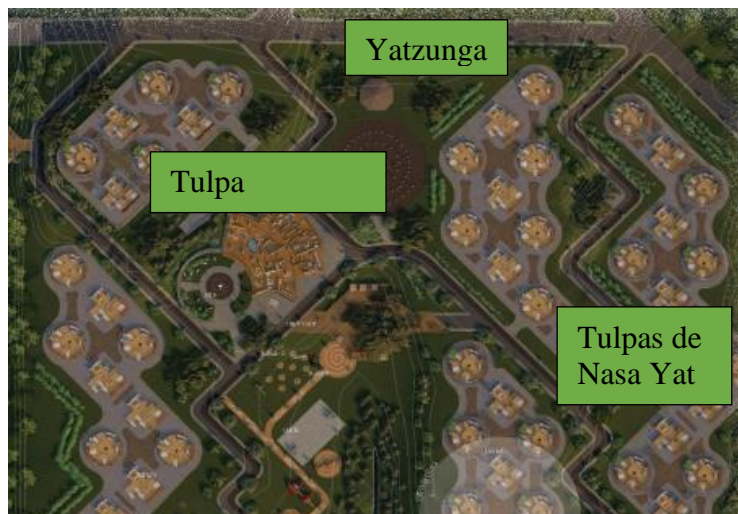


Fig. 3.44, Urban design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

⁶⁴⁷ Collaborative Urban and architectonical design projects between the School of Architecture at the Piloto de Colombia University and Toribío Town Council. The thesis *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*, was developed in *minga* following the policies and beliefs of the community in the *resguardo* of Toribío. Internal advisors: Maria Patricia Farfán, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz, from Piloto de Colombia University and Wuilson Úl Ascué from the Toribío *resguardo*. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

The proposal serves the continuity of the path of territorial restitution, and their implementation begins in the hearth. The centrality and meaning of this place, where the law of origin began, is built on the recognition that the words, beliefs, mythology and rituals transmitted in the hearth are a way “to welcome” knowledge and preserve tradition.

Such experiences around the hearth demonstrate the multiple dimensions of their importance for the community. Weaving of encounter around the hearth thus has great importance: it is the starting point for the great spiral that connects not only the thinking but also the actions taken jointly for the community.

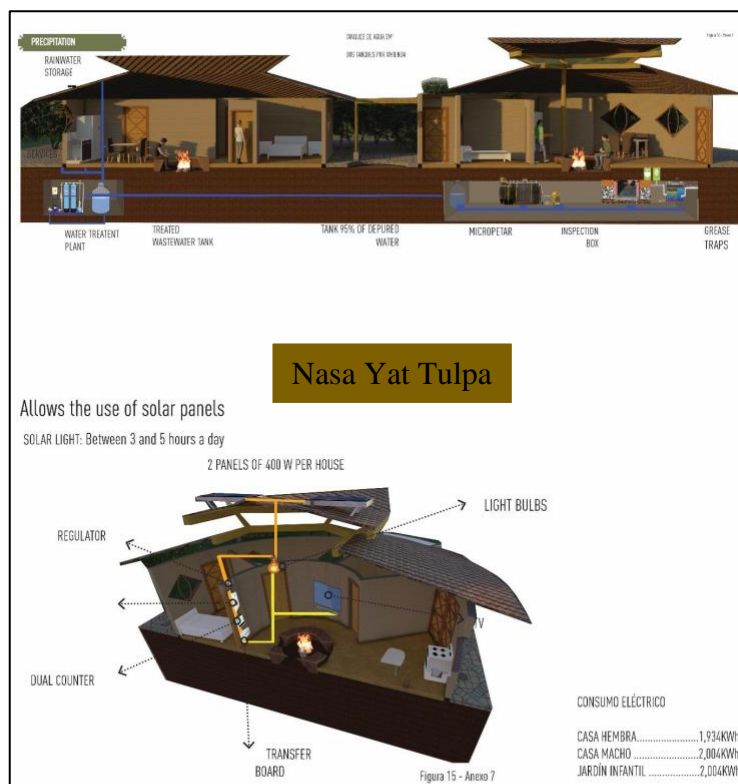


Fig. 3.45, *Nasa Yat* Design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter. Nicole Rodríguez, Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. *Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

It is in the hearth of the house that the community prepares to meet; at the shared place for creation of community and union through orality. Whether it is a collective (Fig. 3.44) or family *tulpa* (Fig. 3.45), the fire becomes a symbol of the law of origin. It generates “weavings for intimacy” either among members of the community, or within the family itself. In the *tulpa*, tradition is shared with the new generations. Figure 3.46 shows a meeting place as “weaving of encounter” expanding outwards.

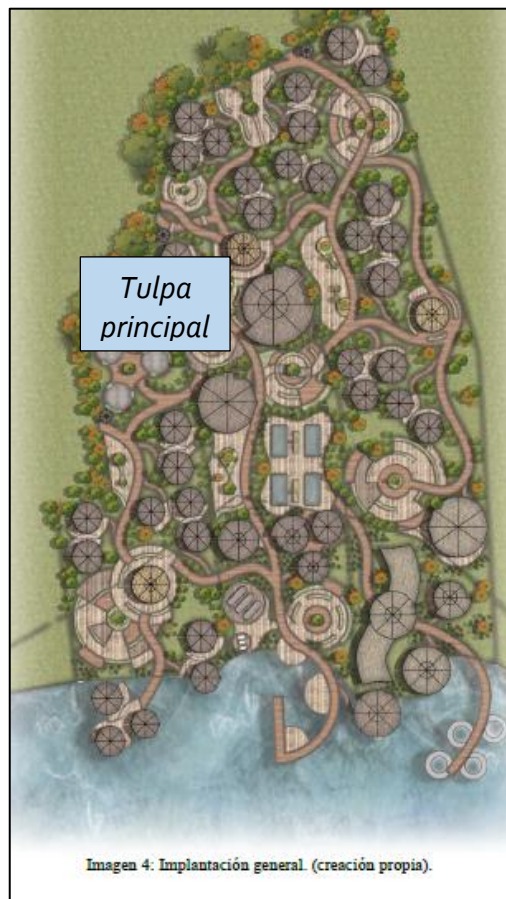


Fig. 3.46, Design proposal – hearth as weaving of encounter between Nasa-Paéz and Muellamues Indigenous Communities. María Aldana, Melissa Moreno and Tomás Rodríguez. *Equipamiento Comunal Etnoturístico Productivo para la Comunidad Indígena Muellamues*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

Figure 3.46 shows the hearth as meeting place and “weaving of encounter” that expands outwards. The intention of the design project in Nariño reflects the mandates of the *Proyecto Nasa*, as a consolidator of Indigenous communities. In this case the project brings together two different Indigenous communities: the Nasa-Paéz and the Muellamues from Guachucal in Nariño.⁶⁴⁸ Tradition and territorial expansion are developed through the life plan of the CRIC and the *Plan de Vida del Pueblo de los Pastos*.⁶⁴⁹

The traditional notion that the hearth of the communal house is the center of Indigenous territory led many interactions to occur in this place, which are experienced by younger generations from different Indigenous *resguardos*; the history, beliefs, rituals, meaning, and respect for Indigenous tradition demonstrate the symbolic value of the diverse expressions of hearth and architecture. As Yule and Vitonás notably point out, the three stones of the *tulpa*, more than just expressions of culture and beliefs, are spiritual and lived places:

The *I'px Kwet* were three stones placed in such a way that the inhabited site would not be lost and would be preserved as *fxnuu* or “sign of a house”. These three stones were also called the *pujinityu*. The right front stone was colored and the left one was *Kwer çëy* green. The middle one was the *sxlapun*, which was why the elders or *shamans* always looked for a proper place to build the house, or the *fxnuu*. They chewed *coca* for a week until it came to them and thus would build the house. They did this not just to chew the coca or to take advantage, but rather to look into the future that the inhabitants of the house or the family were going to have [...].⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁸ Collaborative Urban and architectural design projects between the School of Architecture at the Piloto de Colombia University and the Muellamues community. The thesis *Equipamiento Comunal Etnoturístico Productivo para la Comunidad Indígena Muellamues*, was developed in *minga*. Advisors: Maria Patricia Farfán, Tomas Bolaños, Julian Ruiz, Eduardo Asmus from Piloto de Colombia University. María Aldana, Melissa Moreno and Tomás Rodríguez. *Equipamiento Comunal Etnoturístico Productivo para la Comunidad Indígena Muellamues*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, 2019.

⁶⁴⁹ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca* (Popayán: CRIC, 2007), 17. For more information on Pueblo de los Pastos see: www.asociaciondelpueblodelospastos.com; Luis Calero. *Pastos Quillacingas y Abades*. Bogotá: Banco Popular, 1991.

⁶⁵⁰ My translation. The original in Spanish: El *I'px Kwet* eran tres piedras que colocaban para que las huellas o el sitio donde se habitaba no se perdieran y que se siguieran conservando *fxnuu* “seña de casa” estas tres piedras eran como apartes *pujinityu*. La Piedra anteriormente, del lado derecho era colorada y de lado izquierdo era como verde *Kwer çëy* y el del medio era el *sxlapun*, por esta razón los mayores o shamanes siempre buscaban un sitio adecuado para construir la casa, o el *fxnuu*, ellos mascaban *coca* por una semana hasta que saliera bien y así construían la casa, hacían esto pero no por mascar coca nomás ni engañar, sino para darse cuenta del futuro que iban a tener los dueños de la casa o familia. Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 54 – 55.

Examining the visual interpretation associated with the hearth, as the first point of encounter and of welcome, I have found that the representation of occupied space – the space that constitutes the architecture of the *Nasa Yat* and the *Yatzunga* – results in structural weaving within the community. These social weavings in turn support organizational forms characteristic of *cacicazgos*. They use architecture to create a hierarchy, reinforced by the internal organization of the *resguardo*, which then encourages ancestrally-oriented thinking in contemporary society.

In my field research, I recognized two types of *tulpas* or encounters. The family or community hearth, where the community meets for a specific activity, and the political where the community gather to participate and/or to prepare food for the political *mingas* (Fig. 3.47 & 3.48).

The *tulpa* as political hearth and the central point of orality and knowledge transference is the basis and the focal point of the practice-ritual of the *minga*. In these meetings the hearth and the rift are part of political power where the Nasa-Paéz meet not only to undertake community work but also to promote unity and mobilize weavings; these participative efforts support communication, harmony and the promotion of ancestral and contemporary social and cultural practices.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵¹ For more on political places where the use of rifts in the ground is very powerful, see Doris Salcedo. *Shibboleth*. 2007. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/salcedo-shibboleth-i-p20334>. Accessed on Nov. 30, 2021.



Fig. 3.47, Hearth of the house in *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* San Francisco *resguardo*. Photo by author.



