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Arhuacos Way of Life: An Indigenous Perspective on Nature and Degrowth

Master's Thesis in International Education and Development

Autumn 2024

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ABSTRACT

We are living in an age of ecological destruction. Our planet's ecosystems are changing rapidly due to rising global temperatures. The effects of the climate crisis are already evident on every continent, and climate change is now considered the most significant health threat facing humanity. The global community is looking for solutions and alternative ways to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. In this context, it is worth asking whether it is possible to find solutions within the same epistemology that contributed to creating the problem in the first place. Within Western epistemology, dualistic and reductive thinking have made it easier to think of nature as an object, a "resource" that can be extracted and put into a process where economic growth is the end goal. Conversely, in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia, the Arhuacos and three other indigenous groups have a different way of relating to nature, which includes a notion of responsibility for the environmental protection of the mountain range. Believing in the interconnectedness between all beings, the Arhuacos regard the Sierra Nevada as "the heart of the world," on which all the planet's beings depend for their well-being.

Based on 2.5 months of fieldwork in Santa Marta in the autumn of 2021, this thesis seeks to analyze Arhuaco's relation to nature and explores whether Arhuaco knowledge coincides or diverges with the degrowth movement, a movement closely rooted in anti-colonial perspectives, sharing many of the demands of social movements in the global South. The study aims to contribute to the research field concerning indigenous people's connection to the natural world and bring light to different ways of perceiving human-nature relations. Findings from the research analyzes Arhuaco's relation to nature from three perspectives: (1) Nature in daily life, (2) Nature as sacred ensuing responsibility, and (3) Nature as identity. The thesis demonstrates that Arhuaco's perspectives and the degrowth movement align in the following aspects: (1) A belief in ecosystems' inherent value, (2) Critiques of uniformization of culture, and (3) Critiques of growth. The central tension between the two perspectives is the separation of nature and culture in the degrowth movement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This academic journey has been immensely educational and was made possible by the support and contribution of several individuals. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Axel Borchgrevink. I have very much appreciated your guidance, knowledge, patience, and perspectives throughout this process. Second, I am very grateful for my translator, Javier Pachón, who made me feel welcome during my stay in Colombia and made the project possible to carry out in the first place. Of course, this thesis relies heavily on the participants in Santa Marta, who shared their perspectives and beliefs wholeheartedly. I am beyond appreciative of them for trusting me with their knowledge and perspectives.

Special thanks must also be given to my fellow classmate Joss Vierzen Hansen for encouraging conversations, inspiration, and our late-night study sessions. This academic journey would not have been as meaningful without you.

I would also like to thank Per Halvor Vale and other family members and friends who have given their time to read and reread drafts in order to give their insights. Lastly, I would like to thank Mathias Bakken, for all support and patience during this process. This thesis would not have been possible without these contributors, and I am deeply grateful for their support.

GLOSSARY

Ayu (Iku) – The coca plant

Black Line territory – Ancestral indigenous territory.

Cabildo Gobernador (Spanish) – Political leader and main representative of Arhuaco interests in meetings with the Colombian state.

Comisarios (Spanish) – The civil authorities responsible for solving issues of internal law and order.

Elder brothers – A name to describe the four indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada, given by themselves.

Iku – The native language of the Arhuacos, belonging to the Chibcha linguistic family.

Kaku Serenkua – Father Creator

Malanga (Spanish) – A root vegetable from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Mamo (Iku) – The spiritual leaders of the Arhuacos.

Marnek (Iku) – The work done in the morning in the Sierra, before consuming food.

Marunsama (Iku) – the dialogue between the material world and the spiritual world in the Arhuaco worldview.

Pagamento (Spanish) – A form of spiritual payment to nature.

Resguardo (Spanish) – indigenous reservation areas collectively owned by indigenous peoples in Colombia

Resguardo expansion areas – Land areas indigenous people are trying to obtain through political organization.

Semaneros (Spanish)- Semaneros are responsible for law enforcement in Arhuaco villages

Tutu (Iku) – A handwoven bag of wool or cotton made by Arhuaco women.

Tutusoma (Iku) – A woven hat worn by Arhuaco men made by Arhuaco men.

Kurkuna (Iku) – An instrument used by Arhuaco women to spin thread, used in a spiritual ritual.

Yáboro (Iku) – A gourd container where Arhuaco males store powdered seashells, used to chew coca leaves as part of a spiritual ritual.

Younger brothers – A name given by the four indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada to describe non-indigenous people.

Yuca (Spanish) – A root vegetable native to South America.

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1. INTRODUCTION

We are living in an age of ecological destruction. Our planet's ecosystems are changing rapidly due to rising global temperatures. Glaciers are melting, oceans are heating up, deforestation is escalating, and land is being worn out by industrial agriculture. These environments are home to millions of species, and their increment degradation severely affects our planet's biodiversity. Human beings are fundamentally dependent on these interrelated systems, and more and more evidence suggest that the degradation of ecosystems increases the vulnerability of animals, insects, and humans as well (IPCC, 2022, p. 314). Consequences of global warming are already happening in every continent on the planet (IPCC, 2021), and climate change is now considered the single biggest health threat facing humanity (UN). However, the effects of the climate crisis are affecting the Global South disproportionately to the Global North, and indigenous peoples and local communities who directly depend on these ecosystems in their everyday lives, are especially vulnerable (IPCC, 2022).

These are all well-known facts, and they have been for decades. Although the global community knows exactly what needs to be done to prevent ecological breakdown, "most observed adaptation is fragmented, small in scale, incremental, sector-specific [and] designed to respond to current impacts or near-term risks" (IPCC, 2022, p. 20). The question arises as to whether it is possible to understand the climate crisis when employing the same kind of thinking that contributed to creating the problem in the first place (Hickel, 2021b). Within Western epistemology, dualistic and reductive thinking have made it easier to think of nature as an object, a "resource" that can be extracted and put into a process where the end goal is economic growth (Hickel, 2021b). Disguised as "universalism", Western epistemology also excludes other epistemologies, subjugating alternative worldviews and epistemologies promoting pluralism.

Although most climate adaptation has not yielded significant effects, the international focus on the climate crisis and the sustainability agenda points to movements concerned about caring for and protecting the natural world. One of these movements is called "degrowth," which involves "a planned reduction of energy and resource throughput designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world" (Hickel, 2020, p. 2). The degrowth movement is closely rooted in anti-colonial perspectives and shares many demands with social movements in the Global South. There are also common elements between degrowth and different types of indigenous knowledges.

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia is home to the Arhuacos and three other indigenous groups. The four indigenous groups have a different way to relate to nature and share a worldview that includes a notion of responsibility for the protection of the mountain range. Believing in the interconnectedness between all beings in nature, they perceive the Sierra Nevada as "the heart of the

world" and believe that all of nature's creation depends on the well-being of the mountain range they care for and protect.

1.1 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of this thesis is to analyze the relationship between humans and nature among the Arhuacos in the department of Santa Marta in Colombia. The study is based on data acquired from 2.5 months of fieldwork, during which a combination of interviews and participant observation was used. The purpose of the study is to make visible the profoundly different ways humans perceive nature and offer alternative ways of thinking about our relation to the natural world. This might contribute to important insights into why we are treating nature the way we are, which can be beneficial and assist in the challenges that await us.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How can Arhuaco's relationship to the natural world be analyzed?
2. How do Arhuaco's perspectives align with the degrowth movement?

1.2 THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter 2 of the thesis provides the background to the study. This chapter begins with an introduction of indigenous history in Colombia and a presentation of the literature used in subsequent sections. The following sections describe different aspects of Arhuaco way of life, including territories, lifestyle, agriculture, social and political organization, worldview and beliefs.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework and brings attention to different kinds of epistemologies and explains the term "epistemological domination". Next follows a section about indigenous knowledges and indigenous worldviews. The final section is focused on degrowth and how the movement relates to the Global South and indigenous perspectives.

Chapter 4 is comprised of the methodology of the research, describing and explaining methodological decisions throughout the course of the project. All stages of the research are included, from the development of the research question to the final writing of the report. Lastly, the chapter discusses the quality criteria, limitations of the study and reflects on ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 is granted to present the results of the study. The first section concerns Arhuaco's relation to nature and how the Arhuacos perceive their values different from those of non-indigenous people. The second section describes how Arhuaco's knowledge and the degrowth movement align and diverge.

Chapter 6 contains a summary of the results and how these relates to theory presented in previous chapters before briefly presenting future research opportunities.

2. BACKGROUND CHAPTER

2.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN COLOMBIA

Colombia is a country in the northwestern region of South America with an ethnically diverse population. Among the roughly 50 million inhabitants, 4,4 % of the population identify as indigenous people, and they are divided among the 115 different indigenous groups in the country (Garcia-Godos, 2019). Four of the 115 indigenous groups are located in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on the North Coast of the Colombian Caribbean Sea. The Kogui, Wiwa, Kankuamo, and Arhuaco amount to approximately 50,000 people (Steffens, 2019), and they are believed to be direct descendants of the pre-Hispanic civilization called Tairona. Archeological findings can situate the Tairona civilization as far back as 200 CE, and the civilization prospered until the arrival of Spanish conquistadores in 1499, leading to the majority of the Tairona people seeking refuge in the highlands of their territory (Panda, 2016). Although there are differences between the indigenous groups that today inhabit the Sierra Nevada, it is their worldview, connected to "a shared notion of territory – which links and articulates the identities of the four peoples – and their common responsibility for the environmental and cultural conservation of the Sierra" that binds them together (Ulloa, 2011, p. 86). Before going into more detail about Arhuaco's lifestyle and beliefs, the chapter will briefly summarize the historical context in which the indigenous peoples in Colombia have endured.

2.2 INDIGENOUS HISTORY IN COLOMBIA

This section is dedicated to the indigenous history in Colombia, specifically focusing on the indigenous history in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Colombia has a complex history, particularly concerning the civil war starting in 1964. However, this section aims to paint a picture of the indigenous experience from colonial times to modern times, and as such, the thesis will refrain from going into too much detail about the civil war; however, to give insight into how the indigenous communities have been impacted, some history of this period is inherently necessary and described in section 2.2.3.

2.2.1 COLONIAL ERA

The indigenous people of Colombia have, much like around the world, throughout history been socially, politically and economically marginalized (Jackson, 2019). This marginalization began in the colonial era when Spanish conquistadores invaded the country, forcing native people to flee from fights, enslavement, and disease. In Northern Colombia, people living in the coastal zones were predominantly exposed to this. However, after the foundation of the city of Santa Marta in 1525, the colonial influence began to impact communities belonging to other areas of the mountains as well (Lizzaralde et al., 1987). Indigenous people living in the higher areas of the Sierra Nevada have historically been more

independent and experienced less influence from outsiders, as they have been protected by the mountain range through geography (Muñoz, 2016). This was the case when the Spaniards tried to colonize the village called San Sebastián de Rábago, the most important Arhuaco settlement located in a valley close to 2000 meters above sea level, in the early colonial period. The conquistadores failed as a result of the geographical difficulties and the resistance by the indigenous groups in the area (Muñoz, 2016).

During the Colonial period, many indigenous people were forced to work the land as enslaved people at the hands of the conquistadores who were in search of emeralds, silver, gold, and copper (Vera, 2015). However, in 1542, the Spanish abolished slavery, and indigenous people in Colombia gradually began to receive some privileges, with the premise of staying loyal to the Spanish crown. Behind these incentives was an ulterior motive: the indigenous people had been subjugated to Spanish domination to the extent that the survival of many indigenous communities was at stake, threatening the Spaniard's labor force. As a result, the Spanish created the resguardo-system, in which specific geographical zones were created to ensure "the safeguarding and protection of the rights of the indigenous communities" (Vera, 2015, p. 59). The resguardo-system also made it easier for the Spanish to maintain control over the remaining indigenous communities by confining them to specific areas, which also aided the process of catholicizing the people. However, the resguardo system also resulted in indigenous communities becoming collective property owners with the opportunity to use their resguardos freely in daily life while preserving their cultural heritage (Vera, 2015). Wallbert, cited in Vera, notes that this system imposed European ideas about land and property, which differ significantly from those of indigenous peoples.

Another system implemented by the Spaniards was the cabildo-system. The Cabildos were "annually elected governing councils which mediated between communities and their Spanish overlords" (Jackson, 2019, p. 30). The communities sometimes elected the Cabildo, but more often the Cabildos were appointed by the Spaniards. Their primary function was to be in charge of local affairs in the community and mediate between the communities and the Spaniards. The establishment of the cabildo-system was part of the Iberian political system which existed at that time and "represented the forceful implementation of a system that was a result of years of evolution into a different social and political reality to that of Western Europe" (Brigham, 2005, p. 12). Brigham, writing about the development of local government in Mexico, explains that the cabildo-system became an essential and efficient tool in organizing the indigenous communities (Brigham, 2005).

The government of the newly founded republic carried on the cabildo-system and the resguardo-system created by the Spaniards. To this day, these two systems remain part of the legal framework indigenous peoples have used to claim property rights over their territories. The Arhuacos did this in the mid-18th century, claiming rights over the San Sebastián de Rábago territory (Muñoz, 2016). The indigenous

lands in Colombia today can be divided into three parts: (1) the resguardos, (2) the resguardo expansion areas, which are the lands in which the indigenous people hope to acquire through political organization, and (3) the Black Line territory, which is the traditional ancestral territory where the indigenous peoples lived before the invasion of the Spanish conquistadores (Ulloa, 2011). The resguardo-system and the Cabildo-system were recognized by Law 89 of 1890 and indigenous communities all over Colombia have utilized this law for more than 100 years to recover ancestral territory (Ulloa, 2011).

Today, the resguardos remain a political issue characterized by conflict between the interests of the government and the indigenous peoples of Colombia. Vera points out that there is a gap between “what is stated in the law, along with the political principles, and the action performed by the government, such as unauthorized invasions, carrying out mining activities, construction of infrastructure in the search for development, and the destruction of ecosystems” (Vera, 2015, p. 75). As such, governmental influence and actions, as well as other external actors, do not always consider the land rights of indigenous people, pointing to a gap between the rule of law and reality, which keeps prolonging the conflict between indigenous peoples and the government in Colombia (Vera, 2015).

2.2.2 COLOMBIAN INDEPENDENCE AND MODIFIED RELATIONS

After Colombia declared independence from the Spanish crown in 1810, the relations between the government and the indigenous peoples in the newly founded republic became more repressive compared to late colonial times. The dominant ideology of this period facilitated nation-building by developing a “homogenous, Spanish-speaking, Catholic and patriotic citizenry” (Jackson, 2019, p. 30), resulting in cultural assimilation and biological mixing to incorporate indigenous people into the general Colombian population. Ulloa emphasizes that although the new government now considered indigenous peoples as citizens, this happened within a racist framework (Ulloa, 2011). One crucial turning point in the relations between the Colombian state and the indigenous communities was, as previously mentioned, the creation of Law 89 of 1890, which “declared indigenous territory property of the indigenous peoples and of their local authorities” (Ulloa, 2011, p. 82). The intention behind this law was to privatize lands and transform indigenous peoples from “barbaric savages” to modern citizens and property owners (Ulloa, 2011). However, the effect of this new decree had two important consequences: 1) it recognized the official status of the resguardos and the cabildos (Jackson, 2019), and 2) it created a special status for the indigenous peoples by insinuating that they were “savages” who, like children, needed protection in order to take part of a “civilized life” (Muñoz, 2016). As mentioned previously indigenous peoples in Colombia have used this law to recover ancestral lands, maintain their cultural practices and identity, and preserve political authority over communal matters (Ulloa, 2011). Concerning the Arhuacos specifically, they have used a strategy that involves combining “a language of equal rights

before the law with a language of difference that sustained their claims to special protection, given their conditions as ‘primitives’”(Muñoz, 2016, p. 313).

Although Law 89 of 1890 did have positive outcomes for indigenous people throughout Colombia, this was one of the few victories during the new republican period. Another important change in the relations between the indigenous communities and the state was that the resguardo-system became more repressive compared to colonial times. Jackson points out that “communal landholding was seen as an obstacle to the nation-building project, and legislation intended to dismantle the resguardo was passed” (Jackson, 2019, p. 30). The Colombian state legalized the sale of resguardo lands which resulted in expropriations by outsiders, often through acts of violence (Jackson, 2019). A lot of resguardo lands were taken from indigenous people this way, as state presence near indigenous lands was generally scarce in the late 19th century. In order to impose national culture in these areas, the Colombian state handed over the majority of the responsibility concerning the indigenous population to the Catholic Church (Muñoz, 2016).

Indigenous education was one of the responsibilities the Catholic Church was given by the state (Díaz, 2020), which had grave consequences for many indigenous communities, including the Arhuacos. In 1916, with support from the Colombian government, the Catholic Church came to Nabusimake, the main Arhuaco village, and began the institutionalization of children in orphanages (Murillo, 2009). Children were forbidden to speak their native language, their hair was cut, and they were forced to wear Western clothes (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). One historical account of this can be found in the text by Rodríguez: The native was not a ‘social being’ to them; he was instead a person who did not have a soul, had no beliefs, and his practice were devilish. And therefore had to be converted to Christianity (Rodríguez, 1997, p. 22).

The Catholic Church maintained official authority and responsibility concerning Colombia’s indigenous population until 1962, when the church officially lost its monopoly over indigenous education (Jackson, 2019). In the Sierra Nevada, it was not until 1982, after a massive resistance involving 600 Arhuaco men, women, and children, that the Catholic orphanage was abandoned. A year later, in 1983, the orphanages reopened and were now transformed into indigenous schools with a curriculum developed by the community. The new curriculum combined the study of indigenous cosmology with Western philosophy, and heavily emphasized the Iku language and spirituality (Murillo, 2009). In 1994, Law 115 was passed, which gave legal authority to the indigenous communities to administer their own schools and develop their own curriculum on a national level (Murillo, 2009).

Another aspect that changed the relations between indigenous peoples and outsiders was the expansion of coffee production. Since the end of the 19th century, coffee has been present in the Sierra Nevada

(Ulloa, 2011). However, during the end of the century, with the rapid expansion of Colombian coffee production for international markets, the interactions between highlands and lowlands in the Sierra Nevada increased (Muñoz, 2016). Lands previously uninteresting to most people became popular places to settle in and participate in this new economic activity. As coffee did not require large capital, the possibility was open to more or less everyone. In the Sierra Nevada, this meant newcomers, old settlers, tenants, and indigenous peoples had more contact with each other than earlier. Some accords even state indigenous peoples participated in early coffee production (Muñoz, 2016). However, this process is not to be glorified, as “indigenous communities all over Colombia were certainly harmed by growing demographic and capitalist pressure over lands they have occupied for centuries” (Muñoz, 2016, p. 311). Today, the coffee made in Sierra Nevada, produced by both peasants and indigenous peoples, is exchanged at the international market and reaches consumers worldwide (Ulloa, 2011).

2.2.3 CIVIL WAR AND PEACE?

Colombia's history during the latter part of the 20th century is a complex story with many interwoven actors with different interests, ranging from the state to guerrillas, cartels, paramilitaries, and civil people. In order to paint a picture of the indigenous experience in Colombia during this period, it is necessary to include the outline of the conflict. After a period of political turbulence called "La Violencia," Colombia's most prominent political parties, the liberal and the conservative parties, entered a political coalition from 1956 to 1974. The aim was to reduce the political violence and stabilize the country (Garcia-Godos, 2023). Although this period was characterized by more political stability in the cities, this disguised the increasing turbulence in the rural parts of the country. As all other oppositional parties were prohibited, along with left-wing parties and peasant parties, this led to guerrillas and other leftist groups beginning to fight in the hope of a regime change.

During the 1960s, a consensus was reached within Colombian society, signifying a move away from homogeneity towards multiculturalism. This new mindset would begin to influence national policies up until the creation of the new constitution, which will be discussed later in this section. However, it is the year 1964 that is of great importance in recent Colombian history because of two events: it marks the beginning of the civil war, and it was also the year Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) was founded, which would become the biggest and most militant guerrilla group in the country (Garcia-Godos, 2023). The production and smuggling of narcotics expanded during the 1970s and increasingly began to influence national politics, which exacerbated the civil war further. For the civil population, this resulted in more violence and displacement, especially in the rural parts of the country (Garcia-Godos, 2023). In the Sierra Nevada, guerrillas had been present since the 1970s, using indigenous territories to mobilize troops and exercise control over economic and military strategic areas (Fidh, 2021). Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) was one of the first guerrilla groups to occupy

areas of the Sierra Nevada. In the middle of the 1980s FARC invaded the Sierra Nevada and together with ELN “unleashed a series of attacks on infrastructure and entered into confrontations with the national military” (Ulloa, 2011, p. 99).

Paramilitary groups, founded by armed marijuana growers in the 1960s, settled in the Sierra Nevada in the 1990s, where they took control over the western slopes of the mountain range (Fidh, 2021). Indigenous peoples were at many times victims of stigmatization and accusations of collaborating with guerrillas due to the simple fact that they lived in a territory with a guerrilla presence. Conversely, according to two Arhuaco representatives, one of the early agreements made among the communities in the Sierra Nevada was that “No one of us would take part in military activities, for we are not militarists, and we do not like fighting. We have other ways of working: a spiritual work, a human work” (Rodríguez, 1997, p. 4). Many indigenous peoples in the Sierra and other areas in Colombia were murdered or displaced without taking part in the conflict.

Amidst this, powerful indigenous movements surfaced in the 1980s country (Díaz, 2020). These movements cannot be separated from the emerging international discourse of indigenous rights and the shift toward identity politics around the globe (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019). During this decade, the Colombian state handed over land to different indigenous communities, responding to the indigenous movements and the 1961 land reform (Jackson, 2019). Jackson claims that the motive behind this generosity was to improve “Colombia’s image vis-à-vis international movements for indigenous rights and environmental protection” (Jackson, 2019, p. 43). Another possible motive was to make goodwill out of “rebellious” indigenous people and make them see the state as an ally and not an opponent (Jackson, 2019). After more than 25 years of civil war, it became clear that a new constitution was necessary to promote peace and reconciliation. The charter of 1991 signified a shift towards ethnic pluralism in Colombia. Under the new constitution, indigenous and ethnic groups gained recognition as citizens with unique cultural rights, like indigenous self-determination and having their own government and autonomy within their territories (Ulloa, 2011). Jackson emphasizes that the 1991 charter was “in number of important ways the opposite of its predecessor of 1886, which was designed to homogenize Colombian society, and to promote ‘order rather than liberty’” (Jackson, 2019, p. 48)

At the beginning of the new century, Colombians would experience an escalation in the conflict. Between 2002 and 2005, the Sierra Nevada also faced an upsurge in violence against the civil population. Massacres, land dispossession, displacement, and terror became a part of everyday life for both non-indigenous people and the indigenous communities in the area. As the paramilitary gained control of the middle and lower parts of the mountain range, the guerrillas moved into the highlands of the Sierra Nevada (Fidh, 2021). The paramilitary presence in the area brought about even more violence as they strategically carried out murders as “false positives”, defined as the “killing of civilians

subsequently presented as members of illegal armed groups killed in combat, through various methods of distorting the scene of the crime and the circumstances regarding the manner, time and place” in which the events take place (Fidh, 2021, p. 14). The indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada were especially vulnerable to this strategy as the communities were often falsely appointed to collaborate with the guerrillas, which in turn motivated the murders of the community members (Fidh, 2021). In 2009, the Colombian Constitutional Court concluded that the Kogui, Wiwa, Arhuaco, and Kankuamo, as well as 30 other indigenous groups in the country, “were at risk of physical and cultural extermination as a result of the internal armed conflict and forced displacement” (Fidh, 2021, p. 13)

In 2012, the peace negotiations between the government and FARC began, and the final peace agreement was signed in 2016, marking the end of the civil war (Garcia-Godos, 2023). Although the agreement was highly disputed nationally and divided the population into two nearly equal parts, indigenous communities voted overwhelmingly in favor of the accord (Jackson, 2019). This must be seen in light of the conflicts disproportionately affect indigenous communities in all of Colombia, as “the strategic location of the territories of indigenous peoples, both for the development of the armed confrontation and for drug trafficking activities,” made them especially vulnerable (Fidh, 2021, p. 15). By 2016, the civil war, which had lasted more than 50 years, had taken 220 000 lives, and more than five million people were forcibly displaced as they fled from kidnapping, massacres, rapes, and murders (Jackson, 2019). In the years after the peace agreement was signed, FARC handed over their weapons and formed a peaceful political party called “Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun”. ELN presence increased in areas that were previously under the control of FARC, but in October 2016, peace negotiations between the government and ELN began (Bratberg, 2021). The negotiations never resulted in any peace agreement, just a temporary ceasefire that lasted three months. Another negotiation process began between ELN and the newly elected government in November 2022, resulting in a six-month ceasefire beginning in June 2023 (Bratberg, 2021). This was considered a milestone and remarkable victory in President Gustavo Petro's goal of “total peace” in Colombia.

2.2.4 INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

It is important to note that indigenous peoples are not just victims in this story. They have also resisted external pressures and been active political participants fighting for recognition and rights through political channels. As explained earlier in this chapter, one example of this is how indigenous peoples in Colombia have strategically used Law 89 of 1890 to recover authority over ancestral territories. This section will briefly look into Arhuaco's political engagements specifically.

The Arhuacos began their involvement in politics in 1931, forming the Indigenous League of the Sierra Nevada (Ulloa, 2011). Another important political organization is the Tayrona Indigenous Confederation

(CIT), established in 1978, and is to this day the main representative of the Arhuacos before the national government (Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022). From the 1970s onwards, several vital victories have been achieved by different indigenous organizations in the Sierra Nevada, including the recognition of the Black Line territory, involving the 59 sacred sites under Resolution 0002 of 4 January 1973, recognition of the right to ancestral territory by Resolution 837 of 1996, and lastly decree 1500 of 2018 aimed to redefine the ancestral territory of the indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada (Fidh, 2021).

Today, the leading organization in which the Arhuacos work to enhance their legal rights is the Consejo Territorial de Cabildos (CTC). CTC was founded in 1999 by the four indigenous groups in Sierra Nevada, and the organization worked to coordinate the goals of the indigenous communities in the Sierra Nevada and negotiate with the Colombian state (Ulloa, 2011). The CTC is supported by the spiritual leaders of the indigenous groups, and the core policy is the recognition of their ancestral territory. Ulloa states that the “interactions between the CTC and state institutions have led to agreements and differences, and have fostered new strategies on territorial and environmental issues, which in turn have repositioned them as agents equipped to lay out alternative options for territorial and environmental relations” (Ulloa, 2011, p. 101)

2.2.5 CHALLENGES IN THE SIERRA NEVADA TODAY

Indigenous territories are regularly threatened by the expropriation of outsiders. The Kogui, Wiwa, Kankuamo, and Arhuacos have been experiencing a long-term fragmentation of their territory at the hands of different actors, both legal and illegal (Ulloa, 2011). These activities include projects in tourism, mega-infrastructure developments like waterways, dams, and hydroelectric plants, drug trafficking, mineral extraction and extraction of oil and other resources, drug-trafficking, cattle ranching, and as mentioned in section 2.2.3, military, guerrilla and paramilitary dominance (Ulloa, 2011). The indigenous communities are also frequently victims of burnt houses and destructions of sacred sites (Fidh, 2021).