Fig. 3.48, Political hearth and rift in *Saakhelu Thakwe Yu'*. Photo by author.

As part of the process of welcome and preparation for the meeting, women organize the hearth, bringing large cooking pots to prepare the food. The Nasa-Paéz gather around the hearth fire, which they rekindle with more wood as they cook, weave and converse; all these form part of the process of actions and projects promoted by the *resguardo*.⁶⁵²

The appropriation of a meeting place and the project of expansion originate thus inside traditional houses.⁶⁵³ In fact, territorial expansion is achieved not only through *tulpas* but also through the architecture of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, which enlarge and increase as the Nasa-Paéz family grows. As Pachón points out: “The life of the new home generally begins with building another kitchen in the same house and subsequently with building an independent home [...]”⁶⁵⁴ Because the *Nasa Yat* is inhabited by an extended family, the activities carried out there, in the *tull* or in other economic and political activities determined by the *resguardo*, mean that not only is the place shared, but so also are the activities performed within it.

Each *Nasa Yat*, *minga* or *tulpa* that is lit signifies a new way of appropriating the territory through a new family – both a physical and symbolic expansion of *Nasa Kiwe*. It is for this reason, according to Rappaport, that those relationships lead to “legitimizing space and making it one’s own.”⁶⁵⁵ For instance women, who guide the extended family, are in charge of directing and distributing work within the home. In my field research, I saw how the eldest woman is the head of the *Yat*, whether or not its inhabitants are her daughters, daughters-in-law, granddaughters or an

⁶⁵² Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, 104.

⁶⁵³ For more information on traditional architecture, see: Raúl Asensio, and Beatriz Perez, 2012, Susana Bernardino and José Freitas Santos, 2017; Evelina Fernández, and Yaumara Sainz, 2017; Alexander Herrera, 2017; Carlos Maldonado, 2018; Gustavo Marín, García Ana, & Daltabuit Magali, 2012, Ministerio de Comercio Industria y Turismo. 2015. José Ojeda, 2004.

⁶⁵⁴ My translation. The original in Spanish: “La vida del nuevo hogar, generalmente se inicia con la construcción de otra cocina dentro de la misma vivienda y posteriormente con la de una vivienda independiente [...]” Ximena Pachón, *Geografía Humana de Colombia-Región Andina Central 2* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1996), 63.

⁶⁵⁵ Rappaport, *Territory and Tradition*. 37.

unrelated woman who is nonetheless close to the family. She directs their activities: she teaches them how to light the hearth, to cook, to weave, and she is the one who prepares the encounters.

The structure of the contemporary *minga*, in which women have gained a voice in the political decisions of the *resguardo*, has also enabled unification of the community on gender issues (Fig. 3.49).



Fig. 3.49, Women's *minga* to build a *Yat* in the Tacueyó *resguardo*.

Few *mingas* in which I took part were of a political nature. The great majority focused on social and cultural concerns, in which they addressed the community's expectations regarding proposals by the *cabildo* for creation of community spaces. At these venues, the role of the women was always significant. Women have thus been able to achieve a new positioning that enables them to

work and support processes and efforts that had hitherto been specifically for men. For instance, it is increasingly common to see participation by Nasa-Paéz women in *mingas* for construction of traditional houses, or in other labors that would have been considered masculine in the past.

All of the activities and traditions are taught around the hearth from mother to daughter and thus successively through generations. One might say that the eldest woman represents the weaving of encounter, because it is she who teaches about relationships based on traditional thought and meaning, and how these relationships permeate the territory and its inhabitation. Hence, there is no *tulpa* without women.

We can understand the symbolism of the hearth and *Nasa Yat* for the family in light of these relationships, whose effect extends out in the same way the traditional architecture does. The first fire symbolizes a new beginning, a new encounter, a new welcoming, and a new spiral that encompasses not only the *Nasa Yat* but also the evolution of *Nasa-Kiwe*. It symbolizes a new seed that will work, care for and defend the territory.⁶⁵⁶

Undoubtedly, the main *tulpa* and the extended *tulpas* symbolizing the growth of members within a *Nasa Yat* are not just a matter of each woman having her own *tulpa* to cook or weave. Instead, a new *tulpa* represents her new relationship with her recently-created family, and her position within it. Fig. 3.44 & 3.45 clearly reflect how each new flame from a new hearth, embodied and housed in newly proposed architectural projects, symbolizes prolongation of the ancestral tradition.

My aim has been to analyze how these actions of great importance begin to weave “new” relationships, to consolidate emerging rituals and relationships that I refer to as “weavings of encounter,” where architecture and daily activities can be understood as future-oriented, nascent practice.

⁶⁵⁶ Yule and Vitonás, *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi*, 54.

This “weaving of encounter” is not a ritual as such, but is instead an action and an interpretation. I have aimed to show how the initial moment of union and sharing in the context of the *minga* is deployed around both symbology and actions whose connotations demonstrate another way of understanding the construction of *Nasa Kiwe* as the great imagined house.

In summary, the relationships of the “weaving of encounter” in the *tulpa* signify union, organization and work, but also intimacy. If it weren’t for the traditional architecture of the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas*, these activities and actions – whether of political or quotidian character – could not take place. Because the hearth is part of traditional architecture, it becomes an important element in the structure of the *Yat*. It also enables the territory, as imagined through the symbology of the “weaving of encounter”, to expand.

To conclude, experiences around the hearth demonstrate the multiple dimensions of their importance for the community. Weaving of encounter around the hearth thus has great importance: it is the starting point for the great spiral that connects not only the beliefs, but also the actions taken jointly for the community.

Chapter 4 — Conclusion

The symbolic construction of territory manifested in the *Nasa Yat* and *Yatzungas* creates a meeting space for members of the Nasa-Paéz community, and hence a shelter for their relationships. This dissertation has explored some of the ways that this interaction is revealed. The construction is not only physical but also serves the continuity of beliefs and ritualistic practices; this is another dimension of the great house. Through these actions and beliefs, inhabiting the great house demonstrates to the community the importance of Indigenous unity.

In the same way that the *caciques nuevos* roaming the territory defined their own territorial borders, the *Nasa Kiwe* is now demarcated and delimited through *mingas*, symbols, architecture, traditional education, and beliefs. Taking part in a *minga* is associated with the consolidation of community standing; the family ties of an entire community become evident through participation in the activities of the *resguardo*.

Thus, the preparation of communal actions is represented herein not only as a traditional practice but as a living one. It functions as a unifying and harmonizing element that has recently gained strength in the contemporary *resguardo*. The community amalgamation is a central means for the symbolic construction of *Nasa Kiwe*.

This study has highlighted the predominance of violence in this territory. However, in focusing on community strategies and recovery of the *caciques nuevos*' mandates through *proyecto Nasa*, my intention is not to avoid the reality of the contemporary *resguardo*. Rather, my walk through *Nasa Kiwe* has shown that the Nasa-Paéz, the “people of peace” have become more resilient and united. This unity is realized when the construction of a *Yat* is initiated, when territory is recovered, when tradition is empowered.

In order to construct the symbolic territory, it is necessary to build places of community understanding through *mingas* and traditional beliefs: through dreams, from the hearth, and from the

Yat. These moments in the life of the Nasa-Paéz are associated with offerings to the territory. The *minga* and the rituals, despite having different objectives depending on the needs of the community, pose together an open invitation to participate in the activity and in the final meeting, the festivity in the *Yat*, and around the hearth. In these moments and places, through celebration and ritual, relationships are deepened and strengthened.

As my analysis has revealed, the community's unification around the great house not only represents the act of inhabiting and possessing territory, it also prepares for the expansion and demarcation of the boundaries of *Nasa Kiwe*. In other words, the *minga* and the *Nasa Yat* are not limited to the meeting and implementation of an activity or a physical construction, they are not just a starting point; on the contrary they constitute an encounter that prepares the community for territorial expansion and visibility. Due to contemporary violence and deafening government silence, demonstrations extend beyond the boundaries of the *resguardo*, even to the capital city.⁶⁵⁷

Lastly, I would like to conclude with the case of the imaginative reconstruction of the paternal house of Elder Pavi, and an interpretation of the Ul Ascué house as a contribution to traditional architecture.

Fig. 4.1 & 4.2 shows the elder Pavi reconstructing from memories his paternal home in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* – which demonstrates the process of resistance through architecture. The elder reconstructed his house as it was present in his memory, recounting it to those around him. As his words connected the current *Yat* with the house in which he had grown up, he passed on to new

⁶⁵⁷ From January to October 2020, massacres took place in Indigenous Cauca territory. As consequence of the deafening silence of the Colombian government, a political *minga* was held with the participation of more than 7000 Indigenous people who led the way to Bogotá to protest with the hope of being visible and being listened to. At every town on the route to Bogotá – the group took a week to arrive – a symbolic *Yatzunga* was created of plastics and fabrics. The people were united, and mobilization crystallized, around the hearth of each of these buildings as places for encounter, as seen on the “*minga de resistencia social y comunitaria*” on October 2009. ACIN - CRIC. *Minga Social y Comunitaria por la Vida*. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/la-minga-de-resistencia-social-y-comunitaria-avanza-el-camino-de-la-palabra-hacia-la-ciudad-de-cali/> Accessed on October 20, 2021.

generations the architecture of the traditional house, as well as the belief systems, social structure, and rituals that went along with it.



Fig. 4.1, Interpretation of elder Máximo Pavi's paternal house in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx*. Photo by author.

Resonant with this, the *Yat* supports the policies of cultural unification, consolidation and territorial expansion. The great imagined house establishes and renders visible traditional architecture: the place of origin in the experience of territorial appropriation sheltered by social

weavings.⁶⁵⁸ In this context, architecture is seen as a seed of resistance: serving to protect, and reinforcing domestic connection.



Fig. 4.2, Interpretation of the *Nasa Yat* in the *Wasak Kiwewex Fxidx* by elder Máximo Pavi. Photo by author.

To conclude my walk through *Nasa Kiwe*, I want to return to my experience visiting the paternal home of Ul Ascué.⁶⁵⁹ In this encounter I saw how the *Yat* as a seed not only grows with the family and the community, but also mutates, generating alternatives for community housing similar to

⁶⁵⁸ ACIN, *El Manto de Mamá Kiwe*, 85.

⁶⁵⁹ Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué, Interview by author, *Minga* vereda El Flayo, Toribío – Cauca. March 21, 2019.

traditional models.⁶⁶⁰ Traditional practices change in accordance with how new generations approach the territory and tradition, and how the community wants to be recognized.

Ul Ascué, despite being the only Nasa-Paéz Indigenous architect in the Toribío *resguardo*, has a very strong sense of tradition due to the knowledge and mentorship of the elders. The tradition of living in a *Nasa Yat* enables territory to grow along with the family, while the concept of tradition also evolves.

Born in a traditional Nasa-Paéz family, Ul Ascué's roots and beliefs persist, even though the architectural forms around him may be in the process of transformation. Because he has a conventional western university training, Ul Ascué has developed architectural projects successfully merging the contemporary with the traditional. Even though his parents continue to live in a traditional *Nasa Yat*, he proposed building a *Yat* with nontraditional architecture next to the paternal *Yat*, for he and his wife to live in.

Although they might seem based on two different concepts, the new architecture still serves as part of the community: it is an architecture of tradition, but spoken with a contemporary accent (Fig. 3.31 & Fig. 3.32). Ul Ascué proposed to have interior spaces sufficiently large to enable the family to gather at the traditional *tulpa*. His new *Nasa Yat* was built sufficiently close to his parents' home to be able to share the same place in accordance with the Nasa-Paéz family notion of the symbolic construction of territory.

We can see from these two examples that building the *Nasa Yat* goes beyond the simple fact of constructing a piece of architecture. For the Nasa-Paéz, the *Nasa Yat* is the vessel of life, and a connection to their beliefs.

⁶⁶⁰ Bolaños-Silva, Tomás, Julián Ricardo Ruiz-Solano, María Patricia Farfán-Sopó, Juan David González-Vallejo, y Valeria Ruiz-Triana. "Propuesta de Diseño de Alojamientos Rurales Indígenas en la Comunidad Nasa-Paéz En Toribío, Cauca. Turismo y Cultura en el Posacuerdo" *Revista CS*, no. 28 (Junio 2019): 233 – 234.

Decolonizing processes reinforce the boundaries of *Nasa Kiwe* set by the *caciques nuevos* and contemporary policies. This is why the construction of the *Yat* is so tied to the spirituality and rituals of the community, particularly through the Nasa-Paéz interpretation of research already discussed. Living in *Nasa Kiwe* involves recognizing an architecture that connects its inhabitants with the “great house.” The construction, through architecture, of seeing, understanding, identifying and being is essential to the symbolic construction of an imagined territory. Beliefs, rituals, traditional education and sacred places give permanence and stability to ancestral culture in its contemporary form.

I want to conclude by acknowledging that the same violent conditions exposed in this dissertation have led to a new perception of how the Nasa-Paéz, the “people of peace” decolonize contemporary *resguardos*. That process serves their evolution into an autonomous and resilient community, through the symbolic construction of Indigenous territory.

Through the 50 years of the *proyecto Nasa*, the construction of the *Nasa Kiwe* and *Nasa Yat* as place of origin has been strengthened. Thus, the building of every single *Yat* is an expression of tradition, a celebration of inhabitation and struggle, and an invitation to continue defending and working as a community to keep traditions alive. Perhaps most importantly, it is an opportunity to plant seeds of resistance: voices calling on descendants to expand and take control of the territory itself, the great imagined house of *Nasa Kiwe*.

Bibliography

Abram, David. *The Spell of The Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More Than Human World*. Vintage Books, 1996.

Academia Nacional de Historia. “Caloto (1)”. *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades*. *Academia Nacional de Historia* 13, no. 145, (1920): 100-105.

Adams, Annmarie. “The Place of Manliness: Architecture, Domesticity, and Men’s Clubs.” In *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*, edited by Peter Gossage and Robert Rutherford. Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2018.

Adams, Annmarie and Peta Tancred. “*Designing Women*”: *Gender and the Architectural Profession*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

Aguilar, Rafael, and Jiménez, Julian.” Diseñar Unos Prototipos de Vivienda Integrales y Productivos que Recuperen las Tradiciones y Costumbres que se Viven en El Hogar del Indígena Nasa”. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2012.

Agencia de la ONU Para los Refugiados. *60 Años Comunidades Indígenas*. ACNUR. 2011.

Aguirre, Laura. *Muralismo en Toribío, Hacia un Arte Comprometido Procesos Artísticos y Estructuras Sociales una Mirada Interdependiente*. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2015.

Alcaldía Municipal de Caloto. *Diagnóstico PBOT Municipal Caloto*. Caloto: Alcaldía Municipal, 2013.

Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío. *Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011.

———. *Memoria Reciente Agropecuaria en el Pueblo Nasa, Plan Ambiental Agropecuario de Toribío*, Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2011.

———. *Proyecto Nasa, Cabildo Económico Ambiental*. Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal, Unidad Municipal de Asistencia Técnica Agropecuaria, 2011.

———. *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal de Toribío 2012 – 2015*. Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2012.

———. *Informe de Gestión 2016-2018 Toribío Caminando en Unidad por la Paz Territorial. Alcibíades Escué Musicué Municipal Mayor 2016-2019*. Toribío Cauca, 2019.

Aldana, María, Melissa Moreno and Tomás Rodríguez. “Equipamiento Comunal Etnoturístico Productivo para la Comunidad Indígena Muellamues”. Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia. 2019.

Ameneiro, Roberto. “Las Iglesias Paeces de Tierradentro”. *Apuntes. Revista de Estudios Sobre Patrimonio Cultural* 13, (1976): 17-37.

Arango, Diego. "Textos y Notas Sobre Arte Escritos por Pedro Nel Gómez." *Artes La Revista* 7, no.13 (2007): 57-78.

Arango, Raúl, and Sánchez Enrique. *Los Pueblos Indígenas de Colombia en el Umbral del Nuevo Milenio: Población, Cultura y Territorio: Base Para el Fortalecimiento Social y Económico de los Pueblos Indígenas*. Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2004.

Arango, Silvia. *Historia de la Arquitectura en Colombia*. Bogotá: Facultad de Artes Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1989.

Archivo General de La Nación. *Resguardo Indígena de Vitoncó, Municipio de Belalcázar, Departamento de Cauca, Sección Republica, Fondo Ministerio de Gobierno, Caja 2, Carpeta 1, Folio 038*. Bogotá: Archivo General de la Nación, 1883.

Arias, Patricia. *Del Arraigo a la Diáspora*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2009.

Ascué, Arsenio. *Nasa Yuwe Primeros Pasos - Proyecto Nasa*. CECIDIC, 2014.

Asenssio, Raúl, & Pérez, Beatriz. ¿El Turismo es Cosa de Pobres? Patrimonio Cultural, Pueblos Indígenas y Nuevas Formas de Turismo en América Latina. *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio cultural, Colección PASOS*, 8, No., 1, (2012): 4.

Asociación Colombiana de Ingeniería Sísmica. *Manual de Construcción Sismo Resistente de Viviendas en Bahareque Encementado*. Bogotá: Asociación Colombiana de Ingeniería Sísmica, 2017.

Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca-ACIN. Resolución No.051 de 1996 de la Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas del Ministerio del Interior. Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 1996.

———. *Quienes Somos*. Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2018.

———. *El Manto de Mamá Kiwe*. Santander de Quilichao – Cauca: ACIN, 2000.

———. "Autoridades Indígenas Exponen ante la CIDH el Exterminio Físico y Cultural de los Pueblos". Accessed on July 26, 2020. <https://nasaacin.org/autoridades-indigenas-exponen-ante-la-cidh-el-exterminio-fisico-y-cultural-de-los-pueblos/>.

———. "Tejido Mujer". Accessed on June 20, 2020. <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/#>.

———. *Cartilla Reconstruyendo el Derecho Propio*. Cauca: ACIN, 2007.

———. *Proyecto de Vivienda NASA Comunidades Indígenas Zona Norte del Cauca*. Cauca: ACIN, 2014.

———. *Trenzar para Resistir*. Cauca: ACIN, 2009.

ACIN-CRIC. Programa Mujer Indígena *Cxhab Wala Kiwe*. <https://nasaacin.org/tejidos-y-programas/tejido-mujer/> . Accessed on November 30, 2021.

———. *Minga Social y Comunitaria por la Vida*. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/la-minga-de-resistencia-social-y-comunitaria-avanza-el-camino-de-la-palabra-hacia-la-ciudad-de-cali/>. Accessed on October 20, 2021.

Autoridades Indígenas Cabildo Indígena. *Plan de Vida y de Desarrollo Comunitario, Resguardo Huellas – Caloto 2016*. Caloto: Resguardo Huellas Municipio de Caloto, 2016.

Baena, Javier. *Dimensión Estética en el Diseño de los Chumbes Paeces y Guámbianos*. Cali: Universidad ICESI, 2004.

Baldwin, Thomas. *Introduction, The World of Perception*, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (trans. Oliver Davis). Routledge, 2004.

Barragán, Lourdes. *Pueblos Indígenas y Áreas Protegidas en América Latina*. Santiago: Fortalecimiento del Manejo Sostenible de los Recursos Naturales en las Áreas Protegidas de América Latina, 2008.

Barros, Luis. *El Acompañamiento Misionero de las Comunidades Cristianas de Toribío-Cauca*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Javeriana, 2015.

Beckjord, Sarah H. *Territories of History: Humanism, Rhetoric, and the Historical Imagination in the Early Chronicles of Spanish America*. Penn State Press, 2007.

Bennett, Wendell. C, and Bird, Junius. *Andean Culture History No. 15*. American Museum of Natural History, 1964.

Bentham, Davida, et al. "Sustainability Education In First Nations Schools: A Multi-Site Study And Implications For Education Policy". *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 191, (2019): 22-42

Bernardino, Susana, & Freitas Santos, José. Local Development Through Social and Territorial Innovation: an Exploratory Case Study. *Revista De Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa*, 90, No., 1, (2017):159-187.

Berkes, Fikret, Colding, Johan, and Folke Carl. "Rediscovery of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as Adaptive Management". *Ecological Applications* 10.5 (2000): 1251-1262.

Bernal, Christian. "Nasa Yat: Modelo de Arquitectura Habitacional Sostenible Para el Resguardo Indígena de Toribio". Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

Bernal Villa, Segundo. "Aspectos de la Cultura Paéz. Mitología y Cuentos de la Parcialidad de Calderas, Tierradentro," *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 1, (1953): 281-308

———. "El Poblamiento Disperso Frente al Cambio Cultural Dirigido", *América Indígena* 28, (1968). 891-906.