Ecotourism in the Sierra Nevada is a highly disputed topic, even among the indigenous groups in the mountain range. While some believe opening the mountain range to ecotourism is another way of colonizing their lands (Ulloa, 2011), others believe that taking part in this by teaching tourists about their culture and way of life is crucial to creating a common understanding among different people. Another major concern is global warming. During the last 150 years, the mountain range has lost more than 92 percent of its ice, and if this trend continues, the rest of the ice will be lost during the next 30 years (Steffens, 2019). This will have profound effects on rivers, animals, plants, and ecosystems that the indigenous communities of the Sierra Nevada are trying to protect, not to mention the indigenous peoples themselves, as well as millions of other people in the region who are dependent on these water

systems (Steffens, 2019). The indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada have been and are increasingly affected by the actions of non-indigenous people.

2.3 PRESENTATION OF LITERATURE

Throughout the following section, the thesis will rely on studies conducted with Arhuacos living in different areas in the Sierra Nevada, as well as my own observations and data from the fieldwork. This is done to comprehensively describe Arhuaco lifestyle, organization, cosmovision, and cultural practices. However, before doing this, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the literature used in the upcoming section.

The earliest study included in this thesis was published in 1987 and titles “Indigenous survival among the Barí and Arhuaco: Strategies and perspectives” by Lizzerralde et al. The main topic of the document is indigenous survival among the Arhuacos in Colombia and the Barí people in Venezuela, and the different strategies the two indigenous groups have used to develop their political organization. Although this study is not able to portray the present life of many Arhuacos, especially Arhuacos living in the lowlands of the Sierra Nevada, it is relevant in order to describe a more traditional way of life in the communities in the highlands, as well as the political organization among the Arhuacos and to some extent explain Arhuacos mythical creation story and worldview.

Another study from the 1980s is "Land, the key to Bítukwa ethnic survival, Colombia" written by Tracy and published in 1988. The study aimed to describe Arhuaco land challenges and point to beneficial strategies that could enable the Arhuacos to reduce internal and external land conflicts. This study is a thorough dissertation rich with details, and the longest initiative, 14 years, with the most comprehensive descriptions of the Arhuacos to this date. The findings of this study, similar to the study by Lizzerralde et al., mainly describe Arhuaco's history and the more traditional lifestyle in the highlands in the Sierra Nevada.

The next document relevant to the thesis is "Arhuaco Universe" by Rodriguez et. al., published in 1997. This unique text was written by Arhuacos and was an initiative carried out to make Arhuaco knowledge available to non-indigenous people and, in turn, use this knowledge to preserve planetary balance. The document is a collaboration by several spiritual leaders and other Arhuacos, in which they explain and describe their worldview and culture in a way the non-indigenous world can comprehend. The drawback is that many of the concepts deriving from an oral tradition are difficult to translate into written words, and the translation from Iku to Spanish and then Spanish to English can be confusing from time to time. Nonetheless, the text is rich in detail, especially concerning Arhuaco's practices and beliefs. Another

similar text is "Territoriality, environment and rights in indigenous people Iku (Arhuaco) from Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, Colombia" by Cuadros et. al., issued in 2017. Like the text by Rodriguez et. al., this text is also written by a collective of Arhuacos, explaining how Arhuacos conceive the environment. The text is made to educate non-indigenous people about Arhuaco culture, the value of their territory, and their mission to protect the Sierra Nevada. Unfortunately, the same difficulties concerning the previous texts are present in this one as well, where some of the ideas and beliefs are hard to grasp due to the translation from oral tradition to writing and the multiple language barriers.

Two texts that have been used in the history section are Murillo's "This great emptiness we are feeling: Toward a decolonization of schooling in Simunurwa, Colombia," published in 2009, and Ulloa's "The politics of autonomy of Indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia: A process of relational Indigenous autonomy," published in 2011. Murillo, writing about the decolonization of schooling in an Arhuaco village called Simunurwa, analyzes the development of an indigenous school that incorporates local forms of knowledge combined with the appropriation of Western knowledge as an effort to decolonize knowledge and epistemologies inherited from Western traditions. This text has been a great resource when writing about indigenous history education in the Sierra Nevada in the history section, but also been helpful to get insight into indigenous education in Arhuaco communities in recent years. Ulloa picks up the thread on indigenous territories and political struggle, analyzed earlier by Lizzerralde et al. and Tracy, and focuses on autonomy demands by the Kogui, Arhuaco, Wiwa, and Kankuamo. It touches on indigenous rights history, resguardos, economic activities, and modern challenges the four Indigenous communities face. This text has been used to expand on indigenous rights and indigenous lands and has been a great resource for understanding the intricate resguardo system.

Yet another subject is presented in "indigenous perceptions and adaptive responses to the impacts of climate variability in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia". In this paper, written by Postigo et al. in 2022, perceptions of climate variability among the Arhuacos are explored, as well as the impact of the variability and the responses by the Arhuacos to these impacts. This was an initiative by the Arhuacos and the findings aligns with many topics presented in the texts written by the Arhuacos included in this section, pointing to a desire to be involved in decision-making processes concerning their natural environment. What sets these texts apart is primarily how the information is conveyed, with the text by Postigo et al. confirming to the academic tradition of communicating through research articles.

The final text used in the next section is written by Pinto-Marroquin et al. and called "Potential conflicts as an opportunity for coexistence: cosmovision and attitudes of Arhuaco people towards jaguars", published in 2022. The subjects presented in this article are indigenous knowledge, indigenous worldviews, biodiversity conservation, and coexistence. The authors promote a dialogue between

science and ancestral knowledge and use data collected from fieldwork conducted in ten Arhuaco communities to ground the dialogue. This text is mainly used to describe Arhuaco's worldview in 2.4.5.

2.3.1 HETEROGENIC GROUPS AND INDIGENEITY

The earlier studies about the Arhuacos are mainly concerned with political organization, territories, and land disputes. Later studies combine these issues with topics like culture, worldviews, and environmental conceptions. Altogether, these texts illustrate Arhuaco's life and beliefs, which, combined with my collected data material, will make the foundation of the following sections. However, it is important to note that the Arhuacos are heterogeneous, both between and within groups (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019), meaning that lifestyle, beliefs, and cultural expressions may vary even between individuals belonging to the same group. As such, the literature regarding the Arhuacos, based on case studies that interact with different individuals, cannot speak for all Arhuacos. Instead, the gathered material on the field, and in this thesis, has begun painting a picture of the many realities of what it entails to be Arhuaco.

In order to demonstrate the different lifestyles among the Arhuacos, I have decided to include abstracts from the interviews with the participants concerning daily life and routines. Many participants expressed that they had to live in “two worlds”, which demanded different things from them. Other participants were more submerged in one of these “worlds”. For example, one of the students I spoke with had adopted a life more similar to the occidental world, and one female participant lived a more traditional life in the Sierra and rarely had much contact with non-indigenous people. Neither of them is more Arhuaco than the other; they simply have different lifestyles and experiences of being Arhuaco.

“How does the day-to-day life unfold? Well, you go to your farm. If you have to tidy up the farm, you tidy it up, right? If you have animals, you look for food for your animals. Yes, you have a kind of small routine, but it’s something related to nature. So, being indigenous means living day by day in nature, cultivating for oneself and one’s family” – Participants A3

“I’m working in the city, but I also live in the Sierra, so I come and go, from the mountains to the city. Around 7.30 we are opening the store. I’m working as the store coordinator [...]. During the weekend we can open, and after opening, I go the Sierra” – Participant B2

An important concept concerning indigenous identity is “indigeneity”, a term that emerged in the 1980s and the 1990s when indigenous communities began organizing around demands for territory, cultural recognition and political participation (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019). The term became a strategy for indigenous people to claim citizenship, rights, and justice. Although the definition of the term

remains an ongoing debate, it has “increasingly come to be seen as a product of the ways in which ‘difference is produced culturally and politically’” (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019, p. 21). Traditionally, indigenous people have been defined by their land use and the belonging to specific geographic areas, often in contrast to modernity and the market economy (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019). However, indigeneity is the opposite of this static form of identity and is “continually made and re-made through historical encounters, government policies, and indigenous mobilizations” as well as other factors like class, language, ethnicity and racialized hierarchies (Rivera Andía & Ødegaard, 2019, p. 23). Thus, what it entails being Arhuaco is not only a matter of where people live, but Arhuaco identity is impacted by several events and factors like the colonization by the Spaniards, ethnohistory enforced by the newly founded republic, oppression and domination under the civil war, multiculturalist policies in the 1960s, Arhuacos political commitment, encounters with people from different parts of the world, engagement with social media, and many, many other factors.

2.3.2 ARHUACO, IKU OR WINTUKWA?

Throughout academic literature, the Arhuacos have been referred to by several names: Aruak, Arahuaco, Ijca, Iku, Ica, Vintukua, Wintukwa, Wiktukua, Bíntukwa. "Iku" and the related names are the terms of the Arhuacos' language. Occasionally, the indigenous group is called "The people of Iku/Icja/Ica." However, since this is their native language, this name will not be used in this thesis unless it refers to the actual traditional language among the Arhuacos. Tracy explains that the reason behind the confusion between Wintukwa/Vinukua and Bíntukwa is that the "B" is often written as a "V", which reveals Spanish influence, as the Spanish "B" and "V" are similar (Tracy, 1988). He also stated that there seems to be no consensus on what the Arhuacos should be called, which corresponds with my experience. Interestingly, both the National Gold Museum in Santa Marta and Bogotá refer to the group as "Wintukua". This is also how one of the participants spelled the name when asked to.

In conversations with the participants of this project, the majority referred to themselves as “Arhuaco”. When explicitly asked whether they preferred “Arhuaco” or “Wintuwka”, the majority favored the former, and not all participants were familiar with the “Wintukwa” name. Considering this, this thesis will use the name “Arhuaco” when referring to the indigenous group. Words in Iku will be used when describing specific cultural aspects. However, the spelling might not be correct as Iku is mainly an oral tradition, and spelling varies among the communities.

2.4 THE ARHUACOS

2.4.1 ARHUACO TERRITORY AND VILLAGES

Arhuaco territory is located in different climatic zones and altitudes in the southern part of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and most of the territories belong to the departments of Cesar, Magdalena, and Guajira (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). The resguardos belonging to the peoples of Sierra Nevada today, only cover around half of what was originally within the Black Line territory (IWGIA, 2018). It is important to note that the Arhuacos do not distinguish between the resguardos, the resguardo expansion areas, and the Black Line territory. For them, this is all part of their ancestral territory and is not just perceived as a geographical measurement of a physical space. Instead, territory involves both the physical space, the materials within that space, like the soil, trees, air, and non-human species, and a spiritual space in which Arhuaco culture and knowledge develop (Cuadros et al., 2017). As such, territories cannot be separated from or dismantled from each other, as each piece of land and everything related to that land is connected (Ulloa, 2011). Ulloa emphasizes that “the meaning of territory for them goes beyond legal recognitions and entitlements to collective lands; it is a definition that implicitly includes territorial control and self-government within it, as well as culturally based uses and management of natural resources” (Ulloa, 2011, p. 87). My own data support this, and the participants highlighted the connection between Arhuaco territory and identity. This topic will be further explored in section 5.1.3.

It is within the territories the different Arhuaco villages are located. A traditional Arhuaco village comprises 10-50 traditional houses where parents and unmarried children live together. According to my observations, each village usually has one bigger building dedicated to meetings and communal affairs, in addition to two houses where the spiritual leader and his wife live separately. It is common for Arhuaco villages to have their own primary and secondary schools, and Arhuaco families who live outside of or on the outskirts of the village send their children to the village during the school week and then return home during weekends. This was a typical practice for the two villages I visited in the lowlands. Arhuaco education was generally not a topic the participants and I spent much time discussing. However, Murillo looked into how the curriculum used in Simunurwa village emphasizes indigenous perspectives. This particular school serves as a guide to other Arhuaco schools “in the design and implementation of locally relevant curricula” (Murillo, 2009, p. 432). The curriculum used in Simunurwa, focuses on teaching Iku in the first and second grades before incorporating Spanish in the following grades. This helps the communities not only to preserve their local language and culture but also to develop the proper academic skills that are needed to attend higher education, resulting in most Arhuacos in the lowlands being bilingual; however, this study did not disclose whether or not this is the case in the highlands.

The location of the villages varies a lot, some being fairly new settlements close to the ocean, others being high up in the mountain range. In the lowlands of the territory, there is a closer connection to the occidental world than in the highlands. Even though I did not visit villages in the higher parts of the Sierra Nevada, several participants emphasized that the influence of the non-indigenous world would decrease the further up the mountain range one moved. In the lowlands, people had stronger connections to nearby towns, regularly buying products like soap, oil, and salt. They also used technology like solar panels, Internet, and mobile phones. The study participants pointed out that this was not the case in the highlands, where life was “more simple”, and they expressed that some Arhuacos living in the higher parts of the Sierra Nevada never leave the mountain range and are rarely even seen in the lowlands of the resguardo.

2.4.2 ARHUACO LIFESTYLE

As a result of Arhuaco villages being located in various climatic zones, different Arhuaco villages grow different kinds of foods. Lizzerralde et al. describe the Arhuacos as semi-nomadic people, as their observations assert that the Arhuacos moved between the highlands and lowlands according to what type of foods they were in need of. This way of life was adopted during the last two centuries as a result of the invasion by the Spanish conquistadores, but also later annexation by the Colombian state (Lizzerralde et al., 1987). Conversely, my experience and observations with Arhuacos living in lower parts of the mountain range conclude that most Arhuacos have permanent residences, either in villages, the outskirts of the villages, or even nearby towns. Regardless of the permanent residences, the Arhuaco lifestyle is characterized by a lot of movement.

As stressed in section 2.3.1, daily life among the Arhuacos is very different for each person. This section will describe the more traditional lifestyle in the resguardos in Sierra Nevada. The daily routine in the resguardos mostly depends on the present needs and chores the day requires. It also depends on where one is located in the territory. Some Arhuacos living in more newly reacquired land along the coast might also own a farm with animals higher up in the mountains that they need to look after. Arhuacos living on the outskirts of a village might visit or run errands on behalf of their family or the village. Arhuacos in the lowlands may ride their moto to buy necessary products in nearby towns, and students regularly travel between the cities and the communities. In other words, the Arhuaco lifestyle is characterized by a lot of spontaneous movement, and no day in the Sierra is like the other. Nonetheless, some patterns are noticeable. Arhuacos living in the resguardos usually begin their day when the sun rises at 4-5 am. This is when “Marnek” starts, which is the name of the morning labor done before consuming any meals. The Marnek is not a specific task but depends on the daily necessities. For the men, Marnek can be anything from cutting wood for cooking, carrying rocks to build houses, roads, or stairs, or repairing roads after a night of heavy rain. For women, the Marnek usually consists of caring

for the crops, looking after children, tending to animals, and making breakfast. After breakfast, the work continues until lunch, and the time afterward is usually spent running errands away from home. After darkness, around 6 pm, the women and men gather, sometimes together, sometimes in separate groups. The women usually spend this time working on a Tutu, a traditional backpack, or practicing the Kurkuna, an instrument that Arhuaco women use to spin thread. The men usually sit around the firepit while engaging in conversations and practicing the Yáboro, which is a gourd container storing powdered seashells which, with a stick, is mixed with coca leaves in their mouths (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022). These two devices, the Kurkuna and Yáboro, are sacred elements and, together with the Tutu, will be described in more detail in section 5.1.1.

Arhuaco men and women usually spend time working on their traditional garments during the day. Some participants in this study explained that it has become increasingly common for women to use machinery in nearby towns and cities to make their clothes during the last decades. As many of the interviews took place in a store owned by an organization that sells traditional handmade backpacks, traditional attire was a common theme in these interviews. The participants explained that the fabric used in the traditional clothing depends on where in the territory the people are located; in the highlands of the Sierra, wool is used, and these clothes are usually darker in color, whereas, in the lowlands, the clothes are primarily made out of cotton and are white. Now that machinery is introduced, embroidery in different colors around the neck and arm sleeves is common among women. Women also make necklaces and bracelets complementary to the colors in the embroidery. Another essential part of the traditional attire is the “tutu”, the traditional backpack, which will be elaborated on in section 5.1.1. Selling the traditional garments is frowned upon among the Arhuacos, as it is something intimate and identifying factor in determining who belongs to the community:

“There are people who at times come to buy or rent Arhuaco attire, but it is very traditional, and it is considered prohibited. This is because it is as if we are giving part of our culture to civilians, and it feels like we are losing our customs. This clothing is not causal; it’s something that identifies the Arhuaco because there are various indigenous groups, and our clothing and language set us apart.” – Participant B2

2.4.3 AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMY

Subsistence agriculture is the basis of Arhuaco's traditional economy, and as mentioned earlier, the communities cultivate different crops depending on the altitude in which they are located. Postigo and Guáqueta-Solórzano points out that the "cultivation of crop at different elevation diversifies production, allowing better use of the different eco-climatic conditions, and risk reduction in the face of extreme events"(Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022, p. 3). According to my observations, in the lowlands, the communities typically cultivate ayu, sugar cane, bananas, corn, mangoes, papaya, coffee, cacao,

avocados, malanga, yuca, potatoes, and pumpkins. Ayu is the Iku word for the coca plant, which is considered a sacred plant in Arhuaco communities. It is involved in spiritual rituals and daily life, as will be explained in section 5.1.1.3 “spiritual elements in daily life”. Although it is only men who traditionally chew the ayu, the ayu can also be used as a medicine for both genders. Crops typically grown in the highlands are, according to Lizzerralde et al., corn, potatoes, beans, cabbage, chili and other vegetables (Lizzerralde et al., 1987). However, since the study by Lizzerralde et.al. was conducted more than 40 years ago, this might have changed as a result of rising temperatures in the mountain range. A few participants explained that crops that in the past would not have been able to grow in the highlands, because of the cold environment, are now commonly cultivated. Postigo and Guáqueta-Solórzano confirm this as they write about Arhuaco's perceptions on impacts of climate variability: "The perceived impacts were melting glaciers, increased flooding, and yield reduction of traditional crops such as corn and beans in the highlands, and coffee and bananas in the lowlands" (Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022, p. 9). Participants' observations on climate change in the Sierra Nevada will be described in section 5.3.1.

Lizzerralde et al. emphasizes that the Arhuacos use the land based on respect for the environment and their ambition is to "never take more from the Earth than what we can give back" (Lizzerralde et al., 1987, p. 68). This is coherent with my collected data, and several participants stressed the importance of caring for their natural surroundings and not taking more than they would need from Mother Earth. The Arhuacos are also concerned with “giving back” to nature, as exemplified by the "pagamento" practice. When the communities have to intervene in nature, for example, to clear a field to grow crops, making a "pagamento" is fundamental. This ritual is used in numerous situations and will be elaborated on in section 5.1.2.

Even though the Arhuacos have no ancestral ties to coffee, coffee is the most important source of income for most of their communities, and the income is used to buy products like oil, salt, rain boots, school supplies, or even to buy back ancestral land belonging to the Black Line. This economic activity is nothing new, as Tracy observed the same tendency in the 1980s: “During this century they [the Arhuacos] have been drawn increasingly into the national economy due to the necessity of buying items like salt, pots and pans, and metal tools” (Tracy, 1988, p. 6). As mentioned earlier, these interactions with the occidental world vary depending on where in the resguardo one is located. The Arhuacos typically sell their coffee through trading organizations.

A growing part of Arhuaco daily life involves tourism and social media. Some Arhuacos work as tour guides for companies or even independently, teaching tourists about their culture and beliefs. A few Arhuacos also use social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, where they regularly share their

knowledge and insights about their culture. This study did not disclose whether these activities accumulate economic value that serve the communities.

2.4.4 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The political engagement among the Arhuacos was explained in section 2.2. However, the societal and political structure will be the main focus of this section. The highest authority in Arhuaco communities is the Mamos. The Mamos are both the spiritual and the political leaders of the Arhuacos. Each village has at least one Mamo and an apprentice training to become a Mamo in the future. Lizzarralde et al. states that the Mamo position is usually hereditary through the paternal line. However, it is also possible to be elected at age 9-10 and begin lifelong spiritual training at this point in life (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). This coincides with my data, and one participant explained the process of becoming a Mamo like this:

“There are two methods of becoming a Mamo. One is through generations. For example, there is a Mamo, and his son will become a future Mamo. The Mamo starts preparing the child from a young age. [The second method:] Sometimes, someone comes along, who after some time, decides they want to become a Mamo. That comes at a cost, not in terms of money or anything like that, but a spiritual cost. And in the end, the potential Mamo have to fulfill certain spiritual obligations. Many people won't pass this test. It's like the child of an artist; not all of them becomes artists themselves” – Participant A3

According to Suárez-Krabbe, the Mamos are the highest authority “in the sense that they are the mediums through whom communion with the Mother [Mother Earth] takes place” (Suárez-Krabbe, 2011, p. 341), and this is essential to ensure that community members abide with the Law of Origin, Seyn Zare, which is the fundamental sacred law among the Arhuacos. This law is an integral element of Arhuaco's worldview and will be expanded on in the next section.

The Mamos possess deep ecological knowledge gained through lifelong intellectual and spiritual training, developed for acquiring an ecological awareness between humans and nature (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). One of the primary responsibilities of the Mamo is to take care of and preserve Arhuaco ancestral culture, and because of the deep connection between Arhuacos and their territory, this responsibility also includes taking care of the Sierra Nevada. As Caudros et al. states: “permanence of the culture depends on the territory” (Cuadros et al., 2017, p. 439). Another responsibility the Mamos have is the management of significant life events like baptism, coming of-age rituals, marriage, and burial rituals (Cuadros et al., 2017). Spiritual and ecological knowledge gives a person social status in Arhuaco communities, which is the reason behind the Mamo's social position. This position is based on respect and recognition by other Arhuacos. In addition to ecological knowledge, the Mamo have knowledge of village structure and the needs of the community members (Lizzarralde et al., 1987).

Other authorities in the Arhuaco village are the Semanero, the Cabildo, and the Cabildo Gobernador. The Semanero are responsible for law enforcement (Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022). According to my observation from one village in the lowlands, the Semanero position is a responsibility that all the households in the village take turns having. The Cabildo position stems from colonial times and is the village mayor. The Cabildo is elected after a general assembly in which the Arhuacos meet yearly to select Comisarios. The Comisarios are the civil authorities responsible for solving issues of internal law and order, and it is among the Comisarios and the Mamos that the Cabildo Gobernador is elected (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). The Cabildo Gobernador is the highest political authority of the Arhuacos, but still under the authority of the Mamos, and is the leading representative of Arhuaco interest in meetings with the Colombian state (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). The political organization CIT, mentioned in section 2.2.4, is formed by Mamos from every community in the resguardos. Postigo and Guáqueta-Solórzano explain that “the structure of the CIT is the general assembly formed by all the Mamos and the Cabildo governor” (Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022, p. 3). Thus, the Arhuacos have built a political system revolving around their Mamos in order to mediate the spiritual guidelines to the occidental world (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). Lizzarralde et al. concludes that this social structure has been efficient and makes it possible for the Arhuacos to “formulate their demands for land autonomy in a way that Western society not only understand but party negotiate with” (Lizzarralde et al., 1987, p. 72). These demands are mainly aimed at strengthening territorial control and self-determination, as described in section 2.2.4.

2.4.5 ARHUACO WORLDVIEW

The following section describes Arhuaco's worldview and mythical history, which is the fundament of Arhuaco's knowledge. This section is based on the texts by Lizzarralde et. al., Cuadros et. al., Pinto-Marroquin et. al., Molinares, in addition to interviews with the participants of this study. When it comes to Arhuaco's mythical history, this was not a topic that was discussed in any of the interviews, which is why this particular section is based on secondary data. The term worldview can be defined as a "structured vision by means of which the members of a community coherently combine their notions about the environment in which they live and about the cosmos in which they situate human life" (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022, p. 2). This concept is further explored in section 3.4 of the theory chapter.

According to Arhuaco's creation story, the history of the universe is divided into two phases: before and after the dawn. The first phase, before dawn, was characterized by no light and materialization. Everything that existed, existed in pure thought or in a spiritual state (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022). As a result of this, everything that manifested itself physically after the dawn also has a spiritual counterpart. These dimensions, the spiritual and the material complement each other, and the dialogue between them is called Marunzama (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022). The Mamos are the spokesmen and interpreters of

Marunzama, and this dialogue is essential to keeping the balance in the universe (Cuadros et al., 2017). One way the Arhuacos uphold the balance of the spiritual and the material in the universe is to perform "pagamentos", a practice that will be explained in section 5.1.2.

During the first phase, the Law of Origin was established. As the sacred and ancestral Law created before the dawn, "the material realization [of the universe] was already determined by this law" (Cuadros et al., 2017, p. 446). This means that, according to Arhuaco's worldview, the Law of Origin governs everything in the universe, and it is not restricted to a specific culture as it preexists every other rule or law created by humans (Cuadros et al., 2017). The Mamos are responsible for interpreting, transmitting, and enforcing the Law of Origin to guarantee cultural preservation (Postigo & Guáqueta-Solórzano, 2022). There is a strong connection between the Law of Origin and Arhuaco's ancestral territory, as it is within the territory that the Law of Origin can be fulfilled. As mentioned in section 2.4.1, the territory is perceived not just as a geographical space but involves the physical space, the materials within that space, and the spiritual space in which the culture and knowledge are developed and preserved. As Ulloa states:

From this perspective, territory is seen and felt as an experience of the sacred in daily life, as an adherence to sacred laws, as interaction with other beings who may or may not be human, and as the management of the relations that involved therein. (Ulloa, 2011, p. 86)

Thus, Arhuaco's ancestral territory is essential in their worldview, as it is within it that the communities can adhere to their sacred law. The Black Line territory comprises 59 sacred connection points, which, according to the Gold Museum in Santa Marta, are places that unite the spiritual and material worlds and where the Mamos get a lot of their knowledge from. The Law of Origin requires the Arhuacos to recover and control the sacred sites within the Black Line to ensure the cultural survival of their communities: "permanence of the culture depends on the territory because without territory there is no identity or culture" (Cuadros et al., 2017, p. 4). This is why recovery of The Black Line territory is one of Arhuaco's main political struggles.