- Bernbaum, Edwin. *Sacred Mountains of the World*. University of California Press, 1997.
- Bocarejo, Diana. "Indigenizando "lo Blanco": Conversaciones con Arhuacos y Koguis de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta". *Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, (2002): 3-44.
- Bolaños, Álvaro Félix. *Barbarie y Canibalismo en la Retórica Colonial: Los Indios Pijaos de Fray Pedro Simón*. Bogotá: Fondo Editorial Cerec, 1994.
- Bolaños, Edison. "Por la Memoria Ancestral, la Primera Universidad Autónoma Indígena del País". *El Espectador*, 16 Octubre de 2014.
- Bolaños-Silva, Tomás, Julián Ricardo Ruiz-Solano, María Patricia Farfán-Sopó, Juan David González-Vallejo, and Valeria Ruiz-Triana. "Propuesta de Diseño de Alojamientos Rurales Indígenas en la Comunidad Nasa-Páez En Toribío, Cauca. Turismo y Cultura En El Posacuerdo" *Revista CS* 28, (June 2019): 233 – 234.
- Bonilla, Víctor. *Historia Política del Pueblo Nasa*. Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2015.
- Bradford, Burns E. *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*. Prentice-Hall, 1994.
- Breidlid, Anders. *Educación, Conocimientos Indígenas y Desarrollo en el Sur Global*. Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2016.
- Burguete., et al. *Movimientos Indígenas en América Latina*. *Revista Liminar*. Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos, 5, no. 2, (2011): 144-162.
- Cajas Sarria, Mario. "La Masacre de Caloto: Un Estudio de Caso Sobre los Derechos y la Movilización Indígena en el Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos", *Boletín Mexicano de Derecho Comparado* 130, (2011): 77-85.
- Cahill, David Patrick and Tovías, Blanca, (Ed). *New World, First Nations: Native Peoples of Meso America and the Andes Under Colonial Rule*. Sussex Academic Press, 2006.
- Calero, Betty. "Proyecto Educativo Comunitario". *Educación, Lenguaje y Sociedad*, IX, Num, 9 (Diciembre 2012): 119-133.
- Calero, Luis. *Pastos Quillacingas y Abades*. Bogotá: Banco Popular, 1991.
- Calvache, Juliana. *Cultivos de Uso Ilícito Como Alternativa Generadora de Ingresos en la Vereda La Luz, Resguardo de Tacueyó Municipio de Toribío Cauca Entre los Años 1980 y 2015*. Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2016.
- Campo, Alfredo. *Tejido Territorial Económico Ambiental. Caminando el Territorio. Consolidando Sueños*. Santander de Quilichao: ACIN, 2010.
- Carazas Wilfredo and Rivero, Alba. *Bahareque - Guía de Construcción Parasísmica*. Villefontaine: FUNDASAL, 2002.

Caro Galvis, Catalina. “Minería en el Norte del Cauca Indígena. Prácticas Territoriales y Transformaciones Socioespaciales en los Resguardos Indígenas Nasa del Municipio de Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, Colombia”. *Perspectivas Ambientales*, (2014): 253-282.

Carranza, Claudia, et al. *La Figura de la Serpiente en la Tradición Oral Iberoamericana*. Valladolid: Fundación Joaquín Díaz, 2017.

Castro, Ricardo L. “Sounding the Path: Dwelling and Dreaming”. *Chora 3: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*. Edited by Alberto Pérez Gómez and Stephen Parcell. 25-44. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1999.

Ceballos, Nicolás. *Los Pensamientos del Indio que se Educó en las Selvas Colombianas*. Cali: Universidad del Cauca y Universidad del Valle, 2004.

Centro de Educación, Capacitación e Investigación Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Comunidad – CECIDIC. *Guía de Investigación: Guía para Estructurar y Desarrollar Procesos Investigativos en el Territorio Nasa de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco*. Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015.

———. “Minga Muralismo del Pueblo Nasa 2016”, *Ya’ja Tejiendo en Comunidad* Edición Especial. (2016): 1-44

———. *Juntos Construimos un Mejor Futuro*. CECIDIC, 2017.

Chacón Rosasco, César and Bardalez, Gretel. *The Royal Commentaries of The Incas, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*. Martin, Lawrence, Tran. Ed PIKI E.I.R.L, 2010.

Chávez Mendoza, Álvaro, and Mauricio Puerta. *Vivienda Indígena y Prehispánica en Tierradentro y Agua Bonita*. Bogotá: Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales Banco de la República, 1981.

———. “Vivienda Prehispánica en el Suroccidente de Colombia”. *Ponencia Presentada al 45 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*. Bogotá: Departamento de Antropología, 1985.

———. *Vivienda Precolombina e Indígena Actual en Tierradentro*. Bogotá: Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales Banco de la República, 1988.

Chaparro, Adolfo. “Una Hipótesis Sobre la Formación de Estado en los Andes Colombianos”. *Nómadas*, 25, (2006): 70 - 85.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius, and Thomas Francklin. *Of the Nature of the Gods*. William Pickering, 1829.

Clavijo, Paula, et al. “Centro Armonización Desde La Cosmovisión Indígena Nasa”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2016.

Cobo, Óscar, and Calvo, Omaira. “Los Hijos de la Avalancha”. *Porik An*, 12, (2007): 123-159.

Colciencias y Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. *Cartilla de Español para Indígenas Nasa*. Bogotá: Colciencias, 2008.

Composto Claudia and Navarro, Lorena. *Territorios en Disputa*. Ciudad de México: Casa de Ondas, 2014.

Congreso de Colombia. Ley 89 de 1890, *Por la Cual se Determina la Manera Como Deben ser Gobernados los Salvajes que Vayan Reduciéndose a la Vida Civilizada*.

Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca – CRIC, *Etnohistoria*. Cauca: CRIC, 1992.

———. *Cátedra Nasa Unesco*. Cauca: CRIC, 2000.

———. *¿Qué Pasaría si la Escuela? 30 Años de Construcción de una Educación Propia*. Popayán: Fuego Azul, 2004.

———. *Plan de Vida de los Pueblos Indígenas del Cauca*. Popayán: CRIC, 2007.

———. *Conflicto Nasa-Misak: Cordura y Sabiduría Entre Pueblos Tendrán que Estar por Encima de Oportunismos*. Popayán: CRIC, 2018.

———. *Gran Ritual Sagrado Saakhelu Kiwe Kame*. Popayán: CRIC, 2018.

———. “Sek Buy, ritual sagrado de los pueblos ancestrales del territorio Caucaño” Accessed July 15, 2018. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/sek-buy-ritual-sagrado-de-los-pueblos-ancestrales-del-territorio-caucano/>.

———. “Puntos de Cambio en el Programa de Lucha”. CRIC, Accessed 16 May, 2019. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/estructura-organizativa/plataforma-de-lucha/>.

———. “La Minga de Resistencia Social y Comunitaria, avanza el camino de la palabra hacia la ciudad de Cali...” Accessed 16 May, 2019. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/la-minga-de-resistencia-social-y-comunitaria-avanza-el-camino-de-la-palabra-hacia-la-ciudad-de-cali/>

———. *Memnxi Kiwe Mujer Nasa*. Tejido de la Mujer Proyecto Nasa. CRIC, 2020.

———. VII Regional Minga “*Semillas de Identidad Autoridad y Defensa Territorial*.” CRIC, 2021.

———. “Yo Estoy de Paso... Si no Cuidamos el Territorio Vamos a Terminar Mendigando en Cali. Cristina Bautista,” Accessed on November 13, 2021. <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/yo-estoy-de-paso-si-no-cuidamos-el-territorio-vamos-a-terminar-mendigando-en-cali-cristina-bautista-hermana-mayor-y-vuelo/>

Córdoba, Brenda. “Tejiendo un Territorio Nasa en la Ciudad de Bogotá”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2021.

Córdoba, Sergio, and González, Gina. “Ukawesx Ewka Fxi’Nxxwex Yat, Casa De Los Mayores Para Armonizar, Caloto – Cauca”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2017.

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca – CRC. *Documento de Análisis Socio Ambiental del Departamento del Cauca: Como Elemento para Identificación de Lineamientos para Ajuste de Instrumentos de Planificación*. Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca – CRC, 2009.

———. *Caracterización Ambiental Plan Departamental de Aguas y Saneamiento Básico*. Cauca: Corporación Autónoma del Cauca, 2010.

Corporación Nasa Kiwe. *Misión – Visión*. Popayán: Corporación Nasa Kiwe, 2019.

Côté, Jean-François. "From Transculturation to Hybridization: Redefining Culture in the Americas". *Transcultural Americas/Amériques Transculturelles*, Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, (2010):121-147.

Cubillos, Néstor, et al. "Centro Ecoturístico Comunidad Nasa". Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2013.

Cuchillo Mosquera, Leidy Tatiana and Martha Isabel Vélez Arévalo. *Propuesta Didáctica de E.A para la I.E Agropecuaria Indígena Quintín Lame del Resguardo de Tacueyó*. Cali: Universidad del Valle 2017. <https://bibliotecadigital.univalle.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10893/12354/CB-0575728.pdf?sequence=1>

Cuervo, Carlos. *Estudios Arqueológicos y Etnográficos Americanos. Prehistoria y Viajes Americanos*. Madrid: Editorial América, 1920.

Cuervo, Carlos. *Estudios arqueológicos y etnográficos Tomo II*. Murcia: Editorial América, 1921.

Davila, Valentina. "From the Back of the House to the Back of the City: Venezuelan Domestic Workers and the Acquisition of Architecture". *Paper Presented at the 72nd Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Providence, RI, April 2019.

Daza Güetio, Dora. *Aprendiendo Desde el Ser Nasa Para la Administración y Cuidado de Uma kiwe*. Manizales: Universidad de Manizales, 2015.

De Castellanos, Juan. *Elegías de Varones Ilustres de Indias*. Madrid: M. Rivandeneira Impresor Editor, 1857.

De la Cadena, Marisol. *Indigenous Mestizos the Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Docentes Comunidad Nasa. *Nasa U'jünxin Thegnxi, Leyendo la Vida Nasa. Serie Río de Letras*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014.

Dover, Robert VH, et al. *Andean Cosmologies Through Time Persistence and Emergence*. Indiana University Press, 1992.

Duque Cañas, Juan Pablo. *Territorios Indígenas y Estado. A Propósito de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta*, Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012.

———. “¿Es lo Sagrado un Argumento de Jurisdicción Territorial?”. *Conference Presented at Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar Los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

Duque Gómez, Luis. *Exploraciones Arqueológicas en San Agustín*. Imp. Nacional, 1964.

Eakin, Marshall C. *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Echeverry, Luisa, and Masmela, Lina. “Centro Regional Productivo para la Extracción de Derivado de la Coca y la Marihuana en Toribio”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

El Espectador. “Toribio No es Como lo Pintan, es Como lo Pintamos”: Minga de Muralismo. El Espectador. August 11, 2016. <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/toribio-no-es-como-lo-pintan-es-como-lo-pintamos-minga-de-muralismo-articulo-854684>. Accessed on July 12, 2018.

Elorrieta Salazar, Fernando. *Cusco and The Sacred Valley of The Incas*. Tanpu, 2001.

Equipo de capacitación del CRIC, “El Movimiento Indígena” *Entre Movimientos y Caudillos – 50 Años de Bipartidismo, Izquierda y Alternativas Populares en Colombia*, Comp. Gustavo Gallón Giraldo. Bogotá: CINEP, 1989.

Equipo Nacional del Plan de Salvaguarda. *Baka'cxte'pa, Nasnasa Nees Yuwa' Diagnostico, Fundamentos y Líneas de Acción Para la Construcción del Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa*. Bogotá: Corporación Ensayos para la Promoción de la Cultura Política, 2013.

Eraso, Isabella, et al. “Tejido de Vida Comunidad Indígenas: Argumentar la Coherencia Entre lo Ancestral y La Arquitectura Contemporánea, Manifiesta en la Relación Bioclimática – Sostenibilidad”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2016.

Eraso, Iván Mauricio. *Vivienda Sismo Resistente en Guadua*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2007.

———. “Concepciones y Formas de Habitat el Territorio Ancestral Nasa”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto De Colombia, 2018.

———. “Piscicultores del Territorio Ancestral de Toribio Juan Tama La Fonda, Tacueyó”. *Seminario de Habitat, Ecoterritorio, Espacio & Construcción*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

———. *Construcción en Guadua: Una Experiencia Desde la Granja de Mamá Lulú*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

Escobar, Laura. “Centro Indígena Nasa Para la Medicina Ancestral en Corinto Cauca”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

Espinosa Arango, Monica. “El Indio Lobo, Manuel Quintín en la Colombia Moderna”. *Rev. Colombiana de Antropología*, 39. No. 1 (2003): 139-172.

Espinosa, Myriam. *Surgimiento y Andar Territorial del Quintín Lame*. Quito: Aby-Yala, 1996.

Fajardo, Stephania. "Espacialidad y Cosmogonía en la Ruralidad Emergente". Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

Fals Borda, Orlando. *Fray Pedro de Aguado, El Cronista Olvidado de Colombia y Venezuela*. Cali: Editorial Franciscana de Colombia, 1956.

———. *Una Sociología Sentipensante para América Latina*. Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2016.

Farfan Sopó, María Patricia. "Μουσείον: the Museum/el Museo," in *A Journey to Hellas / Un viaje a Hellas Paisaje del Mito y la Razón*, Edited by Carlos Rueda Plata, 74-79. Bogotá D.C.: Universidad Piloto de Colombia. Express Estudio Gráfico y Digital S.A. 2015.

———. "The Corner: the Wanders and Wonders of Walking," in *Escrito en Montreal / Written in Montreal, Textos en y Sobre el Lugar / Texts in and About Place*, Edited by Carlos Rueda Plata, 77-86. Bogotá D.C.: Universidad Piloto de Colombia. Express Estudio Gráfico y Digital S.A. 2015.

———. "Nasa Kiwe: Defensa del Territorio". *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto De Colombia, 2018.

———. "Indigenous Traditional Practices". *Conference Presented at the Second Annual National CAISES Conference, Canadian Indigenous Advisory Council (CIAC) of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)*. Montreal, McGill University, 2019.

———. "Cultural Preservation and Recognition Through Traditional Language and Architecture". *Conference Presented at the 51st Algonquian Conference*. University of Chicago and McGill University. Montreal, Canada, 2019.

———. "The Nasa Kiwe: Cultural Preservation, Resistance and Recognition Through Nasa-Paéz Territory, Architecture, and Beliefs". *Conference Presented at the sixième colloque étudiant du RÉLAM (Réseau d'études latino-américaines de Montréal) Revendications et solidarités : L'Amérique latine en mouvement*. Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, 2021.

Faust, Franz. "La Cosmovisión de los Coconucos y los Yanaconas en su Arquitectura". *Boletín de Antropología Universidad de Antioquia*, 18, Num. 35, (2004): 350-360.

Fernández, Evelina, and Sainz, Yaumara. Turismo y Patrimonio a Favor del Desarrollo Local, para Diferenciar el Destino Holguín. *Retos Turísticos*, 16, no.1 (2017).

Findji, María Teresa. *Territorio, Economía y Sociedad Páez*. Cali: CIDSE Universidad del Valle, 1985.

Franco Marco and Calero, Liana. *Thul Nasa Huerto Casero Tradicional, Modelo de Desarrollo Alternativo*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2011.

Friede, Juan. *El Indio en Lucha por La Tierra*. Popayán: Punta de Lanza. 1976.

———. *Los Andakí 1538-1947: Historia de la Aculturación de una Tribu Selvática*. Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1953.

Gade, Daniel W. *Nature and Culture in the Andes*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Galeano Trilleras, Heriberto. *Tulpa de Pensamiento*. FUP Fundación Universitaria de Popayán, 2016.

Garavaglia, Juan Carlos, and Juan Marchena Fernández. *América Latina de los Orígenes a la Independencia*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2005.

Garzón, Juan Carlos, and María Victoria Llorente. “¿Por qué Siguen Aumentando los Cultivos de Coca en Colombia? Los Desafíos Para el Próximo Gobierno”. Fundación Ideas Para la Paz. <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1686>. (Accessed 26 jun 2018)

Gerds, Donna. Indigenous Linguists: Bringing Research Into Language Revitalization. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 83, Num, 4, (2017): 607–617.

Graham, Richard. *Independence in Latin America: Contrasts and Comparisons*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013.

Gómez, Diana, et al. “Arquitectura para la Armonización Social Desde la Cosmovisión Nasa”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2017.

Gómez, Fabio. “Manuel Quintín Lame, en la Confluencia del Mito y de la Historia”. *Historia y Espacio*, 8, no. 38, (2012): 89-112.

Gómez, Herinaldy and Ruiz, Carlos Ariel. *Los Paeces: Gente Territorio. Metáfora que Perdura*. Fundación para la Comunicación Popular, 1997.

Gómez Ramírez, Juan Pablo. “Saakhelu: Memoria de Resistencia-Estética y Política de una Emergencia no Experimental”. *Maguaré*, (2016):183-206.

Gómez Sánchez, Andrés Mauricio, et al., “Composición de los Hogares y Niveles de Gastos en Bienes y Servicios Básicos en el Departamento del Cauca, Colombia” *Semestre Económico* 18, no. 38 (2015): 67-104.

González, Catherine. “Naturaleza Política y Acciones Colectivas de los Movimientos Sociales un Emblemático Caso de Movilización Indígena”. *Universitas Humanística*, 70, (2010): 79-100.

Gonzalez, Leonardo. “Líderes Indígenas Asesinados,” *Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz – INDEPAZ*. <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/L%C3%ADderes-ind%C3%ADgenas-asesinados.pdf> (Accessed June 2020).

Gow, David D. *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and The Moral Imagination*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

Gow, David. *Replanteando el Desarrollo, Modernidad Indígena e Imaginación Moral*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2010.

Grupo de Estudios Sociales Comparativos. *Memorias, Conocimientos y Cambios en el Diseño y Construcción de la Nasa Yat, Cauca-Colombia*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca. 2013.

Gutiérrez, Johana. “Centro De Armonización Indígena Para la Comunidad NASA Páez UKAWE´SX EW KAFI ZENXIYAT: Fortalecimiento de la Cultura, Tradición y Costumbres en la Planificación de la Justicia”. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2011.

Herrera, Alexander. Turismo Patrimonial, Identidad y Desarrollo en el Perú. *Indiana*, 34, No., 1, (2017): 199-230.

Herrera Ángel, Marta. “Las Divisiones Político-administrativas del Virreinato de la Nueva Granada a Finales del Período Colonial”, *Historia Crítica*, 22 (2001): 76-98.

Hill, Jonathan. *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past*. University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Hopkins, Candice. We are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice. *Art Journal*, 76, No, 2, (2017): 39–47.

Horta Prieto, Ana Milena. “Tejiendo Entre Redes Diversas: Reflexiones a Partir de una Etnografía Multisituada con los Pueblos Indígenas de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Caribe Colombiano”. *Espaço Ameríndio*, 8, no. 1 (2014): 135-161.

Houghton, Juan. *La Tierra Contra la Muerte*. Bogotá: CECOIN, 2008.

Hunt, John Dixon. *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture*. MIT Press, 1997.

Iglesias, Juanita, and Quintero, Mauricio. "Toribío, Ejemplo de Gobierno Comunitario". *El Mundo*, 03 de junio de 2007.

INALI. *Compendio de Normatividad de los Resguardos Indígenas en Colombia en Relación con la Información Estadística*. Ciudad de México: INALI, 2015

Inseca Pache, Jose Aldemar. *Evaluación y Ajuste del Plan de Vida Comunitario del Resguardo Indígena Tóez 2016-2019 Autoridad Tradicional del Resguardo Indígena de Tóez Municipio de Caloto*. Resguardo Indígena Toes Municipio de Caloto, 2016.

Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural –INCODER. *Acuerdo 024 - 029 de 2004*. Bogotá: INCODER, 2004.

Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural –INCODER and Centro de Estudios Interculturales de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana – Cali. *Proceso de Fortalecimiento Territorial a Consejos Comunitarios y Capitanías* Bogotá: INCODER Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2013.

Insuasty, Norberto. “La Gaitana Mito y Realidad”. *ABC del Huila*, no. 10. (2017): 82-85.

Jacobsen, Nils and Aljovín de Losada, Cristóbal. *Political Cultures in the Andes, 1750-1950*. Duke Univ. Press, 2005.

Jimeno, Myriam., et al. *Kitek Kiwe Reasentamiento de NAYA, Nuestra Memoria*. Bogotá: Centro de Estudios Sociales Universidad Nacional De Colombia, 2011.

Keen, Benjamin and Mark Wasserman. *A Short History of Latin America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

Kewextoritrucha. "Piscicultores del Territorio Ancestral de Toribío: KEW'SX TORITRUCHA" , <https://kewextoritrucha.wordpress.com/2017/08/28/piscicultores-del-territorio-ancestral-de-toribio-kwesx-toritrucha/>. Accessed on May 1, 2019.

Kloosterman, Jeanette. *Identidad Indígena Entre Romanticismo y Realidad*. Amsterdam: Thela Thesis, 1997.

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies : Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2009.

Krögel, Alison. *Food, Power, and Resistance in the Andes*. Lanham: Lexington Book.2011.

Kwet Wala Dxüus. *Somos el Resguardo Indígena Kwet Wala Dxüus Yat Nasa, Piedra Grande Casa Sagrada de los Nasa*. Pradera Valle del Cauca: OIM, 2007.

Landaburu, Jon. *Palabras para Desarmar. Una Aproximación Crítica al Vocabulario del Reconocimiento Cultural en Colombia*. Ministerio de Cultura, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2002.

Langebaek, Carl Henrik and Dever, Alejandro. "Arqueología Regional en Tierradentro, Cauca, Colombia". *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, 45, no. 2, (2009):323-367.

Larson, Brooke and Harris, Olivia, et al. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Duke University Press, 1995.

LeGrand, Catherine. *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1830-1936*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1986.