During the second phase of the history of the universe, after dawn, Kaku Serenkua, Father Creator, began the materialization of the universe (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). In this phase, all elements in the world took their physical form, and Kaku Serenkua entrusted the Arhuacos with specific knowledge about Mother Earth (Lizzarralde et al., 1987). It was explained to the Arhuacos that humans owe their existence to Mother Earth, and thus, She was to be appreciated and respected. Rodríguez states: "To us, Arhuacos, the earth is like a mother whom we should cherish and respect. We may take from Her, but in the right way" (Rodríguez, 1997, p. 25). This position was shared by the participants of this study and will be explored more in detail in the empirical chapter.

It is important to note that Mother Earth is not perceived as foreign or disconnected from other beings. On the contrary, all beings, including humans, are material manifestations of specific spiritual characteristics of Mother Earth (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022). This includes elements traditionally considered “objects” in Western epistemology, such as water, trees, and rocks, which all embody a living force that maintains and sustains the universe (Murillo, 2009). As such, human beings are not separated from the natural world, and our well-being is linked to the physical and spiritual well-beings of everything around us. The mountains, trees, rivers, soil, insects, animals, and humans are interconnected in Arhuaco thought.

2.4.5.1 Arhuaco worldview and environmental protection

To summarize, for the Arhuacos, "the mountain range is a sacred place, the center of the world, where nature is understood as the embodiment of a living force that maintains and sustains the universe" (Murillo, 2009, p. 423). This is supported by data from this study, and one of the participants summarized Arhuaco worldview like this:

“Speaking of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, we have even said that the Sierra is the heart of the world. Why is it the heart of the world? Because the Sierra is a microworld. We have snow, we have all the plants from the earth, paramo plants, jungle plants, cacti, we have the sea and so on, all in a small space. And in this small space, we indigenous people have stayed to protect this wealth. ” – Participant A9

Arhuaco's worldview is based on the fulfillment of the Law of Origin, which cannot be separated from their ancestral territory (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022). Because the four indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada is the bearer of the Law of Origin, “they have the mission to watch over the balance of the forces that regulate Mother Nature. [...] They must teach and set an example to the rest of humanity about the responsibility of all, to maintain the natural balance for the well-being of humanity” (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022, p. 8). As a result of this responsibility, the Kogui, Wiwa, Kankuamo, and Arhuaco refer to themselves as the "elder brothers". Non-indigenous people are called "the younger brothers". The relationship between the elder brothers, and their relationship to their mission, can be explained by using the metaphor of a table: "if the table is the world, the four indigenous peoples are the tables legs. If one is weakened, the whole Sierra – and thus the world – is also brought out of balance" (Suárez-Krabbe, 2011, p. 350). Although there are differences between the groups, like clothing, language, and degree of interaction with the outside world, their worldview binds them together.

It is pointed out by Pinto-Marroquin et al. that “Arhuaco people have profound ecological ethics at the core of their cosmovision” (Pinto-Marroquin et al., 2022, p. 17). This is supported by Ulloa when he states that the Arhuacos use the Law of Origin as the fundament for the environmental management of

the mountain range, and this cultural approach is preferred as opposed to a more political or technical approaches (Ulloa, 2011). Cuadros. et al. echoes this environmental aspect of the Arhuaco worldview: “Because the Arhuaco people were located in a sacred territory of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, so spiritually we have to seek for the balance and the sustainability of life in the world and the universe” (Cuadros et al., 2017, p. 4). As pointed out by several of the participants of this study, recovery of territory then is not only about cultural survival, but it would also serve as environmental protection. Territory expansion, in their mindset, equals protection of the natural world and Mother Earth, which is essential for preserving Arhuaco culture.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on the following concepts: indigenous knowledge, worldviews, and degrowth. As the thesis brings attention to different kinds of epistemologies, the chapter will begin with explaining the term "epistemological domination" in relation to the colonial conquest and how this has had consequences for people of the Global South. Following this, the concepts indigenous knowledge and worldviews are explored. Lastly, the chapter explains degrowth movement and how this movement relates to the Global South and indigenous perspectives. Although other theories and concepts could have been useful in the analysis, the abovementioned concepts are preferred due to the scope of the study.

3.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL DOMINATION

The colonial conquest, described from the indigenous experience in Colombia in section 2.1.1, was not just a consequence of Europe's development of technological and institutional elements between 1450 and 1750 (Pattberg, 2007). The conquest also required a new way of thinking, resulting in a new worldview. Sousa Santos, cited in Breidlid, states:

From the fifteenth century onwards, the construction of the modern/colonial world-system ... rested upon multiple "creative destructions", often carried out on behalf of "civilizing", liberating, or emancipatory projects, aimed at reducing the understandings of the world to the logic of Western epistemology. (Breidlid, 2013)

It is not possible to exploit, dominate, and enslave people while at the same time believing in their humanity and inheriting worth and rights. As a precondition for the colonial conquest, people of the Global South were cast as irrational, underdeveloped, uncivilized, barbaric, savages, and less-than-human (Hickel, 2021b). Of course, it was not only the people themselves who were cast in this light but also their knowledge, beliefs, and values. In contrast, the West was characterized as "rational, dynamic, civilized and progressive" (Breidlid, 2013, p. 9). In later years, this discourse was named Orientalism by Said in 1978. Although his term was more explicitly focused on the Arabic-Islamic world, Said pointed out that a more generalized understanding of the concept is "a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'orient' and (most of the time) 'the occident'" (Wallerstein, 2007, p. 69). Under this discourse, the subject (the Global North) produces knowledge about the Orient (the Global South) based on stereotypes convenient for the subjects' interests. After the establishment of the Orientalist/colonial discourse, European values, knowledges, and sciences were used to justify and rationalize colonization (Breidlid, 2013).

One influential person who helped lay the foundation for the colonial conquest during the Enlightenment was René Descartes. Descartes stated that there was a fundamental dichotomy between mind and matter

and that "humans are unique among all creatures in having minds (or souls)" (Hickel, 2021b, p. 68), pointing to humans' intimate connection to God. The rest of God's creation was considered unthinking material. Based on this unbridgeable dichotomy, humans were epistemologically separated from the natural world. This came to be known as "dualism", and during the Enlightenment, this worldview became dominant for the first time in history (Hickel, 2021b). The new dualist worldview helped cast people of the Global South as barbaric and irrational and they came to be seen as closer to nature than humans, and subsequently considered in the same way as nature; "unthinking materials" and objects. Hickel marks: "dualism was recruited in order to justify the appropriation not only of land in the colonies, but of the bodies of the colonized themselves" (Hickel, 2021b, p. 76).

3.1.1 THE DISENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD

Dualism is also closely linked to what Pattberg calls "the ideology of domination and control of nature" which developed parallel to Europe's colonial conquest (Pattberg, 2007). Without going into too much detail, most people in Europe went from seeing the world and living beings as interconnected, to believing in a worldview where humans were given a privileged place and possessed the right to extract, commodify and plunder nature. This process signified a disenchantment and demystification of the natural world, in favor of scientific and economic progress. Hickel points out that animistic ideas which were common before the Enlightenment, limit the extent of unsustainable practice because "as long as the earth was considered to be alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behavior to carry out destructive acts against it" (Hickel, 2021b, p. 67). This is not to say that people did not utilize nature for their own good, as humans have always shaped their natural environment. However, such actions were motivated to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and housing or to express spiritual beliefs (Pattberg, 2007).

Going back to Descartes, he claimed that the purpose of science was "to make ourselves the masters and possessors of nature". Hickel asserts that this ethic remains in our culture and that "we not only regard the living world as other, we regard it as an enemy – something that needs to be fought and subdued by the forces of science and reason" (Hickel, 2021b, p. 78). Pattberg supports this and states "the ideology of domination over nature is still with us today; indeed it has submerged to deeper layers of consciousness, not only in Western civilization, but also to almost every culture on earth" (Pattberg, 2007, p. 7). He asserts that this ideology is deeply rooted in our everyday beliefs, actions, reflections, and hopes, making it difficult to bring about any real change regarding the ecological crisis we face today. Breidlid reiterates this when he writes: "While colonialism and the capitalist world system have been beset with territorial, political and economic conquest, Western science is based on the same idea of conquest, that is, not respecting the earth ecological limits" (Breidlid, 2013, p. 24).

3.1.2 UNIVERSALISM

Historical subjugation and conquest of nature and humans have shaped what Western epistemology consists of today. Breidlid writes: “The trajectory of Western epistemic hegemony is rather inextricably linked to the spread of colonialism and capitalism and to the dislocation of other epistemologies” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 15). The political and cultural environment in which Western epistemology developed has since long been identified, and thus, Western epistemology cannot be credited as transcultural and universal. Sousa Santos also makes the connection between Western epistemology, colonialism and capitalism:

As I have been arguing, the hegemony of the epistemologies of the North cannot be explained as a mere result of the triumph of one epistemological option among others. It is, rather, both the product and a crucial component of the global expansion of Western-centric capitalism and colonialism. (Sousa Santos, 2019a, p. 226)

Wallerstein points out that one of the specific features of the capitalist world-economy was precisely this; “the development of an original epistemology, which it then used as a key element in maintaining its capacity to operate” (Wallerstein, 2007, p. 88). It is important to note that Western epistemology is not just a single epistemology but several of which share certain assumptions and one of these assumptions is universalism (Sousa Santos, 2019b). The universalistic truth claims of Western epistemology led to hegemonic control of epistemologies that did not share these claims. Breidlid points out that “since the West’s truth claims were indisputable, epistemologies with no universalistic truth claims were easily colonized, Orientalized, and rubbished” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 18).

This section was not intended to undermine Western epistemologies and science's significant and unique contributions. Rather, it was meant to put into perspective the “self-proclaimed superior position” Western epistemologies has held for a very long time (Breidlid, 2013, p. 21) and to illuminate the subjugation of epistemologies of the South.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH

Epistemologies that do not share the universalistic aspect of Western epistemology, and as a result have been subjugated, can be collectively referred to as “epistemologies of the South”. Sousa Santos states that:

The epistemologies of the South concern the production and validation of knowledge’s anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy (Sousa Santos, 2019b, p. 1)

Their commonality lies in the fact that they were created in social and political struggles and, therefore, cannot be separated from these struggles. Sousa Santos marks that “there are epistemologies of the South only because, and to the extent that, there are epistemologies of the North. The epistemologies of the South exist today so that they will not be necessary someday” (Sousa Santos, 2019b, p. 2). The goal of the epistemologies of the South is not to replace Western epistemologies but to “overcome the hierarchical dichotomy between North and South” (Sousa Santos, 2019b, p. 7) and to shift the focus from universalism to pluriversalism. Another important aim is to reveal the massive “epistemicide”, which is what De Sousa Santos calls the destructions of other non-dominant epistemologies. The epistemologies of the South hold a unique opportunity to challenge dominant Western epistemologies and expand our understanding of what is considered knowledge and how we value them. Reiterating Hopper, the epistemologies of the South could complement Western epistemology and “generate forms of creativity that benefit and empower everyone” (Hoppers, 2002, p. 16).

3.3 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Indigenous knowledge gained attention during the indigenous movements in the 1970s and the 1980s (Drahos, 2014). Until then, for centuries, indigenous knowledges had been subjugated and rendered irrelevant in the global community (Hoppers, 2002) due to Western epistemology’s hegemonic position. This section will provide a discussion of terminology, definitions, and characteristics of indigenous knowledges.

3.3.1 TERMINOLOGY

The terms indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and traditional knowledge are sometimes used interchangeably. However, to find the most suitable concept for this thesis, it is necessary to define each term.

Drahos points out that traditional knowledge might be the most open-ended concept of the three and claims that all societies have traditional knowledge (Drahos, 2014). He defines the term as a type of knowledge that “cannot be specified by means of rules and can only be passed on through relationships of close learning such as master and apprentice” (Drahos, 2014, p. 23). As such, this type of knowledge depends on tradition. He further argues that traditional knowledge is sometimes connected to environmental or local knowledge held by particular groups like farmers and fishermen, who may or may not be indigenous, which can explain the interchangeable use of the terms.

Moodie (cited in Breidlid, 2013) states that “indigenous knowledges” are often called “local knowledges” and points to the underlying implication of doing this:

Local can only be understood in relation to “universal”, and thus the term indigenous knowledge incurs a string of negative judgments: “universal” is identified with “mainstream”, and hence with “progress”. And so “local” comes to be understood as referring to an intellectual backwater, and whatever is indigenous is then regarded as primitive, or at best, quaintly ethnic. (Breidlid, 2013, p. 31).

This is not to say that indigenous, and thus indigenous knowledges, is free of negative prejudices. According to Semali and Kincheloe, the concept “has often been associated in the Western context with the primitive, the wild, the natural” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 3). Continuing their argument, they state that to the extent “indigenous” has a meaning in the global context, it is “derived from a historical colonial relationship between indigenous peoples and European conquerors” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 12). Hoppers, on a more positive note, defines the word “indigenous” as something referring to the root, something natural or innate to, and further defines indigenous knowledge systems as “the combination of knowledge systems encompassing technology, social, economic and philosophical learning or educational, legal and governance systems” (Hoppers, 2002, p. 8).

For my purposes, the preferred term is “indigenous knowledge” as it “reflects ties to ancestry and collective identity” (Huffaker, 2021, p. 4). The plural version of the term is used when referring specifically to indigenous knowledge systems to recognize the broad and multiple knowledges the term encompasses. However, when speaking of Arhuaco knowledge, the singular form is used. Although the term indigenous knowledges contain negative preconceptions similar to the terms “traditional” and “local knowledge” I believe it is possible to recognize the historical derivation of the term while at the same time focusing on the insights and understandings these kinds of knowledges might provide.

3.3.2 DEFINING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Defining indigenous knowledges is a disputed topic. One of these debated issues is that there are multiple indigenous knowledges, and to lump all of these knowledges together as one would be inappropriate (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). Additionally, although most members of an indigenous community produce knowledge collectively, there might be discrepancies within this community as the indigenous experience, as explained in 2.2.1, is not the same for everyone. Breidlid states: “indigenous knowledge is not a monolithic concept... not everyone who identifies with a particular indigenous culture produces knowledge the same way, nor do different indigenous culture produce the same knowledge” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 43).

Furthermore, like any other knowledges, indigenous knowledges are constantly influenced by external actors. All cultures, especially colonized ones, are in a state of change where new knowledge is added,

and other knowledges are lost. Semali and Kincheloe state that “any study of indigenous knowledge in the academy must allow for its evolution and ever changing relationship to Eurocentric scientific and educational practice” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 23). To summarize, it is important to acknowledge the multiplex and various knowledges the term indigenous knowledges entail. Moreover, it is also crucial to recognize the nearly worldwide oppression and destruction of these knowledges and their people while at the same time being able to identify these knowledges as not only oppressed but also “knowledges of creativity, holism, ecological awareness and communality” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 53).

Keeping this in mind, it is possible to identify certain characteristics inherent to indigenous knowledges that bind them together. First of all, indigenous knowledges are situated and “produced in specific historical and cultural contexts” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 31). The concept refers to the “dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environments” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 3). These types of knowledges have thus developed in specific historical, cultural, and geographic areas, produced by people indigenous to that area (Grenier, 1998). A second characteristic of indigenous knowledges is that they are generally not produced by a set of prescribed rules or procedures (Breidlid, 2013). They are also usually transmitted orally across generations, which is the third characteristic. Andersson writes that indigenous knowledges are not typically expressed in written form but expressed and represented through diverse cultural practices (Andersson et al., 2021). Greiner supports this when he writes that indigenous knowledge is:

Stored in people’s memories and activities and is expressed in stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local languages and taxonomy, agricultural practices, equipment, materials, plant species and animals breeds. (Grenier, 1998, p. 2)

This reflects the fourth characteristic, namely that indigenous knowledges are as much skill as knowledge (Breidlid, 2013), and people engage with it in their everyday lives. As Semali and Kincheloe write “it lives in indigenous peoples cultures – not in archives or laboratories” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 40).

The fifth characteristic is that indigenous knowledges are fundamentally relational, and “the unity of man, nature and the spiritual make up the construction of knowledges” (Breidlid, 2020, p. 12), meaning that there is a strong focus on the relationship, both between humans, between humans and non-human beings, and between humans and the ecosystem that surrounds them. This is also why indigenous knowledges are characterized as holistic. Hoppers defines holistic as “an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units” (Hoppers, 2002, p. 13). Thus, humans and everything else on the planet cannot be separated from the natural world in which they exist. Breidlid writes that “the holistic nature of the interrelationship between nature,

human beings and the supernatural is founded on indigenous knowledge systems” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 34), which points to the sixth and last characteristic: the spiritual and supernatural.

Semali and Kincheloe explain the relational and spiritual connection like this: “The individual is connected to the group, the group to nature, and nature to the domain of the spiritual. Knowledge produced in such a context is shaped by the tenor of these relationships” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 42). Land and nature are often connected to the supernatural and spiritual, and “the sacredness of land is related to ancestral beliefs” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 37). Then, to sum up, indigenous knowledges are: (1) contextual and situated, (2) free of prescribed rules, (3) orally transmitted across generations, (4) as much skill as knowledge, (5) relational and holistic, and (6) spiritual and supernatural.

A challenge emerges after understanding the characteristics of indigenous knowledges. How can we comprehend such contextualized and relational knowledge when it is abstracted and decontextualized from its natural place of production? This is where the concept of “worldview” is essential. Semali and Kincheloe write that “any effort to understand or use such knowledges cannot be separated from the worldviews and epistemologies embraced by their producers” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 38). This is because the knowledges produced by indigenous people are inseparable from their larger worldviews, and cosmology grants contextual meaning to these knowledges (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). However, indigenous worldviews have been marginalized, dismissed, and ridiculed throughout modern history as they did not fit into “the rational and linear framework of Western knowledge” (Hoppers, 2002, p. 13). If indigenous worldviews are acknowledged at all, this often happens through a eurocentric point of view, and Walker (cited in Hart) points out that the marginalization of indigenous worldviews “has been and continue to be one of the major tools of colonization” (Hart, 2010, p. 4). In order to respect and fully understand the knowledges communicated in the conversations with the participants of this study, Arhuaco worldview was explained in section 2.6, and the following section grants space to define the concept.

3.4 WORLDVIEWS

“Worldviews” can be described as a “conceptual map of the world” which are the basis of our understanding of reality and help us make sense of our existence (Adinarayanan & Rekha, 2017). Hart points out that in most societies, there is one dominant worldview which is held by most members. However, alternative worldviews might exist within the same society (Hart, 2010). Worldviews are developed throughout a person’s lifetime from our lived experiences, and combine beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas to create an extensive map of reality. This map also includes interpretations of the past, present, and future (Schlitz et al., 2019). Our behavior is closely linked to our worldview, and worldviews profoundly impact goals, desires, perceptions, motivations, and values (Schlitz et al.,

2019). Put briefly, our worldview is a broad construct that navigates how we view ourselves and the world around us (Schlitz et al., 2019). As such, there is an apparent inter-relationship between ontology and worldview, demonstrated by Hart: “How people see the world will influence their understanding of what exists, and vice-versa” (Hart, 2010, p. 7).

Hart points out that worldviews are usually "unconsciously and uncritically taken for granted as the way things are" (Hart, 2010, p. 2). This is why worldviews can become rigid and resistant to change (Schlitz et al., 2019). Nonetheless, they can slowly change while acquiring new knowledge and experiences, or transform completely when an experience is so profound and disrupts people's steady state fundamentally, forcing them to change their perception of the world (Schlitz et al., 2019). A worldview transformation involves "a fundamental shift in perspective that results in long-lasting changes in people's sense of self, perception of the relationship to the world around them, and way of being" (Schlitz et al., 2019, p. 19). This transformation is focused on behavioral changes and involves epistemological changes in how people know what they know (Schlitz et al., 2019).

3.4.1 INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS

Many scholars have stressed the vast difference between indigenous worldviews and the dominant cultural worldviews in Western societies (Hart, 2010). According to Adinarayanan and Rekha, interconnectedness is inherent in different indigenous cultures. However, decompartmentalized worldviews, which is how they perceive dominant Western worldviews, do not allow this interconnectedness (Adinarayanan & Rekha, 2017). Indigenous worldviews have developed due to people's close relationship with the natural world, resulting in interconnectedness as a foundation. Other aspects common to these worldviews are outlined by Simpsons' seven principles of indigenous worldviews:

First, knowledge is holistic, cyclic, and depend upon relationships and connections to living and non-living beings and entities. Second, there are many truths, and these truths are dependent upon individual experiences. Third, everything is alive. Fourth, all things are equal. Fifth, the land is sacred. Sixth, the relationship between people and the spiritual world is important. Seventh, human beings are least important in the world. (Hart, 2010, p. 2)

Hart describes these types of worldviews as “relational worldviews” where there is a strong emphasis on spirit and spirituality, as well as a sense of “communitism” and “respectful individualism”. Communitism is defined as “the sense of community tied together by familial relations and the families’ commitment to it” (Hart, 2010, p. 3), and respectful individualism is characterized as a way of being characterized by freedom in self-expression as a result of societies recognition and trust in the individuals’ ability to consider the needs of the community when making actions (Hart, 2010)

3.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES AND WORLDVIEWS

In what ways can indigenous knowledges and indigenous worldviews be valuable and relevant in today's world? First and foremost, the recognition of indigenous knowledges would undoubtedly mean a great deal for indigenous communities worldwide. According to Horsthemke (cited in Breidlid, 2013), this would lead to:

Reclamation of cultural or traditional heritage; decolonization of mind and thought; recognition and acknowledgement of self-determining development; protection against further colonization, exploitation, appropriation, and/or commercialization; legitimation or validation of indigenous practices and worldviews. (Breidlid, 2013, p. 55)

Secondly, Horsthemke also points out that the recognition of indigenous knowledges would result in more caution against the subjugation of nature. Echoing this, Breidlid writes that "there is a growing recognition that huge ecological knowledges are stored in the indigenous communities globally, and that indigenous knowledge's biodiversity, and sustainable development are closely linked" (Breidlid, 2013, p. 38). Semali and Kincheloe support this and take it a step further as they note that some scholars want to use indigenous knowledge to counter the destruction of the natural world led by the Global North. They argue that "indigenous knowledge can facilitate this ambitious 21st century project because of its tendency to focus on the relationship of human beings to both one another and to their ecosystem" (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 16). Grenier similarly notes the potential of indigenous knowledges to help build a sustainable future. He argues that one of the main strengths of indigenous practices for sustainable development is that "they have developed in close contact with specific cultural and environmental conditions" (Grenier, 1998, p. 11).

Following this, Hoppers claims that Western knowledges, although invaluable, has not yet been capable of responding to the rapid destruction of earth's natural resources. She writes that "it is also recognized that a major threat to the sustainability of natural resources is the erosion of people's knowledge, and the basic reason for this is the low value attached to it" (Hoppers, 2002, p. 7). Further, she contends that the combination of local, contextualized skills and technologies offered by indigenous knowledges, and the mechanical and technological precision offered by Western knowledge systems could provide a form of creativity that could benefit and empower all people on the planet (Hoppers, 2002). The consensus is clear: with the challenges of our time, indigenous and Western knowledge systems must find a way to coexist.

It is important to point out that recognizing indigenous knowledges is not a miracle cure for sustainable alternatives, and not all indigenous knowledges are more sustainable than other comparable practices (Breidlid, 2013). As Grenier notes, the dichotomy of modern = unsustainable and traditional = sustainable is overly simplistic and, at times, harmful. (Grenier, 1998). Dichotomies like these contribute to romanticizing indigenous knowledges. As Breidlid writes, “the potential rebirth of indigenous knowledges does not mean that indigenous knowledges should be essentialized, romanticized, or presented as monolithic and uncontested even by indigenous populations” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 42).

A third contribution indigenous knowledges could provide is the unique possibility for Western cultural reassessment, as pointed out in section 3.2 “epistemologies of the South”. Semali and Kincheloe write that a dialogue between indigenous epistemologies and Western science would provide Westerners with a mirror in which they “would come to see themselves, their belief systems, and the knowledge they produce in a different light” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 39). They would become aware of how they appear to non-Westerners. In this way, one would use indigenous knowledges to provide a vantage point to view Eurocentric discourses. As such, indigenous knowledges could not only provide insights on ecological understanding and practices, but also fundamentally change our worldviews (Breidlid, 2013).

However, the recognition of indigenous knowledges and the dialogue between the epistemologies is not happening without pitfalls. Appropriation of indigenous knowledges by the Global North to serve their own interests is of great concern. The growing recognition of indigenous knowledges stems from its monetary value in the global markets (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). Another apprehension concerns how indigenous knowledges are utilized and that often, “they are made to fit the paradigms of Western epistemology” (Breidlid, 2013, p. 48). Semali and Kincheloe point out that speaking of indigenous knowledge systems in traditional Western terms, like botany and medicine, is “to inadvertently fragment knowledge systems in ways that subvert the holism of indigenous ways of understanding the world” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 21). In this process, indigenous knowledges are decontextualized and detached from the cultural connections that grant it meaning to their producers. “The holistic, transdisciplinary aspect of indigenous knowledge does not match the way knowledge in Western schooling is broken down, decontextualized, and taught in efficient fragments” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 46).

Semali and Kincheloe ask whether the study of indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledges is in itself a process of Europeanization and conclude that in some ways it is, but to refuse to act in fear of Europeanization reflects a view of “indigenous culture as an authentic, uncontaminated artifact that must be hermetically preserved” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 20). In order to overcome the challenges concerning appropriation and Europeanization, it is necessary to examine the process of assigning worth and value to indigenous knowledges. As mentioned in section 3.3.2, indigenous knowledges are

characterized as culturally grounded, and subsequently, Western sciences are “not culturally grounded” or transcultural/universal, as expanded on in section 3.1. In this process, indigenous knowledges are also implicitly demoted to “a lower order of knowledge production” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 21). Conversely, this chapter has emphasized the cultural and political context in which Western epistemology developed to “culturally ground” the knowledge tradition and to equalize the playing fields between different epistemologies. The following section will focus on a movement emerging from within Western epistemology and how this movement relates to the Global South and indigenous perspectives.

3.6 DEGROWTH

The following sections are primarily based on the works of degrowth movement proponents such as Hickel, Demaria, and Kallis. Degrowth was first introduced by André Gorz in 1972 (D'Alisa et al., 2015). The name “degrowth” is often criticized for using a "negation for a positive project" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 5) and some argue that a positive-loaded word would better describe the aims and goals of the movement. However, many degrowth advocates support the name as it is used as a "missile word" to challenge and disrupt assumptions taken for granted about the global economy (Hickel, 2020).

3.6.1 STREAMS OF THOUGHTS WITHIN DEGROWTH

Demaria et al. explain that degrowth derives from different streams of ecological and social thoughts and that identifying these is essential to fully grasp the concept (Demaria et al., 2013). The streams of thoughts that compromise degrowth are: (1) Ecology, (2) The critique of development and anti-utilitarianism, (3) The meaning of life and well-being, (4) Bioeconomics, (5) Deeper democracy, and (6) Justice. Each of these will briefly be described before explaining what degrowth entails.