Levalle, Sebastián, and Luciana Levin "Cuando la Investigación se Vuelve Minga de Pensamientos, Los Pueblos Indígenas del Sur Colombiano y su Lucha por la Educación Propia.", 2011. accessed August 18, 2017, <http://tejiendoterritorios.blogspot.com/2011/06/cuando-la-investigacion-se-vuelve-minga.html>

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. G. London: Weidenfeld, Nicolson Ltd, 1966.

Llano, Alejandro. "Centros de Etnoeducación para el Fortalecimiento del Plan de Vida Nasa: Tejiendo Resistencia". *Prospectiva Revista de Trabajo Social e Intervención Social*, 15, (2010): 491-518.

Londoño, Wilhelm. "Los Hijos de las Quebradas: Caracterización Cultural de la Configuración Política Nasa". *En: Contra la Tiranía Tipológica en Arqueología*, Eds. Carl Langebaek y Cristóbal Gnecco, 175-190. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2006.

Machicado Figueroa, Juan Carlos. *When the Stones Speak: Inka Architecture and Spirituality in the Andes*. Amauta, 2010.

Maldonado, Carlos. *Turismo y Comunidades Indígenas: Impactos, Pautas para Autoevaluación y Códigos de Conducta. Serie Red de Turismo Sostenible Comunitario para América Latina (redturs)*. Recuperado de: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_117521.pdf.

Malpas, Jeff. *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Manuel, Arthur, & Derrickson, R. *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 2017.

Marín, Erick. *Cosmogonía y Rito en la Vivienda Wayuu*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2014.

Marín, Gustavo, García, Ana, & Daltabuit, Magali. Turismo, Globalización y Sociedades Locales en la Península de Yucatán, México. La Laguna (Tenerife): Pasos. *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural. Colección pasos Edita*, 7, No., 1 (2012).

Marín Lozada, Aimer Alberto, and Rubén Andrés Marlés Burgos. *Escolaridad e Identidad Indígena en Jóvenes Nasa Exploración Desde la Psicología Cultural*. Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2009.

Marín, Yuly. *La Resistencia Indígena de Quintín Lame Como Una Praxis de Liberación*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad del Valle, 2004.

Martínez, Harold. *La Relación Cultura Naturaleza en la Arquitectura Occidental*. Universidad del Valle, 2001.

———. “Del Hábito, al Hábitat y al Habitar”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

Martínez Bernal, Daniel Ricardo. “Caminando Hacia la Satyagraha. Comunidad, Lucha y Kweet Fxindxi en los NASA (1971-2015)”. PhD diss., Universidad de Granada, 2016.

Matallana Peláez, Susana E. “Desvelando a la Gaitana”. *Revista La Manzana de la Discordia*, (2012): 7-21.

McGill University. *Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education*. Montreal: McGill University, 2017.

Mellin, Robert. *Tilting: House Launching, Slide Hauling, Potato Trenching, and Other Tales from a Newfoundland Fishing Village*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.

Memnxi Kiwe Mujer Nasa. Tejido de la Mujer Proyecto Nasa. Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca CRIC. 2020.

Ministerio de Cultura, *Nasa (Paéz) La Gente del Agua*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010.

———. *Panorama del Conflicto Armado Interno*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2014.

Ministerio de Comercio Industria y Turismo. 2015. Patrimonio Arquitectónico. *Ministerio de Comercio Industria y Turismo*. Recuperado de:
<http://www.mincultura.gov.co/areas/patrimonio/patrimonio-cultural-inmueble/patrimonio-arquitectonico/Paginas/default.aspx>.

Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. *Juan Tama de la Estrella*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2015.

Molina, Victor and Hurtado, Arnulfo. "El Fogón y el Tejer como Elementos de Encuentro". *Educación y Territorio* 3, no. 1, (2013): 16-30.

Montaño, Sofia. "Proyecto de Vivienda Comunidad Nasa Páez: Reserva Kiwe". Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia. 2021.

Montoya, Ginna., et al. *Poder en Espiral, Acción Política y Gobierno Propio en Territorios Ancestrales*. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad del Cauca, 2015.

Moore, Jerry D. *Cultural Landscapes in the Ancient Andes: Archaeologies of Place*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.

Moreno, Juan. "La Vivienda Yat, La Arquitectura Desde la Cosmovisión Nasa". Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2021.

Moreno, Andrea, and Arismendi, Gabriel. "Red agroproductiva de Muellamues : Propuesta Ecorural para el Desarrollo". Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2019.

Mung'athia Matogi, Naftaly. *El Equipo Misionero de la Iglesia Católica del Norte del Cauca y el Plan de Vida Comunitario en los Resguardos Indígenas de Toribío, Tacueyó y San Francisco: 1980 – 2010*. Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2013.

Naciones Unidas. *Declaración de las Naciones Unidas Sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas*. New York: Naciones Unidas, 2008.

National Indian Brotherhood, Canada. Indian, and Northern Affairs. *Indian Control Of Indian Education*. National Indian Brotherhood, 1972.

Nagai, Shin'ichi. *Gods of Kumano: Shinto and the Occult*. Kodansha International, 1970.

Naranjo, Edgar. *La Concepción Cultural y Política del Territorio en el Pensamiento del Movimiento Indígena del Cauca, Visto Desde el Discurso de Quintín Lame*. Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca, 2009.

———. *La Historia y Quintín Lame*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2009.

Navarro, Jaime, et al. "Manejo de la Palma Barrigona o Chonta (*Iriartea deltoidea* Ruiz & Pav) en el Piedemonte Amazónico Colombiano y Perspectivas para Cosecha Sostenible". *Colombia Forestal*, 17, no. 1 (2014): 5-24.

Navia, José. "El Blindaje de los Hijos del Trueno". *El Tiempo*. August 6, 2004.
<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-1577444>. Accessed August 6, 2017.

Nieves, Roció. "Morfología del Predicado en Nasa Yuwe". *Bulletin del IFEA*, 23, 3, (1994): 539-566.

Niño Murcia, Carlos. *Territorio Chamánico Una Mirada Desde la Arquitectura a la Manera Indígena de Construir y Ocupar el Territorio*, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia - ICANH, 2015.

———. "Territorio Chamánico". *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

———. "Territorio Chamánico, la Construcción del Territorio Colombiano". *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio Facultad de Arquitectura y Artes*. Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Teams Platform, September 11, 2020.

Observatorio de DDHH, Conflictividades y Paz, "Líderes sociales, defensores de DD.HH y firmantes de acuerdo asesinados en 2021,". <http://www.indepaz.org.co/lideres-sociales-y-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-asesinados-en-2021/>. (Accessed November 14, 2021)

Ojeda José, Turismo en el Espacio Rural y Patrimonio Histórico: Desarrollo Socioeconómico de las Ciudades Medias Andaluzas. *I Congreso Internacional Patrimonio, Desarrollo Rural y Turismo en el Siglo XXI-Osuna*, 1 ,No., 1,(2004): 1-12.

Olano, Antonio. *Popayán en la Colonia: Bosquejo Histórico de la Gobernación y de la Ciudad de Popayán en los Siglos XVII y XVIII*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1910.

Olson, Richard, and Sarmiento, Juan Pablo. "El Desastre de Cauca y Huila en Colombia no es Otro Armero". *Desastre y Sociedad*, (1995): 7-18.

Orozco, Jorge. *Mitos y Leyendas Testimonios de la Cultura Páez*. Lenguaje y textos, 8, (1996): 321-329.

Orozco., et al. "La Nasa Yat, Territorio y Cosmovisión". *Antropología Universidad de Antioquia*, 28, núm. 46, (2013): 244-271.

Ortiz, Diana. "Parque Paisajístico Cultural Yai.". Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia. 2022.

Osborn, Ann. *The Four Seasons of the U'wa: a Chibcha Ritual Ecology in the Colombian Andes*. Sean Kingston, 2009.

Osorio, Gustavo. *Cosmovisión de Pueblo Indígena Nasa en Colombia. Reducción Integral de los Riesgos, Planificación y Desarrollo Sostenible*. Lima: Pull creativo SRL, 2009.

Ospina Guillermo, Vergara Hernando, Quinchoa Julian. *Complejo de Páramos de las Hermosas*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2016.

Otero, Jesús María (Ed). *Monografía Histórica de Silvia*. Popayán: Ed. Departamento del Cauca, 1968.

Paredes, Adriana. *Liberación de la Madre Tierra en Kisgo*. Popayán: Universidad de Cauca, 2010.

Pachón, Ximena. *Geografía Humana de Colombia-Región Andina Central 2*. Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1996.

Palacio, Marco, and Frank Safford. *Historia de Colombia: País Fragmentado, Sociedad Dividida*. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2002.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

Paredes, Santiago. *Los Nombres de una Expansión Territorial: el Proceso de Configuración del Territorio Páez en las Gobernaciones de Popayán y Neiva Durante el Período Colonial*. PhD diss., Universidad de los Andes, 2014).

———. “Resguardos, Expansión Territorial y Modos de Habitar Entre Los Nasa (Paéz) Coloniales”. *Conference Presented at the Conversatorio de Investigación, Territorios Ancestrales en Colombia, Concepciones y Formas de Habitar los Territorios Indígenas*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.

Paredes López, William, and Carlos Alberto, Rincón Oñate. *Cartilla Nos Juntamos Para que Nuestro Futuro Sea Hoy*. Santander de Quilichao: ACIN-DIAKONIE, 2010.

Parsons, James. "Giant American Bamboo in the Vernacular Architecture of Colombia and Ecuador". *Geographical Review*, 81, no. 2, (1991); 131-152.

Pascué, Julia, and Naranjo, Gloria. *La Independencia en Retrospectiva NASA*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2010.

Paul, John, et al. "Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey and Mi'kmaw Control Over Mi'kmaw Education: Using The Master's Tools To Dismantle the Master's House". *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. New York, NY: Springer, (2017): 309 - 328.

Peñalosa, Enrique and CIFA - Uniandes. *Cerros de Bogotá*, Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2000.

Peñaranda, Daniel Ricardo et al., *Nuestra Vida ha Sido Nuestra Lucha: Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca Indígena*. Bogotá: Organización Internacional para las Migraciones - OIM- Misión Colombia, 2012.

Pérez González, María Luisa. “Los Caminos Reales de América en la Legislación y en la Historia”, *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 1, (2001): 33-60.

Pérgolis, Juan Carlos. “El Deseo de Modernidad en la Bogotá Republicana, un Ejercicio Sobre Comunicación y Ciudad”, *Revista de Arquitectura* 13, (2011): 4-12.

Pilcué Valbuena, William Antonio. *Hacer Camino Entre las Educaciones (De La Escuela Convencional a la Escuela Comunitaria). Aprendizaje y Conocimiento en las Ciencias Sociales e Historia en el Municipio de Toribío (Resguardo de San Francisco, Tacueyó y Toribío)*. Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2015.

Piñacué Achicué, Juan Carlos, and Elías Sevilla Casas, *Los Nasa de Tierradentro y las Huellas Arqueológicas, Primera Aproximación*. Cali: Universidad del Valle-CIDSE, 2007.

Pórtela, Hugo. *El Pensamiento de las Aguas de las Montañas*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2019.

Portilla Dorado, Olga. “Toribío el Museo al Aire Libre en el Cauca”. *El Nuevo Liberal*. September 25, 2016. Web. El Nuevo Liberal. 04 de mar. 2019. <http://elnuevoliberal.com/toribio-el-museo-al-aire-libre-en-el-cauca/>. Accessed on June 02, 2019.

Posey, Darrell Addison, and Graham Dutfield, “¿Quién Visita las Comunidades, qué es lo que Busca y Por Qué? ” in *Más Allá de la Propiedad Intelectual: Los Derechos de las Comunidades Indígenas y Locales a los Recursos Tradicionales*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999.

Posey, Darrell Addison, and Dutfield, Graham. “¿Pueden las Comunidades Crear su Propio Sistema para Proteger los Derechos a los Recursos Tradicionales?”. *Más Allá de la Propiedad Intelectual: Los Derechos de las Comunidades Indígenas y Locales a los Recursos Tradicionales*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999.

PREDECAN. *Cosmovisión del Pueblo Indígena NASA en Colombia*. Lima: Comunidad Andina Secretaria General, 2009.

Prieto, Jorge. and Breiner Ortiz. Ya’ ja Tejiendo en Comunidad. El Camino Investigativo. Construyendo un Sueño Hacia la Fundamentación y la Construcción de la Propuesta Pedagógica Zonal en Artes. Toribío: CECIDIC, 2015.,

Quecano, Angela, et al. “Integración Urbano Arquitectónica En Tacueyó - Toribio Cauca”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2015.

Quintero, Annet. “Modelo De Desarrollo Integral Para La Comunidad Indígena Nasa En El Municipio De Caloto Cauca”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2016.

Quiguanás, Abraham. *Los Tejidos Propios, Simbología y Pensamiento del Pueblo Nasa*. Jámalo: Resguardo del Municipio de Jámalo, 2011.

Quiroga, Marcela. “Las Políticas Coloniales y la Acción Indígena: La Configuración de los Pueblos de Indios de la Provincia de Páez, siglos XVII y XVIII”. *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 1, (2015): 23-50

Quiroga, Marcela. "La Encomienda Entre los Pueblos de la Provincia Páez en el Siglo XVII". *Fronteras De La Historia*, 15, no. 1, (2010): 85–107.

Ramírez, Isabel. *Análisis de las Estrategias del Movimiento Indígena del Cauca*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2011.

Ramírez, Laura, et al. "Tejiendo Territorio UM UMA KIWE". Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2016.

Rapoport, Amos. *House Form and Culture*. London: Prentice Hall, 1969.

Rappaport, Joanne. "Tierra Páez: La Ethnohistoria de la Defensa Territorial Entre los Paeces de Tierradentro". PhD diss., Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales, Banco de la República, 1982.

———. "Territory and Tradition: The Ethnohistory of the Paéz of Tierradentro, Colombia". PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982.

———. *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

———. *Cumbe Reborn: an Andean Ethnography of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

———. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke University Press, 2005.

———. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Rappaport, Joanne, (Ed). *Retornando la Mirada: Una Investigación Colaborativa Interétnica Sobre el Cauca a la Entrada del Milenio*. Universidad del Cauca, 2005.

Rappaport, Joanne, and Tom. Cummins. *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in The Andes*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2012.

Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, *Testimonio autentico De los Titulos i amparos. De las tierras de los indijenas de los pueblos de Tacueyó, Toribío i Sn Fco Espedidos en los años 1700 – i- 1770*. Quito: Real Audiencia de Quito i Virrey de Santafe, Archivo General de la Nación. 1866.

Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina. "El Desastre y La Reconstrucción de Páez". *Revista Semestral de la Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina*, 3, (1995): 01-122.

Reichel-Dolmatoff, Gerardo. *Colombia: Ancient Peoples and Places*. Westport: Praeger Publisher, 1965.

———. *Desana: Simbolismo de los Indios Tukano del Vaupés*. Universidad de los Andes, 1968.

———. *Amazonian Cosmos: The Sexual and Religious Symbolism of the Tukano Indians*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971.

- . “Templos Kogi. Introducción al Simbolismo y la Astronomía del Espacio Sagrado”. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, 19 (1975).
- . “Desana Shamans' Rock Crystals and the Hexagonal Universe”. *Journal of Latin America*, 5 (1979): 117-128.
- . *Los Kogi: Una Tribu de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia*. Procultura, 1985.
- Reina, Acosta, et al. “Yajat Kiwe Sendero Ecológico, turístico – Educativo para Caminantes de la Naturaleza”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.
- Reinhard, Johan. “Las Montañas Sagradas y las Culturas Preincaicas de los Andes”. *América: Tierras de Montañas y Volcanes. Huellas de la Arqueología*. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2012.
- Restrepo Arcila, Roberto Arturo, (Ed). *Sabiduría, Poder y Comprensión: América se Repiensa Desde sus Orígenes*. Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2002.
- Reyes, Luis. *El Pensamiento Indígena en América*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2008.
- Richie, Donald. *The Inland Sea*. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2002.
- Rodríguez, Nicole. Paula León, and Valentina Quevedo. “Modelo de Gestión, Proyecto Armonía, Territorio y Comunidad: Eco-barrio Toribío, Cauca”. Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia. 2019.
- Rodríguez Pizarro, Alba, and Lady Betancourt Maldonado, “Cristina Bautista Taquinás Mujer Indígena Nasa, Trabajadora Social, Lideresa del Norte del Cauca, Colombia.” *Prospectiva. Revista de Trabajo Social e Intervención Social* 30, (2020): 309 -319.
- Rojas, Tulio. *Una Mirada al Habla Nasa Yuwe de Novirao*. Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2011.
- Romero, Andrés. “Diseño de un Centro de Memoria para la Comunidad Indígena Nasa de Toribío Involucrando Elementos de su Cosmovisión”. Degree work. Universidad Piloto de Colombia. 2018.
- Romero, Daniela, et al. “Centro de Desarrollo Agroecológico Nasa - MercaNasa”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.
- Romero, Fernando et al. *La Enseñanza del Español Como Segunda Lengua*. Pereira: Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, 2008.
- Romero, Fernando. *Manuel Quintín Lame, Sabiduría y Saber Escolar*. Pereira: Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, 2005.
- Rueda Plata, Carlos Iván. “Place-Making as Poetic World Re-Creation: An Experimental Tale of Rogelio Salmona's Places of Obliqueness and Desire”. PhD diss., McGill University, 2008.
- Rueda Plata, Carlos Iván et al. *Modernismos Sindeticos/ Syndetic Modernism*. Bogotá: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2012.

- Sack, Robert. *Human Territoriality. Its Theory and History*. Cambridge University, 1986.
- Salazar, Bedredin. et al., *Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Nasa Pal Hoy Nasa Pal Äcxh Ente. Semilla y Camino Fxiw Dxi`j Yakh*. Colombia: Instituto Para Misiones La Consolata, 2011.
- Salcedo, Doris. *Shibboleth*. 2007. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/salcedo-shibboleth-i-p20334>. Accessed on Nov. 30, 2021.
- Sanchez, Daniel, et al. “Centro regional Etnotustico de Acopio y Transformación Para la Elaboración de Medicamentos Derivados de Plantas Ancestrales”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2018.
- Sánchez, Ester. “La Realización del Pluralismo Jurídico de Tipo Igualitario en Colombia”. *Nueva Antropología* 22 no. 71, (2009): 31-49.
- Sánchez Gama, Clara Eugenia. “La Arquitectura de Tierra en Colombia, Procesos y Culturas Constructivas”. *Apuntes. Revista de Estudios Sobre Patrimonio Cultural* 20 no. 2, (2007): 242 -255
- Sánchez Gutiérrez, Enrique, and Hernán Molina Echeverri. *Documentos para la Historia del Movimiento Indígena Colombiano Contemporáneo*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010.
- Sandoval, Andrés Eduardo. *La Guardia Indígena Nasa y el Arte de la Resistencia Pacífica*. Bogotá: Editorial CÓDICE. 2008.
- Schoenauer, Norbert *6,000 Years of Housing*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2000.
- . *Introduction to Contemporary Indigenous Housing*. Ottawa: J. Wyatt Books, 1973.
- Serrano, Julieth. “Centro Cultural Natural Indígena Bajo la Cosmovisión de la Comunidad Nasa Paéz en Toribío Cauca”. Trabajo de Grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2021
- Sevilla, Elías, and Piñacué, Juan. “Los Nasa de Tierradentro y las Huellas Arqueológicas, Primera Aproximación”. *En Actas de IV Congreso de Arqueología en Colombia*. Barranquilla: Universidad del Norte, 2007.
- Scully, Vincent. *The Earth, The Temple, and The Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture*. Yale University, 1962.
- . *Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade*. St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Secretaría General de la Comunidad Andina. *Cosmovisión del Pueblo Indígena Nasa en Colombia*. Lima: Secretaría de la Comunidad Andina, 2009.
- Simbología de la Danza de la Chucha. Nasa ACIN, 2018. <https://nasaacin.org/el-ritual-de-la-danza-de-la-chucha-simbolo-de-armonia-y-equilibrio-de-la-familia-nasa-con-la-madre-naturaleza-se-realizo-en-la-ie-tecnica-kwesx-piya-yat/>.

Sistema Nacional de Atención Integral a la Población Desplazada - SNAIPD. *Política Pública para Protección de los Derechos Fundamentales de las Personas y los Pueblos Indígenas Desplazados por el Conflicto Armado o en Riesgo de Desplazamiento Forzado*. SNAIPD, 2010.

Slocum, Marianna, and Gerdel, Florence. *Diccionario Páez Español Páez*. Bogotá: Editorial Townsend, 1983.

Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. Penguin Group, 2001.

Steward, Julian Haynes. (ed.), *Handbook of South American Indians: The Andean Civilizations* New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1946.

Strong, Mary. *Art, Nature, and Religion in the Central Andes: Themes and Variations From Prehistory to the Present*. University of Texas Press, 2012.

Surralles, Alexandre, and Hierro Pedro. *Tierra Adentro: Territorio Indígena y Percepción del Entorno*. Lima: IWGIA, 2004.

Tatay, Pablo. Cuarta Minga de Pensamiento (Zoom), Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca CRIC y Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural UAIIN. March 30, 2021.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "Truth And Reconciliation Commission: Calls To Action". *Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, 2015.