The main argument within the first stream of thought, ecology, is that ecosystems have inherent value. In this sense, ecosystems are not viewed as just environments or resources deemed valuable after human intervention. This perspective also highlights the competition between ecosystems and industrial production and consumption, and the ecology stream rejects the possibility of absolute decoupling between “industrial expansion and ecological destruction”(Demaria et al., 2013, p. 196). The second stream of thought essential in the degrowth movement is the critique of development and praise for anti-utilitarianism. This source mainly has two standpoints, the first being the “critique of the uniformization of cultures due to the widespread adoption of particular technologies and consumption and production models experienced in the global north” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 196) and the second is the critique of “homo economicus” and the representation of human beings as primarily economic agents driven by self-interest and utility maximation. It is pointed out that this is just one perception of economic practice

by humans and “economic relations based on sharing, gifts and reciprocity, where social relations and conviviality are central” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 197).

The third perspective, “the meaning of life and well-being”, rests on the fundament of the critique of the modern lifestyle based on “working more, earning more, selling more, and buying more” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 197). Under this stream of thought, the Easterlin paradox, which will be explained more in detail in section 3.6.2, is emphasized. Voluntary simplicity is an important ideal in this regard, understood as “reducing individual consumption while seeing simple life as liberating and profound rather than restraining and limiting” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 197). The fourth stream, “bioeconomics,” takes ideas from ecological economy and industrial ecology. Georgescu-Roegen, who invented the term, argues that all natural resources are permanently degraded when utilized in economic activity and that the available resources on the planet are decreasing (Demaria et al., 2013). “Limits to growth”, a report published by Meadows et al., is one of the primary references here. An vital standpoint in this regard is the critique of “the belief in ecological modernisation which claims that new technologies and efficiency improvements are key solutions to the ecological crisis” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 198).

Regarding the degrowth movement's calls for deeper democracy, Demaria et al. state, “degrowth is a response to the lack of democratic debates on economic development, growth, technological innovation and advancement” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 199). However, there are conflicting opinions within the movement, specifically between people who defend present democratic institutions and want to improve them and people who insist on creating new institutions based on more direct and participatory models (Demaria et al., 2013). The last stream of thought mentioned by Demaria et al. is justice. Degrowth focuses on sustainability and “intentionally pursues and explores ways to make justice and sustainability compatible” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 199). The dynamic between the global North and the global South will be discussed more in section 3.6.3, but the justice movement within degrowth is also concerned with dynamics within nations.

Demaria et al. emphasize that it is necessary to recognize the influences on which the degrowth movement is built, as degrowth only makes sense when all streams of thoughts are considered. As Demaria et. al. write: “taken independently they can lead to incomplete and reductionist projects fundamentally incompatible with the ideas of the degrowth movement” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 206). The different streams of thoughts compromising the degrowth movement have their strengths and weaknesses; however, the fact that the movement is built up of multiple ideas also underlines one of degrowth's main strengths, emphasized by Latouche: “degrowth is not a concrete and universal alternative to growth, but a matrix of multiple alternatives” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 208).

3.6.2 WHAT IS DEGROWTH?

Degrowth signifies predominantly two things: a criticism of different elements of the current global economy and a desired direction in the years to come (D'Alisa et al., 2015). The criticism is aimed at four elements of the global economy: growth, capitalism, GDP, and commodification. The critique of economic growth was formulated by Gorz in the 1980s: “lack of realism consists in imagining that economic growth can still bring about increased human welfare, and indeed that it is still physically possible” (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 1). The relationship between economic growth and ecological destruction is adequately demonstrated, and there is proven direct and strong correlation between GDP, carbon emissions and resource use (D'Alisa et al., 2015). Degrowth also criticizes the idea of “green growth” and “sustainable development”, as “more growth means more energy demand, and more energy demand makes it all the more difficult to cover it with renewables” (Hickel, 2020, p. 1). Supporters of sustainable development and green growth claim that it is possible to decouple GDP growth from ecological impact and, in this way, continue to pursue exponential growth. However, as stressed by Hickel, “there is no historical evidence of long-term absolute decoupling of GDP from resource use” (Hickel, 2020, p. 1). No country on the planet has been able to reduce material use or carbon emissions while simultaneously growing the economy without outsourcing dirty industries (D'Alisa et al., 2015).

Not only is perpetual growth harmful to the earth, but it is also no longer necessary or desirable for human welfare and happiness. D'Alisa et al. point out that: “above a certain level, growth does not increase happiness” (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 6). This phenomenon is known as the Easterlin paradox, “the disconnect between income increase and life satisfaction over time” (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 197). When it comes to human welfare, Hickel writes that “it's clear that the relationship between GDP and human welfare breaks down after a certain point” (Hickel, 2021b, p. 176). At some point, more growth begins to have a negative impact on human welfare as growth begins to create more problems than solutions, as exemplified by Daly, cited in Hickel:

The continued pursuit of growth in high-income nations is exacerbating inequality and political instability, and contributing to problems like stress and depression from overwork and lack of sleep, ill health from pollution, diabetes and heart disease, and so on. (Hickel, 2021b, p. 177)

The next criticism made by degrowth is of capitalism. Hickel points out that although many past economic systems have been extractive, the characteristic of perpetual growth in the global economic system makes capitalism distinctive (Hickel, 2021a). Kallis states that growth economies, like capitalism, will collapse without growth. Degrowth would indicate a transition to “something” beyond capitalism (Kallis, 2018). This transition will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

Closely connected to the critique of growth and capitalism is the critique of GDP and the process of commodification. Hickel points out that it is not GDP in itself that is the problem, but the issue arises when it is linked to growth:

GDP itself doesn't have any impact in the real world, one way or the other. GDP growth, however, does. As soon as we start focusing on GDP growth, we're not only promoting the things GDP measures, we're promoting the indefinite increase of those things, regardless of the costs. (Hickel, 2021b)

Several degrowth supporters point out that degrowth is not about reducing GDP or aiming at negative growth but rather an aim to reduce energy and resource throughput. This would result in a reduction of GDP growth or even a decline in GDP. However, this would be acceptable and necessary "to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human well-being" (Hickel, 2020, p. 2). The last critique of the global economic system is commodification. Commodification is "the process of conversion of social products and socio-ecological services and relations into commodities with monetary value" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 4).

Degrowth's critiques lead to a new desired direction, what Demaria et al. call "the reproductive economy of care," where the focus is on reclaiming old commons and creating new ones:

Caring in common is embodied in new forms of living and producing, such as eco-communities and cooperatives and can be supported by new government institutions, such as work-sharing or basic and maximum income, institutions which can liberate time from paid work and make it available for unpaid communal and caring activities. (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 4).

A society like this is characterized by relying less on natural resources and thus needs to be organized in an entirely different way compared to how our society is organized today. Hickel points out that degrowth calls for "the economy to be organized instead around provisioning for human needs (use-value) through de-accumulation, de-enclosure and de-commodification" (Hickel, 2021a, p. 2). D'Alisa et al. mention keywords like sharing, simplicity, care and commons as key to transitioning to a degrowth society (D'Alisa et al., 2015). Degrowth is generally associated with the idea that "smaller can be beautiful", however, the emphasizes is on "different, not only less".

There has yet to be a consensus on how to transition to a degrowth society. D'Alisa et al. write that "there is no agreement in the degrowth literature about the politics and the political strategies through which alternative institutions, imbued with the values of degrowth, would come to replace the current institutions of capitalism" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 14). However, they point out that if they are to identify a consensus, it is that a transition can only happen as "the outcome of multiple strategies and multiple actors; a movement of movements changing both everyday practices and state institutions" (D'Alisa et

al., 2015, p. 14). Before looking into indigenous perspectives on degrowth, the next section will write about what Hickel calls "the anti-colonial politics of degrowth" (Hickel, 2021a).

3.6.3 DEGROWTH AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

As previously explained, the ecological breakdown is driven by the Global North. However, the consequences of global warming have affected the Global South disproportionately. Hickel asserts: "the North is responsible for 92% of global CO₂ emissions in excess of the safe planetary boundary" and "High-income countries rely on a large net appropriation of resources from the rest of the world (equivalent to 50% of their total consumption)" (Hickel, 2020, p. 5). Consequently, regarding both emissions and resource use, economic growth in the Global North "relies on patterns of colonization: the appropriation of atmospheric commons, and the appropriation of Southern resources and labor" (Hickel, 2021a, p. 1). This is why Hickel declares growth as colonial in character:

Capitalist growth is intrinsically colonial in character and has been for 500 years. Enclosure, colonization, mass enslavement, extractivism, sweatshops, ecological breakdown – all of this has been propelled by the growth imperative and its demand for cheap labor and nature. (Hickel, 2021a, p. 2)

This also applies to "green growth" as persistent growth in the Global North leads to larger energy demand, making the transition to renewables unnecessarily difficult and resulting in immense pressure on resources extracted from the Global South (Hickel, 2021a).

On the opposite side of the coin is degrowth, which is rooted in anti-colonial principles, pointing to the sixth streams of thoughts, namely justice. A fundamental principle in degrowth is that degrowth is only required in overdeveloped economies in the Global North, or as Hickel writes: "because degrowth is focused on reducing excess resource and energy use, it does not apply to economies that are not characterized by excess resource and energy use" (Hickel, 2020, p. 5). The Global South would still need to grow their economies to cover basic human needs (D'Alisa et al., 2015). This dynamic is described by Hickel: "Throughput should decline in the North to get back within sustainable levels while increasing in the South to meet human needs, converging at a level consistent with ecological stability and universal human welfare" (Hickel, 2021a, p. 2). The concept of ecological debt has strong consensus between degrowth scholars and activists and is a "demand that the global North pays for past and present colonial exploitation in the global South" (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 200).

As such, degrowth in the Global North would symbolize a process of decolonization in the Global South, as it "releases communities in the South from the pressures of atmospheric colonization and material extractivism" (Hickel, 2020, p. 5). Without pressures to export cheap labor and resources, the Global South would be able to focus on building their economies on "sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and human

well-being" much like many governments in the Global South did during the post-colonial decades (Hickel, 2020). Degrowth in the Global North would consequently reduce demand and the price of natural resources, making them more accessible to the Global South (D'Alisa et al., 2015). This also makes sense the other way around: if the Global South would receive fair wages and prices for their resources, this would demand degrowth in the Global North (Hickel, 2020). It should be pointed out that degrowth in the North is not a universal path that the South should follow, but it "liberate conceptual space for countries to find their own trajectories to what they define as the good life" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 5).

Another aspect worth mentioning is that degrowth "sees itself as an ally of the global environmental justice movement with strong roots in the South" (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 209). Many of the demands made by the degrowth movements coincide with social movements in the Global South (Hickel, 2021a). Additionally, the critique of growth "are in large part pioneered by thinkers in the global South" (Hickel, 2021a, p. 2). Movements from the Global South, such as the Zapatistas and the Buen Vivir movement, have helped form and inspire the degrowth movement (Hickel, 2021a).

3.6.4 INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES AND DEGROWTH

The degrowth movement originated in Western Europe. However, one of the movement's biggest strengths is that it draws from different sources and streams of thought from various parts of the world to develop strategies at different societal levels (Demaria & Kothari, 2014). This might also be why many common elements exist between degrowth and indigenous knowledges. This next section will look into the commonalities and differences between specific indigenous knowledges and degrowth.

Writing about First Nations' anti-colonial struggles in British Columbia, Canada, Frost explains how these struggles for environmental defense, sovereignty, and traditional culture and governance parallel environmental justice and degrowth objectives (Frost, 2019). Frost states: Grassroots First Nations fights parallel those in the Degrowth movement. These include Degrowth calls for voluntary simplicity, local autonomy, communalism, conviviality, and sacred relationship to place, as well as shared explicit challenging of growth ideology (Frost, 2019, p. 139).

Furthermore, Frost argues that a voluntary movement toward reduced consumption, which is prominent in both the degrowth movement and First Nations practice, frees up time for community-building activities and "is linked to an understanding of the ecological repercussions of consumption, locally and globally" (Frost, 2019, p. 140). Another parallel is that both movements actively oppose colonial extractivist industries and "growth for growth's sake". Frost points out that as degrowth is not a "single well-defined theory of frame, but instead a field of discussion around related themes", it is difficult to assert whether First Nation grassroots movements are or are not "degrowth" (Frost, 2019, p. 140). He

concludes by acknowledging that many of the core aims within the degrowth movement parallel First Nations grassroots goals.

Writing about post-development alternatives, Damaria and Kothari list common elements between Buen Vivir, Ecological Swaraj (radical ecological democracy from India) and Degrowth, amongst them being: (1) bioethics or respect for all life and the rights of (and stewardship toward) non-human nature, (2) equity and justice, (3) governance based on subsidiarity and direct participation, (4) collective work, solidarity and reciprocity while respecting the individual, (5) simplicity (or the ethic of “enough-ness”), (6) dignity of work, and (7) qualitative pursuit of happiness (Demaria & Kothari, 2014). Kothari and Demaria emphasize that the commonalities between these movements lie at the level of fundamental values or principles they are based on (Demaria & Kothari, 2014).

Della Valle writes that degrowth "has many elements in common with the view of indigenous peoples from different parts of the earth regarding their approach to the environment, social relationships and development" (Della Valle, 2017, p. 207). This is supported by Thomson, who states: "Western proponents of degrowth have some things in common with the indigenous movements, which have inserted degrowth-like concepts into the formal constitutions of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian states" (Thomson, 2011, p. 449). The Zapatista's ideology is sometimes compared to the goals of the degrowth movement, the main commonality being resistance to growth and redistribution ideas. Kothari writes that "similar to degrowth practices of redistributing surplus to build solidarity and promote cultural expression, the Zapatistas have mobilized to protect their world and connect to other worlds based on solidarity" (Demaria & Kothari, 2014, p. 476).

Additionally, both Della Valle and Thomson emphasize the concept Buen Vivir (or Sumak Kawsay in Quechua), “a pluralistic concept with indigenous roots (Thomson, 2011, p. 449) which “defends a pluralistic, intercultural and non-anthropocentric worldview and recognizes values intrinsic to nature” (Andreucci & Engel-Di Mauro, 2019, p. 181). Ravikumar et al. also emphasize similarities between degrowth and Buen Vivir: “both articulate priorities that improve human well-being in harmony with the natural world while rejecting the idea that economic growth can be maintained forever so long as it is made ‘green’” (Ravikumar et al., 2023, p. 3).

Communalities notwithstanding, there are several differences between indigenous knowledges and the degrowth movement. One of them is pointed out by Nirmal and Rocheleau, writing about the process of decolonizing the degrowth movement: “we contend that a reading of degrowth that divorces nature from culture carries a bias just as harmful as the growth imperative” (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019, p. 469). This separation of nature and culture is rarely seen in indigenous knowledges. Nirmal and Rocheleau suggest that degrowth activists reconsider their definitions of nature and culture in conversations with people from different intellectual, geographical, and economic standpoints (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019).

Following this, Nirmal and Rocheleau write: “We urge degrowth to stretch beyond its current conceptual limits, shrink its sense of universality, and enter as an equal player in the post-development convergence” (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019, p. 471). This is the second critique of degrowth, its acceptance of a “one-world-world” instead of recognizing pluriversality and “the worlds of many worlds”. Considering the environment where degrowth developed, it is only natural that universalistic claims of Western epistemology influence the movement. However, this is possible to overcome, as Kothari states: “Some approaches emerging from within the ‘belly of the beast’ (capitalist or industrialized countries) can also break from dominant logic” (Demaria & Kothari, 2014, p. 366). The degrowth movement would need to recognize its positionality and “center intersectionality of identity and experience, including coloniality” in order to overcome universalistic tendencies (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019, p. 471).

4. METHODOLOGY

The following chapter concerns the methodological framework of the thesis. The chapter is based primarily on three books about qualitative research: *An introduction to qualitative research* by Flick, *The good research guide: research methods for small-scale social research projects* by Denscombe and *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* by Saldaña.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1.1 TOPIC AND INITIAL MOTIVATION

My initial interest in the topic was sparked by the book *Less is more: how degrowth will save the world* by Hickel. Issues like how our thoughts and perception of nature influence our behavior, as well as different ways of relating to the natural world, were particularly interesting to me. These topics made me wonder whether a different kind of ontology would result in a different behavior pattern that, in turn, could assist humanity in taking action in the climate crisis. Combining these questions with my personal connection to Colombia and indigenous peoples in the country, I used my personal network to get in contact with people who knew any of these indigenous groups that could be relevant for my research, namely the Arhuacos. Following this, the process of clarifying and refining the research questions to an operational level began.

4.1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions have changed several times during the research process. The most noticeable change was moving from focusing on behavior and activities in nature to concentrating more on what people were articulating about values and beliefs. This change was a consequence of limited time spent doing participant observation, explained more in detail in section 4.4.2, which made me realize the data collected did not make enough insight to make statements about the participants' behaviors. Nonetheless, the data proved valuable to analyze what the participants expressed about their values, knowledge and beliefs.

The research questions can be defined as descriptive, explanatory, or normative. Research question 1, “How can Arhuaco's relationship to the natural world be described and analyzed?” is descriptive. These questions “aim at identifying what aspects to focus on in characterizing a topic or a case” (Benjaminson & Svarstad, 2021, p. 23). In this study, Arhuaco's relationship to the natural world is the focus, and it will be analyzed. Descriptive questions are particularly important if there is limited knowledge of a topic before starting the data collection (Jacobsen, 2022), which was my case.

Research question 2, “How do Arhuaco's perspectives align with the degrowth movement?” can be identified as a normative question, as these types of questions ask what can be done to prevent a problematic situation. Additionally, they often make recommendations to the situation (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2021). In this setting, research question 2 aims to investigate if there is an overlap between Arhuaco nature values and the degrowth movement. The problematic situations to be prevented are grave impacts from climate change and the systematic degradation of the natural world. Although the research questions are different, they are closely connected. The first question concerns Arhuaco's relationship to the natural world and their values regarding nature. These values impact several aspects of their life, like their relationship to non-indigenous people. The third question examines how these values align with a non-indigenous perspective like the degrowth movement.

4.1.3 A QUALITATIVE DESIGN

Qualitative research is defined by Yilmaz as “an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world” (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 312). The reason behind choosing a qualitative research design for this study is, first and foremost, the objective of the study: to analyze the relationship between humans and nature among the Arhuacos. A qualitative design usually intends to arrive at an understanding of how people make sense of the world and their experiences, in this case, how the Arhuacos perceive their relation to nature and their relation to other people who do not necessarily share the same values as themselves. Moen et al. write: “when the aim is to explore, the research approach must be flexible enough to enable the researcher to identify and follow up on clues that can lead to discovery” (Moen et al., 2015, p. 332). This approach made it possible to discover new topics through open-ended questions and observation, and then explore them by asking new questions developed in the field. A quantitative design, focusing on numerical data and mathematically based methods as statistics, would only have grasped a small fraction of the picture, as I had limited experience with the topic before starting the data collection. This is not to say that I excluded quantitative methods entirely; for example, I spent time mapping and counting crops and animals when visiting a new location in the Sierra. However, the main focus was to develop an understanding of the experiences, relations, and values among the Arhuacos, qualitative methods were predominantly preferred.

Yilmaz writes that:

The qualitative inquiry is identified with a relativist ontology (the notion of multiple realities is accepted), a subjectivist epistemology (the idea that understandings are created through interaction between the knower and the unknown subject), and a naturalistic (subjects are studied in their natural settings) set of methodological procedures. (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 315)

Thus, this study is framed by a relativist ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, and a set of naturalistic methodological procedures.

Another essential aspect to consider is that the Arhuacos are considered a “hard-to-reach” group due to geographical location, different levels of integration into the larger society, and, in some cases, limited use of technology. Then, in terms of getting access and discovering new topics and questions, this research demanded a presence as the scene. It is also worth mentioning that for an individual to open up about their values and beliefs, there is usually a certain amount of trust that needs to be established, and this is much easier done in person through face-to-face encounters than in written form through methods like questionnaires.

4.1.4 ETHNOGRAPHY

This research study was intended to analyze Arhuaco's relationship to nature and people from an ethnographic perspective. Denscombe states that "ethnography literally means a description of peoples or cultures" (Denscombe, 2021, p. 119). He further lists characteristics common to ethnographies, which include: (1) a considerable time spent in the field together with the people and cultures who are studied, (2) everyday life and routines are considered of significance to the research, (3) the researcher emphasizes how the subjects of the study see and make meaning of their world, (4) ethnographies are often developed with a holistic approach, highlighting connections, relationships, and interdependency between different cultural aspects, avoiding isolating these aspects from another, (5) ethnographic researchers acknowledge that the final write up is more of a construction of a reality and not a reproduction (Denscombe, 2021). These characteristics are also fundamental to this research project. Although there were some limitations concerning the duration spent in the field, as will be accounted for in section 4.3.2., I still consider the project ethnographic.

Denscombe distinguishes between two different approaches to ethnographic research. The first approach is called “idiographic”, in which the purpose of ethnographic research is to provide a detailed description of a culture that is to be judged on its own accord. As such, the focus is not on how representative the research is or on how the research contributes to a specific theory (Denscombe, 2021). On the other end of the spectrum, there is the “nonthetic” approach, which intends to “develop more generalized and ‘theoretical’ conclusions” (Denscombe, 2021, p. 124) which will be applied outside of the individual study and in this way, could help to generate theories. Denscombe also points out that these approaches do not necessarily need to be mutually exclusive, and a combination is possible by both emphasizing the importance of rich and detailed descriptions of a specific culture and recognizing the importance of concluding one particular research to reveal more general aspects of human social life (Denscombe, 2021). This research combines the two approaches, as it highly values detailed descriptions of the

participants' lives and their values and beliefs, while at the same time, I aspire to draw conclusions from these findings that are relevant in different settings.

Ethnographies have both advantages and disadvantages. Some of these advantages have already been mentioned, like how ethnographies often provide data based on direct observation, which results in in-depth and detailed data, as well as aspiring to be holistic and seeing things in their context and relation to one another (Denscombe, 2021). Other advantages to ethnographies are that they often contain an element of contrast and comparison, which inspires the researcher to “see things relative to other cultures and lifestyles”, and lastly that ethnographies acknowledge “the inherent reflexivity of social knowledge” as the role of the researcher is open and explicit (Denscombe, 2021, p. 127). Among the disadvantages, Denscombe lists the following: (1) gaining access depends on assistance from suitable gatekeepers, (2) the close relationship between the researchers and the participants requires attention to ethical challenges like intrusions of privacy, disclosure of identities, and gaining informed consent, (3) problems concerning the reliability as ethnographies are hard to replicate in order to validate the findings, (4) tension within the approach as ethnographies aspire to provide detailed descriptions of the culture being studied while at the same time recognize the reflexive nature of social knowledge, and lastly (5) may only produce stand-alone descriptions which remain separated and does not built upon existing research (Denscombe, 2021, p. 128). These disadvantages will be further discussed throughout the chapter.

4.2 SAMPLE AND FIELD DESCRIPTION

The data material acquired in this study was collected during a 2.5-month fieldwork in Santa Marta, Colombia. The material was collected in the city of Santa Marta, the surrounding areas, and two Arhuaco villages. There is a total of 16 participants, and I made three visits to two different villages (two visits to location 1 and one to location 2). The time frame for the fieldwork was between late July to the middle of October of 2022.

4.2.1 GAINING ACCESS

After arriving in Rodadero, an area approximately 5 km from Santa Marta, I had a relaxed entry to the field as I was waiting for approval by the NSD to begin the data collection. I arranged with my landlord and roommate to be my translator during this time. Although he was not trained or had any experience working as a translator, his language skills were adequate for the task. More importantly, the translator had previously worked with an Arhuaco organization in Santa Marta, and he had regular contact and well-established relations with several Arhuacos. The translator worked as a door opener and introduced me to most participants. When the translator’s network had been used to its full extent, the snowball method was used to get in touch with new participants.

4.2.2 SAMPLE

The qualifications for participation were, first and foremost, that the participants had to be over 18 years of age and identify as Arhuaco. An exploratory sample was chosen as the sampling approach, as my project was small-scale and of a qualitative design. The reason for this choice is that I did not have sufficient information about the research population to conduct probability sampling. I did not know how many people, in reality, identified as being Arhuaco, and the official numbers varied greatly. Another equally important reason was that it was challenging to contact potential participants, as the Arhuacos are a “hard-to-reach” group. Additionally, it was not practical to include a large number of participants because of limitations on time and resources.

4.2.2.1 Snowball Sampling and Purposeful Sampling

The two sampling techniques used in this research project were snowball sampling and purposeful sampling. As already mentioned, at the beginning of the fieldwork, the translator’s personal network was used to get in contact with potential participants. In the beginning stage, every participant was asked whether they knew of other people who would be interested in participating in the project. One advantage of this sample strategy was that as previously interviewed participants recommended new participants, the previous participants could vouch for me, resulting in established trust and credibility even before meeting the new participants. The translator also helped immensely by establishing this trust and credibility, as will be reflected on in section 4.2.3. The snowball strategy was combined with purposeful sampling, as in some instances, particularly during the latter part of the fieldwork, I would ask if the participant knew of any potential participants who also met specific criteria like age and gender. At one point during the fieldwork, there was a lack of female perspectives, and some of the previously interviewed participants were asked if they knew of any female Arhuacos who would be interested in participating. During the latter part of the fieldwork, when it was difficult to arrange new interviews, I began contacting potential participants via social media. This was possible after spending time with participants and gaining more knowledge about Arhuaco identity; I also learned how to distinguish Arhuacos from the other indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada, first and foremost by their names and attire. However, reaching out on social media had limited results. Of the 20 people I contacted, three people were interested, and two of them participated in an interview.

Regarding the sample size, a cumulative approach was used, suitable for small-scale surveys using non-probability sampling for an exploratory sample (Denscombe, 2021), like my project. As I could not estimate the size of the sample before beginning the data collection, I had limited time and resources, aimed at producing an exploratory sample, and as the research was intended as a small-scale project, this approach was preferred. This approach involves growing the sample until the researcher has

“accumulated sufficient information for the purposes of the study” (Denscombe, 2021, p. 86). The sample and date of visits to field locations are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1: Sample of participants of the study, including age, gender, date of interview and interview setting

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Place of residence	Date of interview	Place of interview
A1	25	Male	City	Main interview: 23.8.2022 Follow-up interview: 24.09.2022	University of Santa Marta Public café, close to University of Santa Marta
A2	20	Male	City/Sierra	3.9.2022	Dining area in shopping mall in Santa Marta
A3	25	Male	City	8.9.2022	Participants home in Santa Marta
A4	22	Male	City/Sierra	9.9.2022	Sierra, Location 1
A5	21	Male	Sierra	9.9.2022	Sierra, Location 1
A6	48	Male	City/Sierra	10.9.2022	Sierra, Location 1
B1	35-45	Female	Sierra	10.9.2022	Sierra, Location 1
A7	27	Male	Sierra	11.9.2022	Sierra, Location 1
A9	40-55	Male	City	21.9.2022	Office in in Santa Marta
B2	20	Female	City/Sierra	21.9.2022	Office in in Santa Marta
A10	29	Male	City	21.9.2022	Office in in Santa Marta

B3	40-55	Female	City	21.9.2022	Office in in Santa Marta
A11	35	Male	Sierra	1.10.2022	Sierra, Location 2
B4	36	Female	Sierra	1.10.2022	Sierra, Location 2
B5	28	Female	City/Sierra	5.10.2022	Office in in Santa Marta
A12	21	Male	City	14.10.2022	Office in in Santa Marta

Table 2: Visits to the Sierra

Site	Date
Location 1	9-11. September 2022
Location 2	1. October
Location 1	15-16. October

4.2.2.2 Limitations of the Sample

There are several limitations to the sample of this study. Firstly, as the personal network of the translator was the starting point for data collection, his role was extended to both a “door-opener” and a “gatekeeper”. In the beginning, this was not only helpful but essential for the progress of the research. This allowed me to use the snowball method and expand on his personal network. However, at one point during the research, I got the feeling that the translator was restricting access to certain participants, and I realized he also acted as a gatekeeper. After discussing the matter, he explained that the reason was that he thought some of the people we met might not be “good” for my project. I explained that these people might be especially important to the project, as they might have different outlooks than other participants and that there were no “right or wrong” answers to the interview questions. However, instead, the focus was to explore various perspectives. This conversation did not result in any contact with the potential participants discussed, and one assumption is that the translator might not have had a good relationship with these people, making it difficult to not only make the people agree to an interview but also conduct it. This led to me getting more involved with the process of contacting people, and this was when I started reaching out to potential participants via social media. As a result of the snowball method and contacting people via social media, at least five of the people who participated were not connected to the translator’s personal network.

A second limitation of the sample is that due to the sampling strategies and using the translator's network as a starting point, many of the participants were close relatives. Their relationship ranged from parents and children to uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces. There are mainly three families who partook in the project:

- Participants from family 1: A1, A4, A5, A6, B1, A8
- Participants from family 2: A3, A11, B4
- Participants from family 3: A9, B2, A10, B3, B5, A12

Most of the families were familiar with each other and, in some instances, connected to each other in terms of occupation or education. The close relationship between the participants is not a limitation per se; however, it is likely that people with intimate relations might share similar perspectives, and if the sample was spread across a broader population, this might have given different perspectives. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that the three families were from different parts of the Sierra, and some of the participants did not have familial relations with any of the other participants, like participants A2 and A7.

A third limitation is that although I ended up with 15 formal interviews, I lost audio recordings from two of them early during the data collection. Even though I relied on notes for these interviews, the data from these interviews is very much impacted by this, containing fewer details and, in some instances, no responses to several questions.

4.2.3 DESCRIPTION OF TIME FRAME AND FIELDWORK

My time in Colombia can be divided into four phases: getting access, getting accustomed, getting results, and being content. During the first phase, my main focus was to gain access to participants and introduce myself and the project. As mentioned, I spent the first weeks waiting for approval of the NSD application, and even though I did not collect any data material during this period, I see this period as essential for precisely three reasons. First and foremost, this time allowed me to get comfortable in my new surroundings and practice my Spanish in everyday conversations. Second, I asked my landlord and roommate if he would be interested in working for me as a translator, and he agreed. Third, during these first weeks, I was able to visit one of the Arhuaco organizations in the city, and accompanied by my translator, I introduced myself and the project, and I was able to quickly establish my role as a researcher. I also met one potential participant during this first period, and we spent some time getting to know each other. This person was especially significant for the project, and the time we spent together helped build a trusting relationship and the person made my first visit to Sierra possible. During this phase, I also visited the Gold Museum in Bogotá and the Gold Museum in Santa Marta. These museums both have sections dedicated to the Tairona civilization and the indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada, making me more familiar with the Arhuacos, how they are perceived, and their social status in Colombia.

The second phase, getting accustomed, was when I first started collecting data. During this phase, I also decided to postpone my journey home another month, as it had gone nearly four weeks, and I had only conducted two interviews. I also realized the interview guide needed severe revision, as my personal bias was revealed in some of the questions, and did not make sense to the participants. This will be discussed further in section 4.3.1.1.

It was during phase three, getting results, and after my first visit to the Sierra that my reflections on the fieldwork and project changed significantly. At my first visit, I engaged in a “welcome ritual,” similar to what Murillo describes as a “spiritual cleaning” (Murillo, 2009):

I was asked to sit down on the ground and then received some cotton. The translator and I were then asked to divide the cotton into two equal parts [...] We made two balls out of the cotton by rolling it in our hands, and while doing this, we were told to envision cleaning ourselves. We were told to consider negative qualities and characteristics and put these thoughts into the cotton balls. Following this, we were supposed to clean ourselves from these thoughts by making movements with our fists, each holding a cotton ball, as if cleaning ourselves with water. After finishing the ritual participant A5 told us we were now ready to learn from one another. Field diary 9.9.2022.

I believe taking part in this ritual was essential to developing a trusting relationship with the family living at location 1 and, in turn, get the opportunity to conduct interviews in their home. I had some difficulty adjusting to the participant's way of life, which was so different from mine. After the visit to Sierra, I came to understand that I had developed the research design based on my interests without considering my limitations. Consequently, I decided to focus on conducting interviews and listening to what the participants were saying rather than spend as much time on participant observation as intended. However, the visit to the Sierra was worthwhile, as I not only conducted five interviews but, more importantly, came to appreciate my responsibility as a researcher.

I feel an enormous responsibility towards the people I have met, and I probably took this a bit lightly before I went to the Sierra. It is great to be reminded of this responsibility of representing these people, their thoughts and experiences, in the most trusting and authentic way that I am capable of – Field diary. 13.9.2022.

This period also made me more confident in the researcher role, and my interviewing skills were developing. After returning to Santa Marta, this third phase continued to be categorized by many interviews and a confiding relationship with the translator. At one point, I conducted a small follow-up

interview by myself. Although I realized it was possible to continue working without a translator present, it made me realize his greatest contribution was that he made the participants feel more comfortable, allowing them to be more expressive and freer in their speech. As a result, I continued working with the translator throughout the data collection process.

The last phase of the fieldwork began with many appointments being canceled, and as the translator's network had been used to its fullest extent, and the snowball method was no longer effective, I found it challenging to recruit new participants. I reached out to potential participants through social media, resulting in two more interviews. The rest of the people I contacted either did not respond or lived too far away for it to be feasible to conduct an interview. Additionally, my motivation was on the decline. After reflecting on this for a few days, I concluded that I had to appreciate the participants who had given me their time and shared their insights, and I was grateful for what I had learned and accomplished. My last week in Santa Marta was used to give my thanks to the participants and parting gifts, and I left the city feeling optimistic about the project.

During the past few days, I have been disappointed that I decided to go home a day early after my last visit to the Sierra. It felt as if I was giving up. Now, however, I see it as an acknowledgment of being content with the project as it has become and being grateful for what I have learned along the way. Field diary, 18.10.2022.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This study was developed with the idea of using between-method triangulation to increase the consistency and depth of the research. Flick writes that triangulation “allows systematically extending the possibilities of knowledge production by using a second methodological approach” (Flick, 2019, p. 192). The initial idea was that the combination of interviews and participant observation would lead to the discovery of new topics and also make it possible to compare what the participants were saying to what they were doing. As mentioned, I decided to shift the focus to what the participants expressed about beliefs and values instead of focusing on behavior. Although most of the data collected in this study was done by conducting semi-structured interviews, the visits to the Sierra and the time I spent doing participant observation contributed to my insights and understanding of Arhuaco knowledge. Common to the methods used in this project is that they are of an inductive approach, which is in line with the qualitative design of the study (Jacobsen, 2022).

4.3.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Throughout the fieldwork, the main data collection method was semi-structured interviews conducted in collaboration with my translator. All interviews were audiotaped using the "Diktafon" app, an

approved recording system by Oslomet. Additionally, I took notes during the interviews. The audio taping did not contribute to a natural context; however, I believe it was necessary for several reasons. Firstly, the audio recordings made it possible to quality-check the translations after the interviews. This was especially important considering the fact that I collaborated with an inexperienced translator, and early on, I noticed the translator interpreting both the questions and the answers by the participants. I would not have realized this as early had it not been for the audio recordings. The impacts of the translation process will be discussed further in section 4.3.1.2. Secondly, the recordings made it possible to directly quote the participants in the final write-up of the study, which was a conscious choice to strengthen the research's authenticity.

4.3.1.1 The Interview Guide

I used an interview guide in all interviews, initially written before I arrived in Colombia but revised several times during the data collection period. The original idea was to initiate with questions that were easy to answer to get the conversation going before moving on to more in-depth questions. However, I experienced the majority of the participants to be very open and enthusiastic to share their thoughts and beliefs. In some instances, I got the feeling they found this opening phase unnecessary and boring. There was no need to ease into the conversation in many circumstances, but this decision was made in the interview setting based on how comfortable and open the participants appeared.

The interview guide was potentially more restricting than helpful in the first two phases of the fieldwork. In the beginning I relied too heavily on the interview guide. As a result, the tone of the first three interviews could have been more relaxed, and the conversations did not flow naturally. Some participants also appeared impatient towards the end as the interviews perhaps dragged on longer than necessary. As mentioned earlier, the interview guide was revised several times during the fieldwork. Especially important were the changes done after the first interview. Although I was aware that Arhuacos did not differentiate between nature and culture, I was made aware by Participant A1 that my line of questioning had an underlying dualism as a result of my preconceptions. When asked: “Could you explain how nature plays a part in Arhuaco culture?” participant A1 answered: “The question is very isolated from our way of thinking. We believe we are part of her, right? We don’t have a way of thinking distanced from nature”. After the interview, I sat down and reworked the interview guide, keeping in mind this bias. The question later changed to: “Could you explain the relation between humans and nature in Arhuaco community?”. This is just one example of the changes made in the interview guide.

After more experience with the interview process, I learned how to navigate the questions based on what the participants said rather than the order of the questions in the interview guide. This resulted in a notable shift in the tone of the interviews, and the conversations became more natural. The interviews were also more efficient, taking less time without missing important topics. This also opened up for

more probing and gave more power to the participants as they were more in control of what topics they would like to emphasize. In general, the revisions of the interview guide allowed more freedom in the conversations while at the same time providing a level of structure to the conversations. Two copies of the interview guide were used in the interviews, one in English and one in Spanish, to guarantee a correct translation of the questions and minimize misunderstandings.

4.3.1.2 Interview settings

The interviews were conducted both in the city and in different locations in the Sierra. Most of the interviews in the city took place in artificial contexts like cafes or universities, but also in more natural contexts like when interviewing people at their place of work. Some interviews conducted in the city were difficult to carry out and transcribe due to many distractions and high background noise levels. For example, the interview conducted in the dining area of a big mall on a Saturday could have been organized differently. The translator and I had to continuously remind the participant to speak louder throughout the interview, as none of us could hear him, which of course, made him frustrated and annoyed. This particular interview was also especially time-consuming to transcribe because of all the background noise on the recordings. As for the participant, he likely felt neither comfortable nor wishing to elaborate a lot on many questions because of the draining setting.

The interviews in the Sierra were of a more natural context, but they were not necessarily easy to navigate as there were many interruptions there as well. Children interjecting, people coming and going, and chores needing to be done were at times distracting the participants. In this setting, the participants left the interview setting from time to time to do some work or talk to other Arhuacos and then continued the interview when they felt like it. Participants will inherently act differently in a natural context compared to an artificial context, and this activity in the middle of the interviews can be seen as both restlessness or participants feeling free and comfortable. The interviews in the Sierra were, in general, longer, less formal and more free than compared to the interviews conducted in the

4.3.1.3 Degree of openness

Most participants were very open and understanding in the interview process. As mentioned in the last section, some participants appeared impatient, but I believe this resulted from my inexperience. Although there was more distance between the participants and me in the city interviews, they appeared open. Some participants, mainly those living in the Sierra, needed more time to become comfortable with my presence. One participant from location 1 expressed that they had previously had bad experiences with researchers and filmmakers, which is why some of them were reserved. I explained that if I made them uncomfortable or if they did not want to participate in the project, I would understand and not be offended. Nonetheless, the participants from location 1 welcomed me into their homes and

shared their meals with me and the translator. After spending a day or two in the Sierra, more trust was developed, and more people were interested in partaking in the interviews.

The participants from location 2 were also a bit reserved to begin with, and the translator and I realized this was due to a misunderstanding. We had used the snowball method to contact the family of participant A3, and all communication had been through this person. When we got to the location, the family did not know of our visit or who we were, which naturally made them apprehensive. However, this family also shared a meal with us, and we were given a tour of the village nearby before two participants agreed to a shorter interview.

I recognized early that many of the participants wanted to share their knowledge, and later in the fieldwork, I realized some of them looked at my visit as a possibility of exchanging knowledge. The participants not only wanted to talk about their knowledge, but they were also interested in learning about my culture and my family. In retrospect, I believe the participants were more open than myself, and I regret not sharing parts of my life with them earlier in the process as this could have contributed to building more trust. My strategy was instead to take on a "student" role, asking questions outside of interviews and participating in different activities to show my interest and dedication. I believe that the responsibility aspect of Arhuaco's worldview might have worked to my advantage, as many participants viewed my presence as an opportunity to teach an outsider about their values and beliefs.

4.3.1.4 The translation process

All Arhuacos who participated in the project spoke Spanish fluently, in addition to their native language, Iku. It is important to note that there was a double language barrier, the first being participants having to explain complex topics in their second language, Spanish, and then the translator having to translate these accounts into English. It is equally important to draw attention to the complexity of the topics expanded on by the participants, as many of these are not usually expressed verbally. For example, the *pagamentos* were especially difficult for the participants to explain.

My original idea was to rely on a translator in the first weeks of the fieldwork. However, I quickly realized that because of his unique access to the community and the fact that the participants were noticeably more comfortable with him around, I decided to collaborate with the translator throughout the data collection process. Vandana and Potter state that translations are more than a technical exchange of words; "it is also a social relationship involving power, status and imperfect mediation of cultures" (Vandana & Potter, 2006, p. 172). Several ethical concerns are involved when working with a translator concerning the participants' confidentiality and the relationship between an employer and employee. It was essential to build a trusting relationship with the translator in which we both felt comfortable communicating and expressing concerns and thoughts. Before the first interview, we arranged a meeting

to discuss responsibility and expectations. During this meeting, we agreed on a salary, the mode of translation, and who was to recruit participants. I expressed that I was primarily interested in a literal translation, but whenever there were specific words or cultural meanings, we could discuss them in a debriefing after each interview.

Borchgrevink distinguishes between four areas in which working with a translator might impact the data collection process: (1) access to information, (2) the communication process, (3) the translation itself, and (4) the fieldwork process. Each of these areas will be reflected on in relation to my experience working with my translator.

1) Access to information

The majority of the participants in the study were males, and I have reflected on why it was difficult to recruit female participants. We used the translators' network to contact most participants, and most of these people were male, so this starting point might have been one reason why fewer female participants were included. Another assumption is that as the translator was male, this blocked access to speaking to female participants. However, I do not believe this was the most critical factor, as the female participants appeared comfortable in the interview setting. I would instead consider the cause being that some of the women we were in contact with had difficulty relating to us and would need more time to be comfortable to partake in an interview. This might be the result of our different lives, and I was, in many ways, living in opposition to their values. I was unmarried, had no children, and spent my time focusing on my studies. Arhuaco women, on the other hand, usually get married early and have children after marriage, and I got the impression that motherhood was a vital part of their identity.

When it comes to gaining access in general, the translator contributed immensely to the project, which outweighs the negative aspects concerning the recruitment of females. Another aspect the translator contributed greatly was in the interview process itself, as mentioned earlier. Borchgrevink states that the translator's sensitivity to local conditions and perceptions is especially important, and "a good interpreter will use this sensitivity to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere, aiding the anthropologist in approaching informants in a way which builds trust and confidence" (Borchgrevink, 2003, p. 109). This was a significant asset when working with my translator.

2) Communications

The main communication in the interview setting happened between the translator and the participant. There was little direct contact between the participants and me during the interviews. This created a more formal setting (Borchgrevink, 2003). However, I did make an effort to address the participants directly when asking questions and introducing myself and the project. After learning a few words in

Iku, I also incorporated them into the questions when they were relevant. In hindsight I could have done a better job inserting into the conversation when relevant and possible. In the later stages of the fieldwork, I tended to do this more often as my confidence as a researcher grew, creating a more natural conversation. However, the formal setting never disappeared entirely.

3) Translations

The translator did not speak Iku, although he knew some words and phrases. However, he had spent considerable time in the Arhuaco community and therefore had superficial knowledge about Arhuaco values and knowledge. This was a great starting point as he found the topic exciting and was, at times, enthusiastic to learn more about the topics we discussed. He was also able to explain specific Iku terms and their cultural context. For example, he explained that when Arhuacos referred to outsiders, they used the term “Bonachi”, which was a term distinguishing between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

The translations in themselves undoubtedly impacted the data collection. I noticed early on that the translator found distinguishing between interpretation and translation challenging. When the participant would spend a long time talking, the translator would summarize or leave out certain parts of the conversation. This improved after we spent time debriefing the particular interview. I realized that the collaboration between us relied on both our skill sets and considering that we were both inexperienced before starting the data collection, we ended up working well together. Nonetheless, the language barriers might have been the toughest challenge to overcome, and this was the reason behind my choice of audio taping and later transcribing the interviews myself as a way of quality-checking the translations.

4) The fieldwork process

Regarding the fieldwork, I found the collaboration with the translator extremely helpful. I do not think it would have been possible to spend time in the Sierra without him working as a door opener but also as a friend I could rely on. We spent time discussing interview topics, participant responses, and he seemed genuinely interested in my project, which made it possible for me to discuss data and new ideas with him. I may have relied on him too much at times, and consequently not focusing on developing my language skills. I found it challenging to navigate when to involve him in conversations and when to speak independently, especially as my Spanish level is just adequate enough for daily conversations, which resulted in me not practicing my Spanish a lot.

4.3.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Observation is an appropriate method to use when the study is concerned with what participants are doing (Jacobsen, 2022). However, this method is equally interesting when the research revolves around a physical area, in this case, the Sierra Nevada. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I spent limited time

doing participant observation because of personal restrictions. This is not to say that the time I spent doing participant observation was unproductive. I believe this aspect of the data collection contributed to (1) fully understanding my responsibility as a researcher, (2) providing data on the daily activities in nature and traditional Arhuaco lifestyle, (3) the interviews conducted in the Sierra turned out longer and richer in detail compared to the ones conducted in the city which can be the result of the participants not being restricted by time, (4) being able to ask questions about specific things I observed, for example questions about specific crops, and lastly (4) developing more suitable questions to ask in the subsequent interviews. I also believe my experience in the villages influenced how I analyzed the data. I had a greater understanding of the interconnectedness of different aspects of Arhuaco knowledge, resulting in more authenticity and depth to the research.

The first thing I did when arriving at a new location was to introduce myself and the project and then later map out the area by drawing what I saw in the field diary. This was a great way to get familiar with the new environment and learn about what people were cultivating. The observations done in this research were open and participatory, and all participants knew the reason of my stay. I participated in daily routines like cleaning, collecting water, and repairing roads after heavy rainfall. This was a conscious choice as I did not want them to look at me as a guest who needed to be taken care of but rather as someone who wanted to learn and spend time with them in their everyday life.

4.3.2.1 Location 1

The first site I visited in the Sierra was located in the lowlands of the mountain range, and the family I stayed with lived approximately 3 km from the closest Arhuaco village. The family's estate was roughly one hour from the nearest town. The main house was near the river, containing bedrooms and a living room. The participants explained that this house was a former farmhouse bought a few years ago. A second house was located close to the main house, which worked as a kitchen and dining room. Solar panels powered the main and second houses. Further up the riverside there were several traditional houses, which was the place where the translator and I put up our tents. In this area, there were four traditional houses, in addition to a gathering place and the ongoing construction of a new house. The gathering place consisted of wooden beams and a palm-made roof, and the ground was cleared of vegetation and rocks. In the middle of the gathering place was a campfire, used to make food and as a light source after darkness fell. The traditional houses were made of clay walls, and the roof was made of palm leaves. The family cultivated many crops like Ayu, papayas, potatoes, pumpkins, mangos, and cabbage. They also had animals like chickens, roosters and hens, ducks, dogs and cats, and a donkey. During my second visit, I visited the closest Arhuaco village, which consisted of more than 50 traditional houses, a communal building, and two separate houses for the Mamo and his wife. 500 meters from the village, there was a school that functioned as a primary and secondary school for the indigenous children

living in and around the village. The school had a cantina, three classrooms, and streetlights powered by solar panels.

4.3.2.2 Location 2

The second location was a newly reacquired territory located by the sea. The family we visited also lived on the outskirts of the closest village, approximately 30 minutes by foot. Because of several misunderstandings, this visit, intended as a weekend trip, ended up as a one-day visit. The family house was 50 meters from the sea, and they also owned a farm further up in the mountains with animals. The houses in the second location differed from those in the first location, as they were built predominantly with beams of wood, both the walls and roof. The gathering place was much bigger, and the family had three big plastic tables with matching chairs, and there was no campfire. Similarly to location 1, this family also had many animals: hens, chickens, geese, ducks, dogs, and puppies, in addition to three horses. The family cultivated malanga, yuca, banana, pumpkins, potatoes, and cacao. We were given a tour of the nearby village, which held 10 acres of cacao plants and cultivated Ayu. The village consisted of more than 20 houses in addition to a communal building, a building dedicated to textile production, a school similar to the school in location 1, and two separate houses for the Mamo and his wife. Unfortunately, the Mamo was not present at the time of our visit. The schools functioned as primary and secondary schools and were built with brick. We were told that these materials were given by the authorities in order for the Arhuacos to create their own indigenous school. The roofs of the schools were made in traditional Arhuaco style, with palm leaves. The village, as well as the school, used solar panels for electricity. However, this was only used for lights.

4.4 ANALYZING THE DATA

The following section will describe the research's analytical process. This section is included to demonstrate openness about the analytical challenges, leading to a higher degree of accountability and trustworthiness of the research as a whole.

4.4.1 THE CODING PROCESS

The first thing I did before starting the coding process was to gather all the data collected during the fieldwork. This involved transcribing all interviews and reviewing the translations for each. I then began printing all interviews, notes from interviews, field notes, and jottings. I had already decided to do coding manually on paper, as this was my first coding experience, and time did not allow me to learn new software. In retrospect, it might have been more time-efficient to use a software program for this process; however, I learned a lot about coding by doing it manually. I started the first coding cycle after printing all data documents and reading up on qualitative data analysis.

From the outset, I began writing analytic memos to collect my reflections on my relationship with the participants, the development of codes and appearing themes, and ideas on how to present the results of the study. I began by reading my field diary and eased into coding by coding relevant sections of the diary. When coding, I used a thematic analysis strategy. After coding the field diary, I moved on to the first interview, reading the notes from the interview and then coding the interview itself. The codes quickly developed after coding the first three interviews, and I relied on these codes for the subsequent interviews and added new codes when necessary. After the first coding cycle was finished, I used a combination of In Vivo coding (e.g. “pagamentos”), emotion coding (e.g. “concerns”), value coding (e.g. “worldview”), descriptive coding (e.g., “spiritual work”) and also various sub-codes (e.g., “spiritual work – pagamentos”).

After finishing the first coding cycle, I created a code landscape in Excel. This document contained a sheet for each code, a definition, and excerpts from the data as an example of the particular code. If codes were similar, I also added inclusion and exclusion criteria. The code landscape made it apparent that some codes were overlapping, and some were too big and would be better used as overarching themes. In order to find more codes that could potentially be used as themes, I used a focus strategy. I first started out doing “code weaving”, looking at how the different codes related to each other as it made it easier to see what codes were better used as themes. Then, I connected the different themes to the research questions and looked into what codes were relevant for each research question. The main themes discovered were the following: relation to nature, relation to non-indigenous people, and environmental critique of non-indigenous people.

Having established the codes and the main themes, I used these in the second coding cycle. In total, I did three coding circles, and I decided this was efficient as I did not develop any new codes or ideas during the third circle. However, during the third cycle, I came up with the idea of how to present the study's results and began writing a disposition of the empirical chapter.

4.4.2 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Conscious decisions have been made concerning how the results are presented in the empirical chapter. As the qualitative data collected in this study has mainly taken the form of words, the approach chosen is explaining the data through narration. This makes it possible to illustrate the multitude of experiences and perspectives of the participants in depth. In some instances, an illustrative table has been included, not to be analyzed quantitatively but to demonstrate the participants' range of perspectives. Denscombe states that the use of visual representation of data in qualitative research “while not based on numerical data, still works in terms of capturing and communicating a lot of vital information in a short space” (Denscombe, 2021, p. 347), which is my intention when providing visual data in this research.

Additionally, the sections of the empirical chapter include the categories from which the relevant data derives, and these categories are defined in the code landscape provided in the appendix.

The use of interview extracts is essential in this study as it not only enhances the authenticity of the research but also the credibility, as participants' own words are used to answer the research question. However, it is important to note that these extracts are limited as they are presented out of context and involve editorial decisions (Denscombe, 2021). This is why when interview extracts are presented, the context in which the statements arose will be included when necessary. It is important to note that extracts from the interview transcripts are not included to provide proof of a point but to "serve as illustrations of a point and supporting evidence for an argument" (Denscombe, 2021, p. 349).

The main concern I had when deciding on the presentation of the results was figuring out how to explain such a holistic knowledge tradition, in which all elements are closely interconnected, in an academic text derived from the context in which the knowledge developed. I was concerned that I would end up categorizing the participants' statements to the extent that the relations between the content of the statements were lost. I decided to include as many elements of Arhuaco knowledge as feasible, expressed by the study participants, and to point out the relation between these elements. My hope is that I have been able to communicate the participants' perspectives clearly and systematically without losing the context and holistic essence.

4.5 QUALITY CRITERIA AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

An essential part of any research is addressing its quality. The classical quality criteria used in quantitative research have been generalizability, external/internal validity, objectivity, and reliability (Flick, 2019). However, as the two research traditions are inherently different, these criteria are not appropriate for a qualitative study. The criteria that will be used to assess the quality of this research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denscombe, 2021).