Tocancipá-Falla, Jairo. "Gow, David y Diego Jaramillo Salgado. 2013. En Minga por el Cauca: el Gobierno de Floro Tunubalá (2001-2003)". *Antípoda Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, 21 (2015): 189–196. EBSCOhost, doi:10.7440/antipoda21.2015.09. Accessed on July 4, 2019.

Trochez, Flor Ilva. *Núcleo Territorio, Naturaleza y Producción, Educación Básica Primaria*. Cali: Grafitextos, 2000.

Troyan, Brett. *Cauca's Indigenous Movement in Southwestern Colombia: Land Violence, and Ethnic Identity*, Lanham, Md: Lexington Books. 2015.

Tumbo, Luz. *Ipx Kwet Peku'j Alrededor de la Tulpa*. Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014.

Ul Ascué, Eyder Wuilson. *Centro Integral de Medicina Nasa – Resguardo de San Francisco*. Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2012.

———. *Documento Tejido de Salud*. Toribio: Alcaldía de Toribío, 2016.

UNESCO, "Chair in Community Processes, Established in 1998 at The Casa Indígena, Municipality of Toribío (Colombia)", <http://www.unesco.org/en/university-twinning-and-networking/access-by-region/latin-america-and-the-caribbean/colombia/unesco-chair-in-community-processes-113/> . Accessed on July 26, 2020.

UNICEF. *Enseñanza y Revitalización de la Lengua Nasa Yuwe*. Cauca: UNICEF, 2002.

United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. New York: United Nations, 2007.

Urton, Gary, (Ed). *Animal Myths and Metaphors in South America*. University of Utah Press, 1985.

Valencia, Álvaro. et al. *La Recuperación de Tierras del Resguardo de Tacueyó y de la Zona Norte. Cátedra Nasa Unesco. Nasa Uus Kayatxisa. Segunda Etapa*. Popayán: ACIN, 2001.

Valencia, Ana Clelia and Piamba, Alirio, et al. *Memorias de un Pueblo que Renace*. Mesa Local de Víctimas de Toribío. 2018.

Valencia, Angelmiro, and Alejandro Casamachín. *Baka 'cxte'pa Uma Kiwete Nasnasa Nees Yuwa Eena Etapa Formulación Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa*. Cauca: Plan de Salvaguarda de la Nación Nasa Proyecto Nasa, 2014.

Van de Sandt, Joris J. *Behind the Mask of Recognition — Defending Autonomy and Communal Resource Management in Indigenous Resguardos, Colombia*. Library of the University of Amsterdam, 2007.

Vasco, Luis. “Quintín Lame, Resistencia y Liberación”. *Tabula Rasa*, 9, (2008): 371-383.

Vásquez, Adriana and Buitrago Andrea (Ed). *El Gran Libro de Los Páramos*. Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt, 2011.

Velazco Penagos, Luis Fernando. *Políticas Públicas y Desarrollo Local: Análisis de la Política Pública de Desarrollo Local en el Municipio Indígena de Toribío-Cauca 1994-2010*. Quito: Flacso Ecuador, 2010.

Verese, Stefano, et al. *Selva Vida, de la Destrucción de la Amazonia al Paradigma de la Regeneración*. Ciudad de México: Programa Universitario México Nación Multicultural –UNAM, 2013.

Villasenor, Gilberto. “The Politics of Indigenous Social Struggle in Colombia”. Proyecto de Grado, De Paul University, 2014.

Vírguez, Nicolás. “Desarrollo De Vivienda Integral Progresiva Con La Cosmovisión Nasa en Tacueyó – Toribio- Cauca”. Trabajo de grado, Universidad Piloto de Colombia, 2015.

Vitonás, Ezequiel. *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal de Toribío 2012-2015*. Toribío: Alcaldía Municipal de Toribío, 2012.

Wiesner, Diana. *Los Caminos de Los Cerros*. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2007.

Wilches-Chaux, Gustavo. *Proyecto Nasa: La Construcción del Plan de Vida de un Pueblo que Sueña*, Bogotá: PNUD. 2005.

Wilson, Jason. *The Andes: A Cultural History*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Wright, Kenneth R, et al. *Tipón: Obra Maestra de la Ingeniería Hidráulica del Imperio de los Incas*. American Society of Civil Engineers, 2008.

Yule, Marcos, and Carmen, Vitonás. *Pees Kupx Fxi'zenxi "La Metamorfosis de la Vida"*. Toribío Cauca: Cabildo Etnoeducativo Proyecto Nasa, 2010.

———. *Taw Nasa "Chumbe Nasa", Kwe'sx Üusu Yahxcx Pwisnxi "Memoria y Sentido de Nuestras Imágenes, Símbolos", Kwe'sx Ju'gwe'sxfx nxa'üus pwisnxi, Imágenes, Pensamientos de Nuestros Ancestros"*. Toribío, Cabildo Indígena de Toribío, 2015.

Zamosc, Leon. *The Agrarian Question and The Peasant Movement in Colombia: Struggles of the National Peasant Association, 1967-1981*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Zamora Sánchez, Alicia Valeria. "Restablecer la Armonía: Remedios desde los Pueblos Nasa y Guna para la Sanación de la Madre Tierra". *Ciencia e Interculturalidad*, 23, no. 2 (2018): 98-114.

Zapata, Jair. *Espacio y Territorio Sagrado. Lógica del Ordenamiento Territorial Indígena*. Medellín: Universidad Nacional de Colombia. 2010.

Zavala, Silvio . *La Filosofía Política en la Conquista de América*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972.

Zúñiga Salazar, Jaime. *Mi Bello Popayán*. Popayán: Talleres Editoriales del Departamento, 1972.

Interviews and Mingas

Alcibíades Escué. Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. October 10, 2016.

Arquímedes Vitonás Noscué. Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. May 30, 2017.

Australia Poto Julicué. Interview by author, *Minga* San Francisco – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

Carmelina Yule. Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío Cauca. July 28, 2018, and March 21, 2019.

Cuéne Mulcué. Interview by author, *Minga* Mosoco, Cauca. May 28, 2017.

Elizerio Vitonás. Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. May 22, 2015.

Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2014.

———. Interview by author, *Minga*, Toribío – Cauca. February 7, 2015.

———. Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío, Cauca. February 14, 2015.

———. Interview by author, Toribío, Cauca, August 18, 2015.

———. Interview by author. Toribío, Cauca, October 20, 2016.

———. Interview by author, El Flayo – Toribío – Cauca. July 7, 2018.

———. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

———. Interview by author, *Minga* vereda El Flayo, Toribío – Cauca. March 21, 2019.

Ezequiel Vitonás. Interview by Author, *Minga* Toribío Cauca, February 7, 2014.

Father Ezio Guadalupe Roattino. Interview by author, Toribío Cauca, June 29, 2017.

Gilma Mosquera. Interview by author, Cali – Valle del Cauca. February 13, 2015.

Gonzalo Rivera. Personal Interview. February 8, 2014. Caloto – Cauca.

———. Interview by author, *Resguardo* Huellas, Cauca, February 9, 2014.

———. Interview by author, CECIDIC, San Francisco, Cauca. June 19, 2014

———. Interview by author, Resguardo Huellas, Cauca. May 21, 2015.

———. Interview by author, *Minga* Tacueyó – Cauca. August 18, 2016.

Herney Largo. Interview by author, Toribío- Cauca. February 14, 2015.

Ingrid Dayana León. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 16, 2017.

———. Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 17, 2016.

———. Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 18, 2016.

———. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. May 29, 2017.

———. Interview by author, CECIDIC Toribío – Cauca. March 22, 2019.

Joanne Rappaport. Interview by author, Universidad de los Andes Bogotá. May 24, 2017.

Josefina Fixcué. Interview by author, *Minga* Santo Domingo – Cauca. October 22, 2016.

Lina María Amaya. Interview by author, Archivo Histórico del Cauca, Popayán. June 26, 2017.

Luis Antonio Poto. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 17, 2016.

Luis Antonio Poto Eyder and Wuilson Ul Ascué. *Minga* – Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. July 30, 2018.

Luis Fernando Poscué Juli. Interview by author, *Minga* Centro de los Niños, Toribío Cauca. March 22, 2019.

Mariano Welwéch. Interview by author, *Minga* Caldono. Cauca, March 18, 2018.

Mariano Pilcué and Florencio Mestizo Musicué. *Minga Saakhelu* Tacueyó Kwet Yu'-Thakwe Yu'. Tacueyó, Cauca. August 17 – 20, 2016.

Mayra Aida Finscué. Interview by author, Vereda López Toribío Cauca. August 20-21, 2016.

———. Interview by author, Vereda López Toribío Cauca. October 21-22, 2016.

Marco Tulio Jascué. Interview by author, Vereda López Tacueyó – Cauca. October 21, 2016.

———. Interview by author, Vereda López, Santo Domingo, Cauca. March 17, 2017.

Marcos Yule Yatacué. Interview by author, Santander de Quilichao – Cauca, July 27, 2018.

Máximo Pavi. Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 17, 2016.

———. Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 15, 2017.

———. Interview by author, San Francisco – Cauca. March 14, 2018.

Numar Musicué. Interview by author, Toribío – Cauca. March 18, 2016.

Oscar Chauta. Interview by author, Sesquile – Cundinamarca. February 15, 2014.

Oscar Wilde Cuchillo. Interview by author, *Minga* Toribío CECIDIC – Cauca. May 29, 2017.

Soledad Martínez Cápi. Interview by author, *Minga* Resguardo Nuevo Tóez – Cauca. October 23, 2016.

William Yatacué. Interview by author, *Minga* Bloque BTC, Loma Linda Toribío – Cauca. July 28, 2018.

Mingas

Minga Toribío. Cauca. February 7, 2014.

Minga Resguardo Huellas. Cauca. February 9, 2014.

Minga San Francisco. Cauca. March 16, 2015.

Minga San Francisco. Cauca. July 15, 2015.

Minga Saakhelu Tacueyó Kwet Yu'-Thakwe Yu'. Tacueyó. Cauca. August 17 – 20, 2016.

Minga Consejo Alcaldía de Toribío. Cauca. October 20, 2016.

Minga Resguardo Nuevo Tóez. Cauca. October 23, 2016.

Minga Toribío. Cauca. March 15, 2017.

Minga Mosoco. Cauca. May 28, 2017

Minga Cerro Berlín. Toribío – Cauca. May 29, 2017

Minga Khabuwee'sx Jambaló – Cauca, March 15, 2018.

Minga Caldono. Cauca, March 18, 2018.

Minga San Francisco. Cauca. July 30, 2018

Minga Juan Tama Piscícola. Santo Domingo – Cauca. May 22, 2019

Minga Virtual Socialización Proyectos Arquitectónicos Universidad Piloto de Colombia – Eyder Wuilson Ul Ascué. July 09, 2021