4.5.1 CREDIBILITY

The credibility of the research determines whether the results of the study are reliable from the perspective of the participants and concerns the degree to which the researcher has accurately described the phenomenon in question and if the empirical data is interpreted in a way that reflects the participants' realities (Flick, 2019). Denscombe mentions four steps to ensure this: respondent validation, grounded data, and triangulation. Respond validation is when the researcher returns to previously interviewed participants with the study's findings to examine the data's accuracy. The data can then be confirmed or corrected by the participants (Denscombe, 2021). As the Arhuacos are a "hard-to-reach" group, it was not possible to discuss the results of the study after returning from the fieldwork. The fact that it has not

been possible to conduct respondent validation is considered a limitation of the research. However, during the interviews, I went back to previously discussed topics and ask the participant whether I had understood their statements correctly. Additionally, at the end of each interview, I gave the participants an opportunity to expand on previously discussed topics or to open up about any new topics. Only a few participants decided to bring up new aspects, but a few expanded on topics already discussed. I also decided to conduct a follow-up interview with Participant A1 to clear up misunderstandings from the first interview.

Grounded data concerns that the study results have been “grounded extensively in fieldwork and empirical data” (Denscombe, 2021, p. 350). All data acquired in this study originated from the 2.5-month fieldwork in Santa Marta. However, this is not considered an extensive time spent in the field for qualitative research and, therefore, is another limitation of the research. Making connections and building trust takes time, and ideally, I would have liked to spend more time with the participants, which could have resulted in a deeper relationship, making way for different and more profound perspectives. I nonetheless find the data reflective and insightful and an interesting building block for further research.

Triangulation is another way to assess the credibility of the research. As mentioned, this involves using different data collection methods, which could lead to new discoveries as the researcher views the phenomenon from different standpoints. The triangulations of methods have already been discussed in section 4.3. However, reiterating this section, the limited time I spent doing participant observation contributed to several things, including providing data on daily activities in nature, being able to ask questions about specific things I observed, and developing more suitable questions in subsequent interviews. The data from the combination of interviews and participant observation contributed to portraying the participant's realities more accurately.

Flick additionally mentions “peer debriefing” and sample credibility as elements that can enhance the credibility of the research (Flick, 2019). Peer debriefing is meetings and discussions with people not involved in the research to disclose potential blind spots. This was done regularly with co-students, especially during the analytical phase. It made it possible to see the data from an outsider’s point of view and resulted in themes like “value changes” appearing in the data set. Sample credibility has indirectly been discussed in section 4.2.2. However, I would like to add that I did not get the opportunity to talk to a Mamo during my stay in Santa Mata. As the spiritual leaders of the Arhuaco community, the Mamos are considered to have the most profound connection and knowledge of nature. Many participants also referred to Mamos when explaining complex aspects of Arhuaco knowledge. As such, being unable to interview a Mamo is certainly a limitation of the study.

4.5.2 TRANSFERABILITY

A research study's transferability asks, "to what extent might the findings be relevant to other instances?" (Denscombe, 2021, p. 351). The primary strategy to account for the transferability is to include relevant and rich details, making it possible for the readers to consider how the results from this specific qualitative research might apply to situations elsewhere. Denscombe points out that information about the research participants might be necessary to assess the transferability. For this study, information about the participant's age, gender, living situation, and relations to other participants have been included. Additionally, extensive information concerning Arhuaco's lifestyle, practices, and knowledge is included in both the background chapter and the empirical chapter to provide sufficient information to address the research's transferability.

4.5.3 DEPENDABILITY

The dependability of a study asserts whether another researcher would have come to similar results to that of the study (Denscombe, 2021). This is not a question with a definite answer. However, one way of dealing with the dependability of a study is to focus on transparency, which "acts as a proxy for being able to replicate research" (Denscombe, 2021, p. 352). This is why I have included every step of the research, from the initial motivation and development of the research questions to writing about the analysis of the data and the presentation of the results. Choices done throughout the research have been made explicit to enhance transparency. In this way, other researchers could assess the procedures described and decisions made to conclude whether a different researcher would get similar results (Denscombe, 2021).

4.5.4 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability is the counterpart of objectivity in quantitative research. The confirmability of research addresses whether the results and conclusions are fair and unbiased (Denscombe, 2021). Denscombe raises two issues concerning confirmability: "(1) the prospects of keeping an open mind with the respect to the research, and (2) the involvement of the researcher's 'self' in the interpretation of the data" (Denscombe, 2021, p. 352). Keeping an open mind includes not neglecting data that does not fit the analysis and checking for rival explanations. As such, these aspects need attention during the analytical stage of the research process, and one way in which I have kept an open mind is by doing multiple coding cycles to the point where no new codes or themes appeared from the data set. I have also discussed results with co-students to arrive at alternative explanations. Relating to the involvement of the 'self' in interpreting the data, it is not possible to discount the researcher's identity, values, and beliefs, and these elements will "guide" the research in some ways. For example, the research itself would not have been carried out had it not corresponded with my values. However, it is vital to address reflexivity.

It is fundamental to be aware of the biases, assumptions, experiences and values the researcher brings to the field, in addition to some aspects of the researcher's identity, as these inevitably will affect the data collection process and the analytical process. One way I have tried to become aware of my biases is to write a field diary of what I experienced in the field, how I felt about it and how I reacted in different situations. This enhanced the self-reflectivity aspect, which is also how I learned about the underlying dualism in my line of questioning after the first interview, as I spent time reflecting and writing about the interview itself. Concerning my identity as a Norwegian female student with biological ties to Colombia, my identity, in some instances, worked to my advantage. Some participants interpreted my project as a way of getting closer to "my roots". I emphasized that my interest in Colombia and its indigenous population did stem from my mother being adopted as an indigenous child in the early 1970s; I also explained my interest from an academic point of view, explicitly being curious about different ways to relate to nature. My identity did perhaps also create more distance in some situations, as explained relating to the recruitment of female participants, but also in terms of positioning myself in the field. The position I created, as a result of my introverted personality, was in some ways too far from the participants. Lindskog writes that establishing a meta-position during the data collection is vital to create the ideal distance between the researcher and the field. Being too close would lead to losing context, but being too far away can result in only seeing the outlines (Lindskog, 2022). I do not believe I ever came too close to the field. However, I do think I positioned myself too far away by not sharing enough of my personal life and culture with the participants, which in turn could have influenced the level of trust the participants felt in the setting and possibly also not wanting to go too much into detail on questions regarding personal beliefs. This is also why the research would have been enriched if I had spent more time in the field.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All research has different ethical considerations that the researcher must consider, and any research involves high levels of responsibility on the researcher's part. Therefore, this study's ethical considerations have been a core focus through all phases of the research. The Arhuacos can be perceived as a vulnerable group as they are part of a population in Colombia which have experienced injustices and devastation as a result of external interventions. Additionally, the intimate issues of the research, personal values and beliefs, add to the potential risks this research could lead to if not handled responsibly. To become aware of the potential risks and harm of the research, I carried out a risk assessment, which involved reflecting on aspects of the research that could potentially cause harm to any participants and what measures could be applied to mitigate those risks (Denscombe, 2021).

Flick states that the goal of all research is to “do no harm” and further presents four aspects to ensure this: (1) Non-maleficence, meaning avoiding harming participants, (2) beneficence, referring to the aspect where the research should produce positive and identifiable benefits for the participants of the study, (3) autonomy, revolving around participants and their values and decisions being fully respected throughout the research process, and (4) justice, which ensures that all participants are treated equally (Flick, 2019). It is crucial to reflect on what “harm” can mean to different people and that harm can take on many different forms. Denscombe mentions three categories of harm: physical harm and safety, psychological harm, and personal harm, referring to social embarrassment, economic damages, or legal implications (Denscombe, 2021)

4.6.1 NON-MALEFICENCE

In order to ensure that the research was non-maleficence, I began by writing an application to the NSD (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata). As approval of the application was necessary before collecting any primary data, I had two weeks in Santa Marta, where I was not able to collect any data. During this week, I spent much time speaking with my translator and asking about Arhuaco customs and norms to ensure I would act politely and respectfully in meetings with new participants. I also asked if any topics, in his opinion, would be tough to speak about and potentially harmful to the participants. However, he did not think the topics were the problem, but rather how we went about speaking about the topics. When meeting potential participants, I would introduce myself and my project and quickly establish my role as a researcher. Although this may have led to some participants feeling skeptical or uneasy at the outset, the long-term effect resulted in more trust as I was open about my intentions and the reason for my stay.

From the beginning, anonymity was a key concern of mine, so I decided to use pseudonyms for the participants in all field documents. The only place I kept a list of the connections between participants and pseudonyms was in the field diary, which was locked in my backpack when not in use during the fieldwork. No field documents that can identify any of the participants have been stored on my personal computer.

4.6.2 BENEFICENCE

It is difficult to say whether the research had any direct positive effects on the lives of the participants. However, because many of the participants spoke about their goal to teach non-indigenous people about their knowledge, the interview setting can be seen as beneficial in the way that they had the opportunity to teach me and my translator more about their beliefs and values. A few participants also relayed that they were pleased their knowledge would make it to the other side of the world and be presented in a thesis. The significance of the thesis was never exaggerated and was always presented as a student project as a result of my curiosity about the topic.

Many participants were interested in knowing whether I would return in the future. Although they never asked about the thesis specifically, I have had contact with a few participants on social media after returning home, which leads me to believe there is some interest in the project results. As I regularly travel to Colombia, I aim to return and discuss findings with the participants who are interested. However, this has yet to be planned in detail.

4.6.3 AUTONOMY

In order to ensure the autonomy of the project participants, all people who wanted to be a part of the project were given an information letter in Spanish. The information letter explained the purpose of the project, what participation involved, information about personal privacy and rights, and contact information if they had any questions after my return home. Before beginning each interview, the translator explained the letter and asked if they had any questions. We also explained that the interview would be audio-recorded. We emphasized that if the person regretted the decision to participate, they could at any time withdraw their consent. Additionally, if there were any questions they did not want to answer, we would happily move on to the next (e.g., some participants wanted to keep their age secret). Although a few participants found this process “overly bureaucratic,” they appeared content with the possibility of contacting me in the future if they wanted to. The information letter was a strategy used to ensure the participants made an informed decision on their participation. In some instances, we were in contact with people who appeared uncomfortable and declined participation, which was, of course, respected. There was space in each interview for the participants to expand on topics they found interesting or add new aspects to the conversations we had not discussed. This further enhanced their autonomy in the interview process.

4.6.4 JUSTICE

The last aspect to consider when reflecting on the ethical considerations of a research project is justice. The way in which justice was upheld in this research process was that no person was excluded from participating or judged for the decision not to partake in the interviews. For example, in one interview setting, the translator and I met up at the agreed date and time agreed upon, but after waiting 30 minutes, we were not sure whether the participant would show up or not. We decided to ask if any other people at the organization we were at were interested in participating. One participant was interested, but after starting the interview, the participant we intended to interview turned up. We asked him if he was still interested in participating and if he would be okay with waiting until we finished the current interview. He was still very interested and seemed happy to have the opportunity even though he was late to our agreed appointment. Being flexible and realizing the different concepts of time in the different cultures was essential when making arrangements to meet the participants. As mentioned previously, the

translator and I also came in contact with people whom we asked to participate but were not interested, and this did not change our attitude towards them during our stay in the Sierra.

5. EMPIRICAL CHAPTER

The following sections are dedicated to explaining the results of the study. The first research question will be answered by looking into three perspectives on Arhuaco's relation to nature based on their discussion of practices, beliefs, and values. Following this is a section on how Arhuacos perceive these values as different from those of the outside world, as well as concerns regarding the survival of their knowledge. The second research question will examine how Arhuaco knowledge and values correspond with the degrowth movement. This section includes Arhuaco's perspectives on climate change and attitude towards the outside world. Each of the sections include the relevant categories from with the data in question derived from, the coding landscape is included in appendix 1.

5.1 ARHUACOS RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL WORLD

The first research question: "How can Arhuaco's relation to nature be described and analyzed?" will be explored from three perspectives: (1) Nature in daily life, (2) Nature as sacred leading to responsibilities, and (3) Nature as identity. Appendix 2 illustrates the different topics the participants emphasized when discussing their relation to nature, all of which will be discussed in the following section.

5.1.1 NATURE IN DAILY LIFE

The first perspective used to analyze Arhuacos' relationship to nature revolves around how they interact with their natural surroundings on a daily basis. This involves how Arhuacos meet their physical and spiritual needs through nature. The data in this first section derives from interview excerpts coded with the category "daily life" and observations.

5.1.1.1 Physical needs

As illustrated in section 2.3.1, "Heterogenic groups and indigeneity", the daily life and experiences of the participants of this study vary greatly. The data in the category "daily life" also revealed a difference in the way participants described how their physical needs were met through nature. Arhuacos living in the resguardos in the Sierra Nevada interact with their natural surroundings on a daily basis, which was described in section 2.4.2. "Arhuaco lifestyle". Naturally, then, they depend on nature for food and shelter. The participants emphasized these immediate needs when speaking about their daily tasks like tending to crops and animals, gathering wood for fires, collecting water, cutting palm leaves to build roofs, and gathering vegetables and plants for meals. The interviews conducted in the Sierra Nevada thus strongly focused on these tasks and how the participants provided food for their families, which made them more inclined to talk about specific crops and food strategies. A representation of this is when participant A11 explained how he started every morning at sunrise to arrange food for the day and depending on the day, used different fishing techniques: "There are different techniques, like the

chinchorro¹. There are days for the chinchorro, and days for using hooks as well. When it comes to the chinchorro, we go out in a boat”.

Although participants who lived in the cities also emphasized how their physical needs were met by nature, these statements were more general and contained fewer details, like the following statements by participants B4 and B2:

“We live upon nature, and we depend on Her. For example, we eat from Her, we have everything from Her and without nature we are nothing” – Participant B4

“Mother Earth provides us with the protection and sustenance we need” – Participant B2

Arhuacos living in the resguardos also included more details when speaking about nature providing protection and shelter, and a few participants explained the process of how they constructed their traditional houses by using elements from their surroundings like stones, trees, and palm leaves, described in section 4.3.2., “Participant observation”. One of the participants who was especially involved in the construction of traditional houses in his community stated:

“The whole process or idea is about having a more traditional place, right? And being able to seek or rescue the things that have been passed down to us [from generations]” – Participant A5

This statement suggests that traditional houses are not constructed just out of practicality based on what is available in their natural environment. The building process is also a way of passing on knowledge from one generation to the next and a strategy of preserving Arhuaco culture. This topic will be discussed more in detail in the section concerning “Nature as identity.”

5.1.1.2 Coexistence and Interconnectedness

Arhuacos' reflections on their daily interaction with nature can be categorized by two concepts: coexistence and interconnectedness. These two ideas are highly related to respect and equality among all beings in nature. Regardless of whether they lived in the cities or the territories, several participants expressed that living in harmony with nature was essential to them. Data from this section belong to the category "coexistence" and "interconnectedness".

The participants of this study grew up in the Sierra Nevada², and they all described the intimate connection they experienced with nature. They also described how appreciation of nature was part of

¹ Chinchorro is a type of fishing which involves throwing a fishing net and returning later to fetch the fish caught in it.

² The participants who lived in the cities moved in their teenage years, at the earliest.

their education from early childhood. The ideas of “doing no harm” and “not taking more than you need” were common expressions throughout the interviews. This is exemplified by statements such as:

“Well, for us as a community, as Arhuacos, it is very important to always be in harmony with nature [...] It’s about understanding that if we use all the things that nature offers us and use them wisely, they will benefit everyone” – Participant B2

“We don’t need a large piece of land to cultivate and benefit from. It [a small piece of land] does have a benefit, but just for the family. That has been the concept for a long time because we should not harm nature” – Participant B3

When discussing their relationship with nature, many participants brought up other beings as their inspiration on how to coexist in the world. According to Arhuaco knowledge, all beings in nature are considered living beings. Animals, insects, and amphibians, but also elements that in the Western tradition are not considered alive, like stones, trees, and rivers, are all perceived as living beings, each having a specific role to fulfill in nature. One participant explained how humans should look to their “non-human brothers for inspiration on how to coexist better between themselves and in nature, and he pointed out the food chain being the most apparent proof of all beings’ coexistence and interconnectedness. The following remarks further support this idea of coexistence:

“Non-human living beings, according to their life cycle, are responding perfectly and complements their existence as just another element in fulfilling their life cycle” – Participant A6

“The relationship between human beings and nature is that we should live as if we were siblings with nature” – Participant B3

The expression “siblings with nature” is especially interesting as this is a way to equate humans with non-human beings. Participant A3 reinforces this when he states:

“You are just another element of nature. You don’t have a greater value than an armadillo or a tapir. None of them are any different [from you]” – Participant A3

Using words like “siblings” and “brothers” reflects how nature and different natural elements are seen as familial, demonstrating the intimate connection between Arhuacos and the natural world. In a similar fashion, all participants referred to nature as “Mother Nature”, “Mother Earth” or “She/Her”. This will be further analyzed in section 5.2.2.

5.1.1.3 Spiritual elements in daily life

Certain spiritual practices in Arhuaco's daily life further demonstrate this intimate connection to nature. The data used in the following section are excerpts from the category "spiritual elements". The spiritual tools described are all interconnected and cannot be separated from each other. The tools to be presented and analyzed in relation to nature are the Yáboro, the Kurkuna, and the Tutu³.

Yáboro

The Yáboro goes hand in hand with Ayu, the sacred plant described in section 2.4.3., "Agriculture and economy". The Yáboro is a small pear-shaped gourd with an opening on the thinnest part on the top. The inside of the Yáboro holds lime powder made from seashells found at the beaches in the lower parts of the Sierra Nevada. The seashells are crushed and roasted in a clay pot over a fire to create the powder. It is used by Arhuaco men, and the practice itself involves the Yáboro, the lime powder, a stick, and Ayu: a wooden stick is inserted into the gourd to pick up powder and then put in the mouth of the person who is simultaneously chewing Ayu leaves. A mixture of lime powder and saliva is rubbed against the head of the gourd. As time goes by, the top of the gourd will grow as the saliva and lime powder will create new layers to the Yáboro's head. The Yáboros many elements represent different elements from the Sierra Nevada, as explained by participant A11:

"Each element we use [in the Yáboro] is something sacred to us. There's the tree, which represents the mountains, there's the seashell, representing the sea. And to pulverize one of those seashells, we need stone, water and fire. That's why we have it, in this tool we have practically all elements in the Sierra Nevada. So, we see it as a representation of what exist in the Sierra Nevada" – Participant A11

The Yáboro is perceived as not only a symbol of the Sierra Nevada but also as a feminine symbol. A few participants described the Yáboro as "the first spiritual woman" a man has, and therefore a personal element that is not to be shared, as "you are not going to share your woman with your friends".

There is no specific age when a boy receives his first Yáboro, as this depends on individual maturity. However, the reception of the first Yáboro can be seen as a coming-of-age ritual, and the Yáboro serves as a guardian for the youth to help him mature and grow mentally. The Yáboro is not only an indication of maturity then but also gender-affirming, as stated by participant A11: "[The Yáboro] is something that, for us, makes us a man, it identifies us as an adult". One particular Yáboro is also given to him on

³ Some participants referred to Yáboro as "Poporo", Kurkuna as "Uso", and Tutu as "Mochila", which are the Spanish translations of the Iku words.

his wedding day, and this specific Yáboro connects with the Woman's Kurkuna. These two elements unite and protect the new couple in their life together.

During his lifetime, a man can own multiple Yáboros, as he usually makes a new one when the head of the gourd has grown large. A few participants explained that when a Yáboro has grown big, it is because of all the thoughts the man has stored in it. As a way of reflecting, the man transmits his thoughts into the Yáboro, as stated by participant A1: "Its where you transmit everything you think, into the Poporo, all that you carry".

The Yáboro has great significance for Arhuaco men, and one of them is that this tool helps a man to reflect and align his mind with nature. This was expressed by several participants and is demonstrated by statements such as:

"It is something that allow us to learn a bit more about nature. As people, to reflect, think about positive things, and to take care of ourselves as people, not just thinking negative, but rather, thinking harmoniously" – Participant A1

"It's so that one never forgets, first and foremost, the movement of everything in nature, and the movement of the planet. So, these materials [the Yáboro and the Karkuna] will always be part of us, as symbols of nature" – Participant A2

The movement referred to by Participant A2 is the practice when a man rubs the stick around the head of the gourd. The Kurkuna also involves a rotary motion. The practice involving the Yáboro is done throughout the day during conversations, gatherings, and walks. It was common for male participants in the resguardos to do this activity while participating in the interviews. However, this was not exclusively an observation from the Sierra Nevada, as several participants from the cities also performed the activity during the interview process. An interpretation of this is that practicing the Yáboro away from the natural world reminds a man about his connection to the Sierra Nevada and helps him to think "positively and harmoniously." The significance of the Yáboro then is, first and foremost, a tool for guidance and protection in life, which represents him as a male Arhuaco adult, but also an element in which a man can reflect, reaffirm, and be reminded of his connection to the natural world and the Sierra Nevada.

Karkuna

The Kurkuna can be seen as Yáboro's counterpart, a symbol of masculinity exclusively used by Arhuaco women. It is a spinning device used to make thread to make traditional clothes and Tutus. The Kurkuna is shaped like a tiny spear with a round part near the small tip at the end. It is used by spinning the upper part of the forearm while letting the tip spin and rest in the lap, supported by the Arhuaco woman's dress. In contrast to the Yáboro, the Kurkuna is prepared as soon as a female child is born and will be present

in all of life's important moments. The Kurkuna becomes a life companion and contains an element of protection as well, explained by the following statements:

“When they are baptized, when they grow, during their first period, and at the moment of marriage, the Uso is present in all of these processes. That is why it becomes one of the most important elements in the life of Arhuaco women” – Participant B3

“Well, the Uso is very important for us because it is given as the girls develop and that gives them a kind of protection. One is going to have it and have to take care of it for a long time, while it protects you” – Participant B4

According to The Gold Museum in Santa Marta, “spinning and weaving are everyday activities that symbolize life and thought. ‘When you are spinning, you think. Sitting there, twisting the thread over your thigh, you think a lot: about work, about the family, about people, about everything’”. The thread is, therefore, filled with the thoughts of the woman spinning it, and as the yarn gets bigger, it is filled with more thoughts, similar to the head of the Yáboro.

Parallel to the Yáboro, the Kurkuna reminds a woman of the movement in nature and the rotation of the planet, as both activities involve a rotary motion: “*You know, it dances, it spins on and on, it's like the rotation of the earth*” – Participant B4. As stated in the introduction of the sections, these spiritual tools and practices cannot be separated from each other, which was emphasized by participant B3:

“No object we create is separate from another, everything follows a single line. You cannot separate, for example, the weaving of the Tutu from the Uso, they cannot be separated. So, the Poporo, the Kurkuna or the Uso, and the Tutu all goes hand in hand” – Participant B3

A few participants elaborated on their gendered view of the Yáboro and the Kurkuna. They explained that since the Yáboro was perceived as a feminine symbol, it could only be used by men. Likewise, as the Kurkuna was a masculine symbol, it was exclusively used by women. The underlying logic was harmony and balance between the feminine and masculine energies in the world. Similarly, this was the idea behind chewing Ayu amongst men. As Ayu was perceived as a feminine symbol, only men could chew it. However, both genders could use Ayu before it was roasted, for medicinally for issues like headaches and colds. Different natural elements, then, were perceived as belonging to different genders, and nature in general was seen as a “mother” and thus a woman. Perceptions on “Mother Nature” will be elaborated on in the next section concerning “nature as sacred leading to responsibility”. However, the gendered nature was not a topic that was explored amply enough to analyze in this research.

Tutu

The Tutu is a part of Arhuaco's traditional attire and symbolizes the feminine aspect of Arhuaco culture. According to the Gold Museum in Bogotá, the Tutu is "a symbol of unity, respect, nobility, and understanding." The indigenous groups in the Siera Nevada all make Tutus. However, they differ in size, colors, and patterns. In the Arhuaco community, the Tutus are made by women and girls. Rodríguez-Burgos et al. describe the process as follows: "The wool is washed and dried in the sun. Subsequently, it is wound of the spindle and finally the bag begins to be knitted with the needle" (Rodríguez-Burgos et al., 2016, p. 247). The Tutu is made up of three parts: (1) the Gaza, which is the handle; (2) the Bolso, which is the bag; and (3) the Plato, which is the base of the bag (Rodríguez-Burgos et al., 2016). The Tutus are used by both genders in Arhuaco community, and they are used to carry necessary items around. For men, it is usual to carry multiple Tutus, one bigger for general items and the Yáboro, and one small to carry Ayu. When Arhuaco men greet one another, they exchange a handful of Ayu leaves. This ritual is considered a way of reasserting trust and friendship with each other. Women can also carry several Tutus at once; however, as roasted Ayu is only used by Arhuaco men, they usually do not carry the small Tutu containing Ayu.

Arhuaco girls are usually very young when they begin knitting their first Tutu. Girls as young as 3 years old can make their first Tutu, which is later given to someone special in their life, like their father. Participant B3 explained that giving someone a Tutu is a sign of affection and a token of love and that:

“All women should give a mochila to the man or the person who is very special to her, it could be the father or the children” – Participant B3

The process of making a Tutu relies on ancestral knitting techniques, which have been passed down from generation to generation in Arhuaco communities. Many participants, including participants A1 and B3, explained that making a Tutu is like writing or drawing:

“They weave and making drawings of nature, often replicating natural elements like the mountains, the sun, the roads, the universe” – Participant A1

“It’s like writing. Because we are thinking, and we are weaving what we do every day. I can think about the future, I can think about the present, about the past, and I’m writing it all down, tying together all those thoughts I’m having” – Participant B3

As pointed out by participant A1, the Tutus can have many different patterns. Common for all, however, is that the patterns illustrate elements from the natural world. Each Tutu is different and contains different messages, as each Tutu represents the individual woman’s thoughts while she is weaving. One Tutu can reflect the balance of the earth, while the other can symbolize mountains and rivers and the

flow of life. Many of the women in this study explained that the patterns are transmitted by nature when weaving, indicating the close connection between a woman and her natural surroundings when knitting:

“They weave in connection with nature within the community, and that is how the new designs and ideas come to them - it’s a creation in the mind”. – Participant B2

“Also in the mochila, we summarize everything that is nature, as I told you, it’s like the transmission of the code of nature, I transmit all of that. There it is plants, trees, water, mountains, and it also has its own history because of the designs has a name, which goes a lot deeper. Each of the designs has a story” - Participant B3

“Everything that is the code of nature, that is, all the designs, they are not our inventions: they are codes emitted by nature, from water, stones and everything like that” – Participant B3

The way in which these women articulated the knitting process, by the statements “ideas come to them”, “transmissions of the codes of nature” and “codes emitted by nature” points not only to a close bond between Arhuaco women and the natural world but also to a form of communication between themselves and different natural elements. It was common for participants across gender and age groups to speak of “codes of nature” and although this term was not explained explicitly, it can be interpreted as “rules of nature”, or, in some occurrences, more specifically, natural elements like stones, trees, and rivers, which might be more suitable in case. The patterns in the Tutu, then, are not something made up by the women, but something given to them and communicated to them by their natural surroundings.

Each of these activities in this section requires a deep concentration and a reflective mind, and it is not done thoughtlessly. As these spiritual practices are all interconnected, they also reveal Arhuacos' holistic nature and demonstrate Their close relationship and connection to the natural world in their day-to-day activities.

5.1.2 NATURE AS SACRED LEADING TO RESPONSIBILITY

5.1.2.1 Mother Nature and sacredness

The second perspective in which to understand Arhuaco's relation to nature is through the lens of responsibility. Data from this section come from the categories "Worldview", "Mother Earth", "Territory", "Responsibility", "Mamos and Elders", and "Spiritual Work”.

The aspect of responsibility is strongly connected to Arhuaco worldview, described in section 2.4.5. Reiterating from this section, the Arhuacos and the other indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada refer

to themselves as "older brothers" because of the responsibility to watch over and protect the mountain range perceived as "the heart of the world". A personification of nature also characterizes Arhuaco's worldview, and nature is perceived as the mother of all beings.

As mentioned in the previous section, the participants of the study all referred to nature as "Mother Earth" or "Mother Nature". Several participants also referred to nature and humans as "Mother Earth and her children". Participant A1 shared his reflections on this:

"She is a person, a woman, because that's where we live, where everything is born, everything that we consume. And we are part of all that, right? In the sense that, for example, a mother takes care of her children, right? She's always with her baby, giving maternal milk, care and attention. So, it follows the idea that nature has a similar role to that of a person's mother" – Participant A1

Participant A1 compares nature's role to a mother's by focusing on the nourishment provided by the two. A mother provides maternal milk to her children, while nature provides sustenance to humans and non-human species. When participant B5 was asked directly why Arhuacos believed nature is a mother, she answered, "Because She gives you life. She is the mother, She gives light, She gives life. Food, water, everything". This perception of nature as a mother is another indication of the intimate relationship between Arhuacos and the natural world.

This intimate relationship with nature also contains an element of spirituality, which was an underlying topic in most interviews. Participant A10 explained that the relation between Arhuacos and nature is a "connection that exists without flesh, without material things; it's something very spiritual". Following this, participant A6 explained the correlation between the spiritual and the material elements in Arhuaco knowledge: "It's directed from the spiritual to the material, right? These two aspects are intricately linked". Participant A6 continued by explaining that, unlike in the occidental world, in the indigenous world, there is not only a connection between the spiritual and material elements but that the spiritual is, in many cases, the first consideration when doing any activity in nature. He later stated that "it is essential to consider things from a spiritual perspective".

This spiritual connection to nature is further strengthened by the act of baptism. When asked how the relationship to nature is established between a newborn and the natural world, two participants emphasized baptism. They both compared the ritual to the registration of a child in the occidental world, either as the identification number granted by the government or the baptism in the Catholic Church. In the indigenous world, the baptism is a form of spiritual registration with Mother Nature:

"It is like what you guys are doing, a child is born and immediately registered. But for us, we register them spiritually, to make them recognized by nature. Every child that is born, you have to introduce them to nature, to register them" – participant A11

“The registration is necessary, just as it is here in the Bonachi part. As an indigenous person, you have to register your child. In our culture, it is necessary to make a spiritual registration. [...] Why do we do that? Well, it’s for our mother nature to recognize us, to acknowledge that we are, that we exist, that we are going to live” – Participant B5

This was explained to be the first relation between a child and the natural world.

It is worth noting that the term "spiritualism" was never defined by the participants. In a traditional Western understanding of the term, "spiritualism" presupposes a non-material world. This spiritual world is then seen in contrast to the physical, material world. Taking into account Arhuaco's mythical creation history, described in section 2.4.5. "Arhuaco Worldview", there seems to be some overlap in the understanding of the term. According to Arhuaco's mythical history, the creation of the universe is divided into two phases: before and after the dawn. Before the dawn, everything existed in a spiritual state. After the dawn, the materialization of the universe began. In this sense, the Arhuacos could also believe in two worlds. However, there are also interactions between these worlds, as reflected by the Iku word "Marunzama". As pointed out by Pinto-Marroquin et al., all material manifestations in the Arhuaco worldview also have a spiritual counterpart, and these two parts, the spiritual and the material, complement each other and are in constant dialogue. This dialogue is called Marunzama and the Mamos are the interpreters of it. As Participant A6 explained, the spiritual and material worlds are interconnected, pointing to coexistence and dependence between the two. From an Arhuaco perspective, these two worlds are seen as equally important and cannot be seen as completely separate from one another. Interestingly, as emphasized by many participants, the spiritual elements are the first considerations Arhuacos considers when interacting with nature, implying what participant A6 expressed about the order of the indigenous world "It's directed from the spiritual to the material".

Following this argument on spirituality, some participants linked this notion of spiritualism to sacredness. Only a few explicitly mentioned this, and the concept was not defined overtly. However, participant A9 stated: "The territory is sacred". Additionally, most participants mentioned sacred sites and connection points in the Sierra Nevada, which they emphasized when discussing Mamos and Pagamentos. Although the participant's expressions of sacred sites can be interpreted as specific places being sacred, consequently meaning other places are not, I got the impression that the participants perceived all of their ancestral territory and the Sierra Nevada to be sacred. The sacred sites mentioned were mentioned concerning spiritual work, which will be explained in section 5.1.2.3, "pagamentos". A possible interpretation of this is that these spaces allowed for the interpretation of dialogue between the spiritual and material elements in nature, Marunzama, by the Mamos, and thus were perceived as "special" spaces allowed by nature for humans to connect with. If the Sierra Nevada is perceived as sacred in totality, this could be what leads to the notion of responsibility toward the natural world.

5.1.2.2 Responsibility

Responsibility was a topic discussed in the majority of the interviews. One question from the interview guide focused on this specifically: “Do you believe humans have a different responsibility towards nature than other species?”. Not all participants were asked this question directly, as many of the conversations naturally moved toward the topic by itself. However, out of the 9 of 16 who were asked this question, they all answered, with different reasonings, that human beings indeed have a special responsibility regarding nature. The responses to the question and reflections on the topic can be divided into four groups. It is worth noting that although the responses are presented in four groups, the individual participants had multiple perspectives, and some statements overlapped between the presented groups. After presenting each group and their respective quotes, a short discussion by the participants on the consequences of ignoring this responsibility will take place.

(1) Participants who emphasized the duty of taking care of the natural world

Most participants emphasized a duty to care for the natural world. Taking care, protecting, preserving, and respecting the natural world were common terms for this group, in addition to duty, obligation, and adherence. A few participants in this group referenced an adherence to the Law of Origin, described in section 2.4.5.

“In the Arhuaco culture, they say that humans exist to take care of everything, right? With responsibility, perhaps more than their other brothers, living beings that inhabit nature” – Participant A1

“Native tribes from here have their own laws, right? And it’s our duty here, on earth, to preserve and protect” – Participant A5

“A sense of responsibility is developed towards maintaining this relationship [with nature], and this relationship is intricately tied to, let’s say, adherence. Adherence to the Law of Origin. Adherence to the Law of Origin means fully adhering to the norms that correspond to being Arhuaco”. – Participant A6

(2) Participants who stressed human rationality leading to responsibility

Another perspective shared by some participants was that human knowledge and rationality are the fundament of humans’ responsibility towards nature. The participants who shared this position defined human’s role in this world either as an administrator, manager, guardian, or protector, all of which is in

opposition to the role of an owner. One participant also explained that according to their Mamos, nature is like our home; however, it is not a home that a person owns but a place one rests and reaps benefits from. This aligns with another perspective in which a participant explained that Arhuacos live as though in another state, as “renters”.

“We have this thought; this knowledge and that knowledge is not to make us feel like owners of the universe. We are the administrators; we are not the owners.” – Participant A2

“The man, as a rational being, we have a duty to care for what is represented in the world, right?”
- Participant B3

“Humans have the ability to understand. This is the work we have to do to ensure that every being that makes up your surroundings has their energy, their strength, their life” – Participant A9

(3) Participants who emphasized equality and fulfilling a natural role

A few participants also mentioned equality among all species. Regarding equality, many participants also discussed fulfilling a natural role, looking to non-human species for guidance, as discussed in section 5.2.1.

“So, the Mamos say that as a human being, you are just another element of nature. You don’t have a greater value than an armadillo or a tapir. None of them are any different [...] It is like being the same element, taking care of the other elements of nature. So, it’s all about equality.”
– Participant A3

“Living beings are elements within nature, and as humans, we are part of nature. Therefore, as we make up a natural world, humans have greater responsibility compared to non-human living beings. Because non-human living beings, according to their life cycle, are responding perfectly complements their existence as just another element in fulfilling their life cycle.” – Participant A6

(4) Participants who highlighted reciprocity regarding responsibility

The last perspective, shared by several participants, highlighted reciprocity as an aspect of responsibility in their relation to nature. This perspective was also brought up when the participants described and explained pagamentos, which is why this perspective will be further analyzed in section 5.1.2.3.

“That’s where one must be giving back, making sure that one is taking responsibility as a thinking human beings, focusing on caring and showing respect (...) one has to give back. That’s the mission we have with nature.” – Participant A6

“[Speaking about Pagamentos] A way to give back to nature” – Participant A2

Consequences of not being responsible

The gravity of the responsibility towards the natural world was revealed in the responses to the question, “How do you feel about humans and nature's future?”. Responding to this question, many participants expanded the responsibility towards nature to not only the indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada but to all human beings, and in some instances, they critiqued non-indigenous people on their overconsumption, lack of awareness and self-control, and exploitation of nature. These topics will be further analyzed later in this section.

“As for my vision of the future of in this world, I see a world continuing to develop much more, significantly. That won’t change; people will keep produce and inventing. [...] If humans keep changing and exploiting the earth without conscience, many years from now, we’ll be left with little jungle” – Participant A3

“Well, in the future, suffering may affect both humans and nature if we continue to mistreat, exploit, and disrupt the balance with the environment” “All living beings in nature are waiting for human to behave responsibly towards nature because we are the ones who have power to mitigate the negative impact on the environment”. – Participant A6

“Well, gradually nature is being depleted, and perhaps, as a consequence, the community will also be affected. That’s what I see. If there is no nature, then we will disappear too.” – Participant A12

Another element apparent in the responses to this question was that many participants referred to Mamos when speaking about the future. They explained that the Mamos have predicted a great change coming for the future if humans do not act more responsibly.

“The Mamos also say that a great change is coming for the universe” – Participant A1

“I trust in what the elders and Mamos are saying. They claim that Mother Nature will organize herself when the time is right. When she needs to organize herself, that’s when we will have a final outcome where all of us will come to an end. When Mother Nature revolts against

humanity, it's at that moment when she feels the need to cleanse herself and restore balance" – Participant A6

Participant A6 further explained that Mother Nature is just like a mother who loves her children and never holds anger against them; however, sometimes her patience is tested, which can be “terrifying even for Her children.”

5.1.2.3 Pagamentos as Part of Responsibility

Although pagamentos was not a focus in the initial interview guide, it was revealed early during the fieldwork that many participants used this concept to explain their relation to nature. It was apparent that pagamentos were not an easy concept to explain, and many participants had difficulty describing different pagamentos in detail, which may be one of the reasons why most participants referred to their Mamos when asked to explain a pagamento.

“It would take a Mamo to explain it 100%. Besides, it's very, very extensive to explain in exact terms” – Participant A3

The participants stated that the Mamos are the spokespersons of the mountains and are responsible for receiving the pagamentos and delivering them to nature. They further explained that the Mamos decide when a pagamento needs to take place and how it is to be done. The Mamos all have different approaches to the pagamentos; however, the participants stressed that no approach was better than the other.

“The Mamo is the professor, because he is the one who knows how to make the pagamento. That is, they know what needs to be paid. So, one only fulfills this by doing the work.” – Participant B4

“It's a process mostly based on what they know from the knowledge of Mamos. It's as if they were practically speaking their own language at the moment they decide how the pagamento should be done” – Participant A12

One participant explained that the Mamos spent their whole life getting to know the different parts of the Sierra Nevada and the sacred connection sites the mountains hold. It is at these connection sites that the pagamentos are made. Participant B5 explained that these sacred sites are called Kaduko in Iku and the relation to the Mamos:

“The Kaduko is important because there is the connection that the Mamo has with Mother Nature [...] the place that the Mamo is going to make any pagamento.” – Participant B5

Rodríguez explains that the word pagamento comes from the Spanish verb “pagar” which means to pay (Rodríguez, 1997). This is also how one of the participants of the study explained pagamentos, stating that it can be seen as a form of spiritual payment:

“Making the pagamento, for the water I consumed during the month, like paying a service every month, spiritually. It’s something like that.” – Participant A2

Participant A2 emphasized making pagamentos for the water provided by Mother Nature. The underlying logic of pagamentos is that a person spiritually pays for the benefits provided by Mother Nature. Pagamentos are required for all elements in nature, such as plants, water, land, firewood, stones, mountains, the air we breathe, and the food we consume. However, different life events also require pagamentos. The participants mentioned the baptism, marriage, and a general yearly pagamento as examples of events that necessitated pagamentos. One participant mentioned the yearly pagamento, and this participant also explained that music and dance were central elements to this pagamento, which was not discussed by any other participants. The other participants explained that the pagamentos are carried out with different natural elements and are always guided by a Mamo. As explained, there is no specific way to perform a pagamento, as the approach varies from Mamo to Mamo. One participant explained that:

“Sometimes you have to do it with cotton, and sometimes you have to do it with fire, sometimes with fruits, or sometimes you have to do it with the fur of certain animals, right?” – Participant A3

When asked to explain a specific pagamento of their choice, participants B3, B4, and B5 described a pagamento concerning cultivating crops.

“When we are going to clear a land to plant new crops, to cultivate, we need to clean the space. But before that, we have to ask nature for permission to enter and cause harm. [...] So, when I enter to harm the land, even if it’s for my needs, I have to ask for permission and make a pagamento before taking action. That is mutual respect. When there are crops, the crops also need to be “baptized” by the Mamo.” – Participant B3

The first step to cultivation is to ask Mother Nature for permission to enter and harm the land before taking any other action. It is important to note that the pagamentos, as mentioned earlier, are directed by the Mamos, and they are the ones who decide when and what type of cultivation will take place. Participant B5 continues to explain the next step:

“In terms of lands that are full of weeds when you are going to cultivate. You have to heal the space, meaning you have to remove the weeds from the soil. [...] So, let’s say that in this way, one makes these pagamentos so that Mother Nature yields good crops for you” – Participant B5

In this statement, participant B5 explained that to clear the land, one would have to “heal the space” and “remove the weeds from the soil.” This can be interpreted as physically cleaning the space and removing weeds, but also in a more symbolic sense in which “removing the weeds” can be interpreted as mentally removing ailments from the soil. This interpretation aligns with the concept of “saneamientos,” which was mentioned by a few participants and was defined as a sort of spiritual cleansing or healing. Participant A1 explains it like this:

“And how I see it, it is primarily about healing. Healing the entire environment we are in, and also, healing the negative thoughts you could say” – participant A1

Participant A2 also touched on the subject when explaining pagamentos to the water:

“How can I make a pagamento to the water? It is, primarily, by offering your good energy, your good thoughts, to the water. Spiritually cleansing the water of any ailments it may have. and then, once you have made the pagamento, you can drink the water” - Participant A2

Based on these statements, it seems likely that the concepts saneamientos and pagamentos are closely related and that they can, at least in some instances, be part of the same process. Going back to the descriptions of pagamentos regarding cultivation and food, participant B4 stated:

“Well, when one plants Yuca, one cannot just harvest it like that, no. The first ones that are harvested must be taken to the Mamos so that they can do the work. [...] If one eats it without permission from the Mamo, before making pagamento, then one might get sick. It might cause harm, to oneself or to the children” – Participant B4

This statement about the first harvest of a crop was also pointed out by participant B3 when she stated that the crops needed to be “baptized” by the Mamo, which again not only points to the Mamo's unique position in Arhuaco communities but also their essential role regarding the fulfillments of pagamentos. Another aspect of this statement is that of doing a pagamento to prevent a future outcome. Both participant B4 and participant B5 highlighted this in different ways. While participant B4 stated that doing pagamentos and involving the Mamos before harvesting would ensure the crops are safe to consume, participant B5 indirectly pointed out the same effect when stating that one makes the pagamentos in order for Mother Nature to “yield good crops”. This was explicitly pointed out by participant A7 when explaining more generally the idea behind pagamentos:

“Within our daily life, there are spaces that serve as a means of prevention by making pagamentos in advance for activities that may occur in the future” – Participant A7

Pagamento as responsibility and reciprocity

A commonality between the participants was that they perceived pagamentos as a duty and responsibility that was essential to Arhuaco knowledge. This was apparent in the interviews, as the participants who discussed pagamentos stated that it was something “they had to do.”

“We live of nature, and we depend on Her. For example, we eat from Her, we have everything from Her and without nature we are nothing, so that’s why we have to make pagamentos every month, do traditional work, spiritually, give offerings” - Participant B4

This responsibility was sometimes linked to how Arhuacos upheld coexistence and balance in the natural world.

“So, we always have to make pagamentos to them to always be in harmony with our brothers, both older and younger, with the mamos, and everyone in the environment, in the Arhuaco culture” – Participant B2

“So what it is, more than anything’s how to coexist in nature through pagamentos” – Participant A11

Importantly, pagamentos were seen as a way of giving back to nature, meaning that reciprocity and respect were central to this act.

“From a spiritual perspective, we need to pay attention to organizing and providing reciprocity because we will benefit from agriculture, right?” – Participant A6

“That’s why the concept of the Mamo is that we have to make pagamentos. Pagamentos means giving back everything she gives us” – Participant B3

Thus, pagamentos is an essential aspect of Arhuaco knowledge in several ways: (1) they serve as a way of showing gratitude and respect to Mother Nature, (2) they help to sustain coexistence and balance in the natural world, (3) they are essential to prevent unwanted results in the future, and lastly (4) they are central in Arhuaco knowledge as a way of instilling values based on reciprocity and responsibility towards the natural world.

5.1.3 NATURE AS IDENTITY

The third and last perspective used to understand Arhuaco's relation to nature is viewing nature as part of Arhuaco's identity. Data from this section comes from the categories; "Mother Earth", "Territory", "Preservation of culture" and "Holism".

It is safe to say that, based on the first section regarding coexistence and interconnectedness, being Arhuaco involves a close relationship with nature. This relationship consists of not only a physical, daily relation to nature, as the majority of the participants lived in the resguardos or travelled regularly to the Sierra Nevada from the city they resided in, but also a mentally and spiritually connection. This perspective can also be seen in the light of Arhuaco's worldview, as the participants identify themselves by their association with the Sierra Nevada and their mission to protect the mountain range. Participant A3 explained that it is expected of Arhuacos to be familiar with different parts of the Sierra Nevada and linked this to their identity:

“You have to know where our borders are, where our reserves are, where the sacred points of the community are, right? Or to know every part of our environment, as Arhuaco beings” – Participant A3

In some instances, a few participants went further and indicated a holistic relationship with nature, pointing out that it was not possible to speak of Arhuacos without also considering the natural world around them.

“The Mother is everything. We believe we are part of her, right? [...] We are part of her, and she is part of us.” – Participant A1

“The worldview of the Arhuaco people is that humans are nature, and nature is human” – Participant A9

Although this was explicitly only mentioned by these two participants, several other participants made a similar connection, explaining that humans are part of nature and thus cannot be separated from the natural world. Participant B1 emphasized the connection between human energy and spirit and Mother Nature:

“We are not different things from another. The spirit of the body is part of nature [...] Because in itself, what Mother Nature is, is our energy” Participant B1

Another indication of nature being part of Arhuaco's identity comes from the idea of protection and expansion of the resguardos. Participant A9 asserted:

“That’s why we have been persistent in claiming our territory. Because the territory is sacred, it is the soul of the culture, the identity, the race [...] Without Her, we know we will lose everything – our language, our vision, our knowledge, our way of dressing, our way of building homes” – Participant A9

In this statement, participant A9 directly links Arhuaco's identity with the Sierra Nevada and emphasizes that reclaiming territory is essential for the cultural survival of the Arhuaco community. Similarly, participant B5 stated: “I think, to expand is to protect”, referring to both environmental protection and protection of Arhuaco culture. Participant A12 also made this connection:

“Well, gradually nature is being depleted, and perhaps, as a consequence, the community will also be affected. That’s what I see. If there is not first nature, then we will disappear too” – Participant A12

Expanding territory was just one of many strategies the participants mentioned as necessary in order to preserve their identity. Participant A5 explained that the topic of the preservation of Arhuaco's identity was crucial to him:

“Native tribes from here have their own laws, right? And it’s our duty here on earth to preserve and protect [...] And the tribes, from generation to generation, must carry them [ancestral practices]. So it’s a practice that must be carried out, a practice in our daily activities, and it’s something that must not be lost, because it’s from here, it’s not from the outside, it’s not from somewhere else, it comes from the Sierra” – Participant A5

It is important to note that neither the original nor any of the revised interview guides contained a specific question on how to preserve cultural identity. However, this topic was important to many participants, as it was naturally discussed in all interviews but two (with participants A4 and A10). Appendix 3 shows an overview of participants' strategies for preserving Arhuaco's identity and knowledge.

Among the responses, preserving traditional practices, expanding territory, and sharing Arhuaco knowledge with non-indigenous peoples were the strategies most participants highlighted as significant to preserving Arhuaco's identity. However, the category "Going back to the Sierra" was relevant to 9 of 16 participants as they had moved outside the resguardos for different reasons. A few participants summarized their points by referencing the Law of Origin. The idea was that by adhering to the Law of Origin and fully conforming to the norms corresponding to the Arhuacos, Arhuaco knowledge and identity would endure.

“The Law of Origin, is something that, for us as indigenous peoples, allow us to preserve our traditions, our language, our clothing, our craftsmanship [...] So, the Law of Origin practically encompasses everything in the history of a culture, with its territory, and what it [the law] does, is paying homage to Mother Nature” – Participant A3

One interpretation of what it means to adhere to the Law of Origin is to be conscious of what Arhuaco's identity is made up of. Some of this has already been discussed in this thesis, like protecting and preserving natural elements in the Sierra Nevada, performing pagamentos to Mother Nature, learning from the Mamos, doing traditional work, making and wearing traditional clothes, learning and using Iku, would all be a part of what it means to be Arhuaco and preserving that identity from generation to generation. Participant A7 was especially vocal about preserving Arhuaco's identity and spoke about his concerns that some Arhuacos, instead of keeping their way of life and traditions, "followed the current" of the outside world. In his view, this was breaking with a natural law and not being authentic to one's identity. Explaining this, he compared this process to how birds in nature always stay authentic to their species: "We won't see a macaw imitating a toucan, or a toucan imitating a macaw. It's like there is an order where they preserve their uniqueness and therefore appear unique, right?".

5.1.4 ARHUACO KNOWLEDGE AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Many participants expressed concerns regarding the lack of appreciation and recognition of Arhuaco knowledge, as well concerns about how their communities were changing due to more interaction with the outside world. This section will briefly describe the participants' concern about the perseverance of Arhuaco knowledge and how the participants experience their values to be different from non-indigenous people.

5.1.4.1 Two worlds

As explained in the background chapter, many Arhuacos depend on the nearby towns to get products and crops they do not provide by themselves. The term “outside tools” was used by the participants themselves and referred to any elements coming from the outside of the communities, ranging from salt, cooking oil, hammocks, boots, pots, and pans to technology and constructions like the internet, lights, computers, phones, social media, paved highways and concrete buildings. With regards to outside tools being introduced and used in the communities and, in general, a higher interaction with the outside world, many participants expressed concern about losing their ancestral heritage and culture. This concern was twofold; on the one hand, participants expressed that they were worried outside tools were changing their communities from within, as they observed more Arhuacos moving away from traditional customs and practices. On the other hand, participants voiced concern about lack of appreciation and recognition of Arhuaco knowledge among non-indigenous people, as well as concerns regarding the lack of common ground between Arhuacos and Bonachi.

The interaction with non-indigenous people and the outside world was sometimes explained by the term "two worlds". This was primarily the focus of participants who had more experience with the outside world. Participant A3 who had lived in the city for a few years for his studies, described seeing a "different world" develop in the town he worked in. This manner of speaking was not unique to him, as participant B3 also expressed that due to her life situation, with her father working in the city, they had to "live in both worlds". Participants living in the city emphasized that they regularly went back to the Sierra as a way to maintain contact with the communities, their identity, and the natural world. The concept of "two worlds" points to a belief in the existence of multiple worlds, similar to the concepts of "a world of many worlds" and "pluriverse". However, this aspect needs further exploration to make statements about the participant's perspectives on these issues.

Changes within Community

Some participants living outside of the resguardos in the Sierra perceived their way of life as a strategy to preserve Arhuaco knowledge and culture. Participant A1 explained that he had "been able to assimilate life" and did not live in the city to use outside tools but to empower their culture and offer Arhuaco knowledge to the world outside of the territories.

"It's about empowerment and knowing how we could coexist better as a society, right? [...] So, it's good to be in this process, strengthening the ancestral practices and ensure that the knowledge of the original people will be carried out" – Participant A1

Participant A2 also lived in the city and worked with social media to promote Arhuaco knowledge and teach "people from the city to coexist". Participant A3 explained that in his case, he had finished his studies in the city and used this knowledge to teach the younger generation in the communities:

"It has evolved. For example, I have completed my studies, and I want to share my experience and the knowledge I have gained with the younger generation. My father taught me, and now I teach them" – Participant A3

Participants A1, A2 and A3 were all young men, living outside of the resguardos, and although they had regular contact with the communities as they travelled back and forth, their lifestyle was indirectly critiqued by other participants. Participants A5 and B3 criticized the younger Arhuaco generation for their lack of focus on traditional knowledge and customs:

"Right now, the ones who support our knowledge are the older people, right? Or the authorities, the Elders and the Mamos, not so much the youth or the people who are studying outside [...] Because as of now, it appears that young people are not as focused on our own knowledge and duties, right?" – Participant A5

“The new generation has a completely different concept. It is like we no longer have respect anything, not even respect among ourselves, and much less for nature” – Participant B3

Participant A5 was especially vocal about the preservation of Arhuaco culture, and he explained that his goal in life was to rely less on outside tools and rather make the community go back to being self-sufficient. Participant A12 also shared the observation about changes within Arhuaco communities:

“I see sometimes the Arhuaco change a bit, and leave his customs aside, because he assimilates a little more into the Bonachi society” – Participant A12

The changes observed within the community were sometimes perceived as inevitable. Both participant A1 and participant A7 shared their thoughts on dominant Western culture being imposed on Arhuaco community:

“Seeing that Western culture had a dominance and was what was most visible, what was most in motion, in a sense, has had an effect where people like the Arhuaco no longer feel like they should sit, think or act like Arhuaco. Instead, it’s like they follow the current. The current with the most strength is the one that pulls them along” – Participant A7

Participant A7 explained that he believed many Arhuacos had allowed themselves to be “absorbed by the current with the strongest force”. Participant A1 shared this perspective and stated:

“The original nation, or idea of the culture, we can say that it is disappearing [...] Globalization, the modern culture, is a monster. Absorbing, and disappearing ideas of the people of the rights thought and the nation” – Participant A1

Participant A1 shared the standpoint about traditional Arhuaco culture slowly disappearing as a result of globalization and cultural homogenization, however, he also lived most of his life outside of the communities and used outside tools like internet, phones and computers on a regular basis. He stated that he believed it was necessary to learn how to use outside tools in order to empower his community, and not be “vulnerable to other pretensions”. This was participant A3s attitude as well, and he stated that because “everything is managed with documents” it was necessary get an education and learn to become “a lawyer to defend the territory”.

Similar to participants A1 and A7, participant A5 also reflected around cultural homogenization, and he was of the impression that as a result of influence from the outside world, Arhuaco knowledge would disappear in the future:

“And when, in the end, when everything becomes one, I mean when the tribes cease to exist, or when those knowledges and practices are no longer carried out, and when everything becomes one single way of doing things, at that point, the knowledge will be lost.” – Participant A5

Lack of recognition of Arhuaco knowledge

Many participants expressed concerns about the lack of recognition of Arhuaco knowledge in the outside world. Participant A2 expressed that he wished the larger society would listen more to indigenous perspectives and implement more of their knowledge in society. The impression I got from many participants when discussing their knowledge in relation to the outside world was that they felt that as a community, they were more influenced by the outside society than the other way around, and they aspired to be in a position to teach non-indigenous people about their beliefs and values.

Some participants, like participants B1 and A1, expressed disappointment and sadness when reflecting on the position of their ancestral knowledge in the larger society:

“Many times I believe the ancestral knowledge is worth nothing now, just for advertising and publicity, but that’s it” – Participant B1

“So, sometimes, talking about the Arhuaco culture might seem like begging, right? Because it is as if we want to plead for the culture to be recognized” – Participant A1

Some participants stated they wished their knowledge would influence the larger society, and two participants also reflected around the possibility of indigenous knowledges, or Arhuaco knowledge specifically, in school curricula:

“Governments in various countries should consider incorporation an essential structure in the educational curriculum, to impart environmental knowledge [...] children must be taught to protect the environment” – Participant A6

“The idea of caring for nature is essential for human life. If it were taught in schools, that would be a significant step forward for us [...] Every indigenous person wants our way of thinking to influence society” – Participant A2

5.1.4.2 Lack of shared values

The majority of the participants shared their reflections on how their values differed from the outside world, and how this was the main strain in their relationship with non-indigenous people. The main perspectives on how the values of non-indigenous people differed from their own were: (1) Disconnectedness from nature, (2) Pursuit of money and power, (3) Environmental critique of Bonachi.

Disconnectedness from Nature

Disconnectedness from nature was a topic expressed by six participants, and the topic was also related to a lack of self-control and awareness among non-indigenous people. Participant A1 stated:

“It’s just that some, with the idea of meeting their needs, became more detached from nature, from the natural environment. So, that perspective that is sometimes held, I don’t know, but it can complicate things and make everything a bit more difficult” – Participant A1

Participant A1 followed this by stating he believed that human needs were at times given so much priority that these were seen as separate from nature itself, which breached with Arhuaco knowledge in which human needs are equal to nature needs. This is apparent from the Arhuaco worldview, in which taking care of and protecting the Sierra Nevada is essential for the well-being of all living beings. This idea of being detached from nature to the extent where human needs are seen as separate from nature itself was expressed by participants A6 and A12 as well:

“Meanwhile, humans, with our way of thinking, projecting and organizing, we are, let us say, interacting with nature in reverse” – Participant A6

“Some people think, more about their own advancement than about the preservation and all that. So, let’s say, if there are no trees, if there are no water, if there is none of that, what am I going to do? Because in the end, everything comes from nature?” – Participant A12

Participant A6’s statement about “interacting with nature in reverse” indicates a break with a natural law concerning how to live and behave in nature. A possible interpretation is that A6 refers to a breach of the Law of Origin. As a result of prioritizing individual wants and needs, one harms the natural world instead of caring for it. This would indicate a detachment from nature, which is what participant A12 expressed as well; if humans become detached from nature to the point where all they care about is their own progress, they will lose sight of the interconnectedness between everything on earth and the natural world, and humans, would suffer. Participant A1 similarly stated that: “The desire to obtain something may lead us to self-destruction”

Pursuit of money and power

Five participants critiqued non-indigenous people’s pursuit of money and power. Participants A2, A7, and B1 stated:

“Once the human being sees these elements as something to appropriate and do business with, we are directly disrupting that spiritual balance that exists in the universe” – Participant A2

“We get out of control in our pursuit of accumulating money, but doing so, we are also causing a lot of harm to the earth” – Participant A7

“Many men are just doing business with everything from nature. If they talk about water, then money is part of water. But if there is no water, then what?” – Participant B1

Participant A2 expressed that the appropriation of nature leads to an imbalance between the universe's spiritual and material elements. Participant B2 also mentioned this imbalance, as she stated, "There is an imbalance in the Bonachi part". She followed by explaining that while the Arhuacos were trying to care for Mother Nature, "it is as if non-indigenous people are testing Her". Participant B1's statements also signified a detachment from nature, like the statements in the previous section.

Participant A7 was especially vocal about the commodification of nature and what he called “the game of the money”:

“It reaches that extreme point where humans start selling nature, selling what exists on Earth, in order to fulfill certain needs and acquire wealth, right? It’s the game of the money” – Participant A7

He followed this by explaining that, in his opinion, humanity disregards its responsibility towards the natural world due to the game of money and power. It is not difficult to grasp, then, that the relationship between Arhuacos and non-indigenous people is strained when the responsibility towards the natural world, which is fundamental in Arhuaco knowledge, is not evident in the behavior of non-indigenous people. Participant B3 made this connection explicitly:

“The relationship is not good because indigenous people are seen as if they were like bugs, as if they don’t contribute to the government, to the advancement of the country, in other words, to the development of the country. It’s as if we are just invaders. Because we always take care of nature, we criticize the new companies, we talk about the destruction of the sacred sites, and all of that” – Participant B3

In this statement, Participant B3 makes the connection between the differentiating values being a core challenge in the relationship between the Arhuacos and non-indigenous people. She also mentions that the Arhuacos regularly critique their younger brothers' environmental practices, a topic discussed by another six participants.

Environmental critique of non-indigenous people

Seven participants described observations about the environmental practices of non-indigenous people, and in some instances, these observations were followed by a critique grounded in their own environmental values. Participant B2 explained that the Bonachi way of life would lead to a world in which not much nature would prevail:

“The intervention of the Bonachi, who harm nature, ultimately leads them [the Mamos] to believe that there won’t be much nature left, only constructions everywhere, and little by little they are going to destroy everything we have worked hard to preserve” – Participant B2

Participant A5 shared his observations about cattle farmers in the lower part of the Sierra cutting down trees to the point where many native trees had disappeared. He followed by critiquing the practices in nature by their younger brother:

“They come with the intention of extracting wealth from nature and all that, right? And when the younger brother takes on these processes, well, our well-being depends on nature right?” – Participant A5

Participants A6, A9, and B1 shared this perspective on non-indigenous people's activity in nature:

“I think the mismanagement of land use has indeed created a kind of rivalry against nature, right?” – Participant A6

“The moment we start extracting, extracting, extracting, of course, at some point, it [the land] will become like an immobilized body. It will stop serving” – Participant A9

“Every day we see the need to build a house. What we are doing is removing, taking away energy from the Mother” – Participant B1

The “mismanagement of land” is similar to what participants A9 and B2 expressed:

“With so many people, so much interference from people from other parts of the country and foreigners, they are using the land, but not in the way it should be used” – Participant A9

“In the part of the civil people, there is always a tree falling and land exploitation happening” – Participant B2

These statements indicate a “wrong” way of using the land and, consequently, a “right” way of using the land. In their belief, the non-indigenous people are not using the land as it was meant to be used, which can be analyzed again by a lack of respect, responsibility, and awareness of the natural world as a result of non-indigenous people being more disconnected from nature. Participant A6 explained that

when people are not aware of their behavior in nature, they end up making decisions that also harm themselves, indicating the interconnectedness between humans and nature:

“For example, it is like climbing a tree and sitting on the branch you are planning to cut down, it doesn’t make sense right?” – Participant A6

5.2 ARHUACO KNOWLEDGE AND DEGROWTH

The second research question “How does Arhuaco knowledge align with the degrowth movement?” will be answered by using data deriving from the following categories: “environmental perspectives”, “outside tools”, “value changes”, and “disconnectedness”. This section will begin by presenting observations of climate change shared by the participants and their perspectives on the introduction of outside tools in their community, touched upon in the last section. Lastly, this section will compare Arhuaco knowledge and the degrowth movement and examine how these perspectives align and diverge.

5.2.1 OBSERVATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The participants were all concerned about global warming, and seven shared their observations on climate change in the Sierra Nevada. Participant A2 stated that they did not have to go to Europe or other parts of the world to educate themselves on the consequences of global warming, as the Sierra Nevada was their “laboratory” in which they could experience the effects firsthand. The table below illustrates the observations made by six participants concerning the effects of global warming in the Sierra Nevada.

Table 3: Effects on global warming mentioned by participants

	Warmer climate	Melting ice	Natural disasters	Less fertile land	Water shortage
A2	x	x			
A3			x		
A5	x			x	
A6	x				
A7	x	x			x
B2			x		x
B5				x	
A11	x				

Participant A2 described how the Elders in his community used to talk about the three highest mountain peaks in the Sierra Nevada, which all were topped with snow when he was younger. However, in the later years, the Elders spoke of only two peaks with snow:

“Nowadays, they don’t talk about the three peaks, just two of them [...] That is an observation we see” – Participant A2

Participant A7 also mentioned the melting snow in the higher areas of the Sierra Nevada:

“When looking at the colder areas which used to have ice, there’s much less ice nowadays. Around those areas, trees are growing where nothing used to grow before. So, I can see those differences from the farm I have, during the last 10 years” – Participant A7

Increased temperature was the most common effect mentioned by the participants concerning climate change. Participant A7 explained that he grew up in an area high in the mountains, which used to be much colder than today. The temperature change resulted in being able to produce crops that previously would not grow as a result of the cold temperature:

“The place I grew up used to be much colder. It didn’t produce crops like it does now. It’s fair to say that it has warmed up” – Participant A7

Participants B2, A11, and A5 also remarked warmer temperatures, while Participant B2 stated, “the temperatures have risen a lot,” and Participant A11 mentioned “overheating”. Participant A5 explained how the rising temperatures killed their crops, leading to the necessity of planting more often. This can also imply less fertile land. Participant B5 also emphasized land not being as fertile as before:

“The same land, it has been changing and it is not as fertile at this time” – Participant B5

Two participants commented on the rivers having less water than usual, and participant B2 was concerned this could lead to a shortage of water, which could lead to animals dying and, consequently, affecting the communities’ diets and hydration. Participant A7 stated:

“The rivers used to have significant amount of water, but now they often have only a small amount of water, unless there is heavy rain” – Participant A7

Two participants mentioned natural disasters; participant B2 described experiencing more natural disasters, and Participant A3 mentioned earthquakes. More generally, participant A6 stated:

“Nowadays there is a lot of talk about climate change, and people are starting to realize that we need to find alternatives to counteract global warming” – Participant A6

5.2.1.1 A time to act

Five participants emphasized that humanity is living in “a time to act”. Participant A2 explained how he believed humanity is in a moment of decision in which we can choose between life and death and stressed the need to take action:

“If we say we are concerned but don’t take action, it’s like saying nothing can change, and its already happening and [that it is] inevitable. The concern won’t go away without figuring out how we can improve the situation” – Participant A2

Similarly, participant A10 stated:

“It’s like a double-edged sword. If we don’t take care, we end up destroying everything to the point of disappearance” – Participant A10

Participant A7 shared this perspective, although he believed prevention at this time and place would only delay the inevitable:

“I would say that we are on the edge, nowadays. We are on the brink, so to speak. Prevention is simply a way to delay the fall into the abyss, as a means to avoid accelerating the outcome, right? Because we are at the extreme” – Participant A7

Participant B3 pointed out: “if the world is deteriorating, it’s because we have allowed it to happen,” implying humanity’s responsibility to the natural world. Participant A6 also highlighted the need to change and rise to the challenge ahead:

“People are starting to realize that we need to find alternatives to counteract global warming. We’ll have to wait and see how people begin to change, but this is a challenge that people are just starting to wake up to, right? If people let things continue as they are, it could lead to a confrontation with nature, which could potentially lead to what someone describes as the ‘end of the world’” – Participant A6

5.2.2 ATTITUDES TOWARDS OUTSIDE TOOLS

As previously mentioned, the participants used the term “outside tools” to refer to any elements coming from the outside world, ranging from foods they did not produce themselves to technology like phones and the Internet to infrastructure and machinery. The question: “Are there any outside tools (like you would like to see in your community?” revealed different attitudes towards outside tools. Some participants began to describe the outside tools available in their communities in the Sierra. Participant A1 stated that although outside tools were limited, they had increased, and there was a growing interest in technology in his community. Participant A3 described how the introduction of solar panels to use electronics like phones and computers had increased during the pandemic. Participants B2 and A10

explained how solar panels were used for electric light and how the internet was introduced to provide better educational opportunities for the children in the communities. The following sections will describe the different attitudes towards introducing outside tools in the communities.

5.2.2.1 Positive attitudes towards the implementation of outside tools

Two participants expressed excitement about introducing more outside tools in their communities, although these statements were usually followed up by caution and the need to “give the tools a purpose,” which was explained in section 5.3.3.

Participant A1 stated:

“It [outside tools] must be strengthened further, and made a little stricter, and it must be made understandable to others who inhabit the territory” – Participant A1

He further explained that young Arhuacos in his community needed to learn how to use technology. He stated that this could result in unfavorable consequences: “we lose our mind, we lose our time, we waste time, and that is a big problem”. He explained that he had experienced this when moving to the city and used technology without guidance. Participant A1 emphasized that when the function of the technology is not understood, people get lost in it. However, he believed there was a way to use these tools to strengthen their culture and “facilitate a nice relationship” with non-indigenous peoples. Moreover, participant A1 stressed that the introduction of outside tools needed careful planning, and they were not supposed to be used in all places in the community, just in specific areas, as “imposing these ideas on different people” could lead to difficulties with preservation of Arhuaco knowledge and culture.

Participant A3 conveyed positive attitudes concerning increasing outside tools to facilitate for students in his community. He stated: “What we do need, is to live a bit more updated, and we want to learn from here [the city]”. He emphasized that electricity would be beneficial but should only be used for a few hours in the evenings. Additionally, he expressed that having internet in his community would help students with research and that “nowadays it is necessary to be informed about all of this”. He emphasized the importance of teaching students in the community how to use technology and “really make the most of it”. Participants A1 and A3's living situation was similar as they both lived in the city, had experienced student life in Santa Marta, and shared similar experiences concerning their first experience with technology and internet.

5.2.2.2 Negative attitudes towards outside tools

Participant A2 explained that outside tools were disputed in his community and that “not everyone agrees to bring light to where they live”. He agreed with participants A1 and A3 about introducing more outside tools to enhance education in the Sierra Nevada. However, he stated: “I don’t think they should

be [present] in all areas. It's not good for us; it's not recommended for the Sierra". Participant B4 shared this standpoint, and although acknowledging the usefulness and potential purposes of outside tools, she did not want to see an excess of outside tools in her community.

Participant A10 stated that the communities could not close themselves off from the outside world, and they had to reflect on how different tools could be helpful in the Arhuacos "without losing sight of who we are as indigenous people". He further explained that the Mamos endorsed outside tools "as long as any process preserves the culture and doesn't harm it". Participant A4 also voiced that outside tools could be helpful, but it was necessary to act carefully and restrict them to specific spaces within the territory.

Participants A9, A6, and B2 were possibly the most skeptical about introducing more outside tools:

"The reality is that we are not focused on things like electrification, paved roads, coliseums and stadiums" – Participant A9

"Development goes against nature, right? Development is, let us say, impacting and depleting nature. It clashes with nature" - Participant A6

While participant A9 stated that outside tools were not their primary focus, implying their attention was directed to the natural world, participant A6 pointed out that supporting development would go against their responsibility towards nature, although the participant did not mention how he defined the concept. Participant B2 believed that outside tools were more appropriate for non-indigenous people and introducing too many of them in the Sierra would:

"Essentially turn the Arhuaco village into a regular city. It would make us lose our customs. Imagine technology being in focus, the Arhuacos would forget about the work with the crops, the Mochilas, and well, everything that is traditional" – Participant B2

The concern about forgetting or leaving behind Arhuaco traditions and values was present for participants A11 and A12 as well:

"I see that people sometimes worry much more about technological advances and less about the preservation of nature" – Participant A12

"[Are there any outside tools you would like to see in your community?] Personally, no. because the truth is that when one come to have those things, every day we move further away from the culture. We seem to distance ourselves from the culture" – Participant A11

The two participants most favorable to introducing more outside tools in their community were participants A1 and A3, both young males who had spent years studying in Santa Marta and had similar

experiences with technology when arriving in the city. Both participants were positive about more technological advancements in their communities but were nonetheless aware of the dangers if they were not done “the right way”. However, integration and experience with the outside world was not a defining factor for the participants in general, as participants A9, B2, and A12, all of whom had been living in the cities for many years, were more skeptical on the topic. Participants A6 and A11 lived in different locations in the Sierra and shared both gender and age groups as well as perspectives on the matter at hand. Most participants agreed that outside tools could be useful if introduced sparingly and “with a purpose”, but they were not seen as necessary. I was left with the impression that the potential benefits outweighed the possible dangers.

5.2.3 ARHUACO KNOWLEDGE AND DEGROWTH

The data presented throughout the empirical chapter will be used to compare Arhuaco knowledge with the degrowth movement and explore what aspects the two perspectives align and diverge.

5.2.3.1 Similarities with the degrowth movement

Arhuaco knowledge and the degrowth movement align in several ways. Firstly, they share the view that ecosystems have inherent value. In Arhuaco knowledge, the natural world serves as a provider of protection and nourishment and is seen as a mother who should be respected and cared for. It is clear that in Arhuaco knowledge, humans are not needed in order to “add” value to the natural world; on the contrary, the participants emphasized that human beings were interacting with nature “in reverse” and devaluing the natural world by exploiting it. Likewise, the degrowth movement believes in the inherent value of nature. The goal to reduce human pressure on nature is comparable to Arhuaco's values concerning “not taking more than you need” and “doing no harm.”

Secondly, the degrowth movements critique of growth aligns with the participant's perspectives regarding the "pursuit of money and power" in section 5.3.4.2. The participants critiqued the appropriation of nature, the accumulation of money, and the commodification of nature. The uniformization of culture is another similarity between the two perspectives. In the degrowth movement this belongs to the second stream of thought, criticizing the widespread adoption of technologies and culture from the Global North. As disclosed in section 5.3.3. "Concerns regarding perseverance of culture" is highly comparable to the participant's concerns and critique of dominant Western culture being imposed on their communities as well as the lack of appreciation and recognition of Arhuaco knowledge outside of their communities.

Thirdly, the degrowth movement is comparable to Arhuaco knowledge concerning "the meaning of life and well-being". Essentially, this aspect of degrowth involves a critique of the modern lifestyle, which

rests on the fundament of "working, earning, selling and buying more". This can be linked to the opinions on the "pursuit of money and power" in the empirical chapter as well, and the participants critiqued non-indigenous people for their lack of awareness and "getting out of control" in the chase for more money. Sharing, simplicity, conviviality, care, and commons are key concepts of the degrowth movement, all aligning with Arhuaco's way of life.

Fourth, the degrowth movement aligns with Arhuaco knowledge regarding the perspective of natural resources being permanently degraded when used in economic activity, leading to decreased accessible natural resources on the planet. The participants of the study emphasized that extracting resources from "Mother Earth's body" would consequently take away "Her energy" and "immobilize Her body" to the point where "She would stop serving us".

The last similarity between the two perspectives refers to restricting development. Both perspectives from the standpoint that development, or in the case of the participants "outside tools" should be restricted and limited to certain places. As disclosed in section 5.4.2., although the study participants varied in their attitudes towards introducing more outside tools in the communities and "developing" the communities further, they did share a common ground concerning the need for a "planned development" with a clear purpose. The degrowth movement similarly stands for restricting further economic development in the countries in the Global North while increasing development in the Global South in order to meet human needs. This is also a kind of "planned" development as it focuses on reducing excess resource and energy use in the Global North, while letting the Global South develop their economies.

5.2.3.2 Differences from the degrowth movement

The central tension between the two perspectives is the separation of the nature and culture inherited in the degrowth movement. Reiterating from section 3.6.3, "indigenous perspectives and degrowth", Nirmal and Rocheleau point out that the degrowth movement needs to rethink the definition of both nature and culture in order to align more with different indigenous perspectives (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019). This is also the case concerning the degrowth movement in relation to Arhuaco knowledge. As disclosed in section 5.2.3, "nature as identity", Arhuaco identifies themselves by their connection and responsibility to the natural world that surrounds them, and the survival of Arhuaco culture was identical to the survival of the Sierra Nevada, implying a break with the traditional Western dualism concerning culture and nature.

Another possible strain among the two perspectives regards the degrowth movement's acceptance of a "One-world world" instead of recognizing pluriversality and "the worlds of many worlds." Nirmal and Rocheleau urge degrowth to "shrink its sense of universality" (Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019, p. 471). On

the other hand, the rhetoric of participants of this study implied the existence of multiple worlds in relation to navigating two very different domains, namely the Sierra and the city. However, as emphasized previously, this topic must be researched further to demonstrate if Arhuaco knowledge supports a belief in multiple worlds.

6. CONCLUSION

This research analyzed Arhuaco's relationship to nature and offered a perspective on a different way of perceiving nature and how these ideas compare with the degrowth movement. To sum up the study's results and show their relevance, I will repeat the main findings while looking into how the data compare to the theory on indigenous knowledge and degrowth.

The theory chapter presented the characteristics inherent to indigenous knowledges, and this section will use findings from the empirical chapter to demonstrate how Arhuaco knowledge coincides with the following characteristics: (1) contextual and situated, (2) free of prescribed rules, (3) orally transmitted across generations, (4) as much skill as knowledge, (5) relational and holistic, and (6) spiritual and supernatural.

The participants emphasized how their knowledge is developed in the Sierra Nevada. This reflects characteristic 1. Not only is the knowledge developed in their ancestral territories, but some participants also explained that the knowledge comes *from* the Sierra and is transmitted to Mamos at different connection points:

“Nature sends them messages, and the Mamo conveys this to his people” – Participant A3

“The Mamos speak of words that are written on stones or in the mountains. They are spokespersons for those mountains, they transmit how they [the mountains] should be treated”
– Participant A5

Thus, Arhuaco knowledge might be an extreme example of situated knowledge. The first characteristic also concerns how indigenous peoples understand themselves in relation to their natural environment, which for the Arhuacos is reflected by how they identify themselves by their connection to Sierra Nevada, as explained in section 5.1.3, “Nature as identity.”

Characteristic 2 is demonstrated by the participant's statements concerning the Mamo's different approaches to the pagamentos in section 5.2.2. Several participants explained that each Mamo has a different approach to their spiritual work, but none of the approaches are more correct than the other. This knowledge is also transmitted orally, aligning with characteristic 3.

Characteristic number 4 is reflected in the knitting of the Tutu, elaborated on section 5.2.1. Arhuaco women spend much of their free time making Tutus which involves being able to reflect on the natural world which surrounds them. This activity relies on ancient traditions that have been passed down from mother to daughter throughout generations in the Arhuaco community and is a knowledge that is engaged with in daily life.

Characteristic number 5 is revealed by the fact that the participants considered all beings in nature living beings. One way the participants relate to other beings is to look to them for inspiration on how to fulfill their role in the natural world. The holistic element is illustrated in the following statement by participant A1:

“We believe we are part of her, right? We don’t have a way of thinking distanced from nature. We don’t think that the role of nature is any different from our role. It is interconnected, at all times. So, I think we are her.” – Participant A1

The last characteristic is, as the participants emphasized, that their connection to the natural world was as much spiritual as it was physical, and that in the indigenous world all relationships begin from spirituality. Participant A10 stated that the connection between Arhuacos and nature is:

“A connection that exist without flesh, without material things; it’s something very spiritual” – Participant A10

Indigenous knowledges must always be seen in light of indigenous worldviews, and Arhuaco's worldview is the foundation of Arhuaco knowledge. Throughout the chapter, the study's results have highlighted how Arhuaco's worldview and knowledge are holistic, relational, and contain multiple truths. Additionally, the results emphasize how all beings are alive and equal, the sacredness of territory and land, how the spiritual world is emphasized among the Arhuacos, and how humans' position in the world is not dominating or conflicting with the position of other beings in nature. These aspects were pointed out as definitions for "relational worldviews" in section 3.4.1.

The comparison between Arhuaco knowledge and the degrowth movement shows that the two perspectives align in the following aspects: (1) a belief in ecosystems inherent value, (2) a critique of the uniformization of culture, (3) the critique of growth, and (4) limits and restriction to development. Their differences mainly lie in the lack of holistic interpretation of nature in degrowth, as the movement separates nature and culture, and degrowth acceptance of a “one-world-world,” which might not be comparable to Arhuaco knowledge. However, as emphasized earlier, this last topic must be researched further. Although Arhuaco knowledge and the degrowth movement share many of the same elements and values, it is difficult to determine whether Arhuaco knowledge can be considered “degrowth or not”.

Similar to the indigenous perspectives on degrowth in section 3.6.3., Arhuaco knowledge and the degrowth movement align and diverge with many aspects presented in the said section.

6.1 FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

This research project has introduced potential topics which could be interesting for future research opportunities. A project with a strong emphasis on participant observation would be interesting to compare Arhuaco's environmental practices in light of their environmental values. In this regard, it would be possible to compare their behavior to their expressions of values regarding the natural world. Secondly, a research project focusing on the role of the Mamo as the spiritual leader of the Arhuacos could lead to more insight into spirituality and sacredness of land among the Arhuacos. A third possible project concerns the topic "gendered nature" described by the participants, i.e., "Mother Nature" referring to a woman, and this could be analyzed closely with respect to gender ideas in nature. A fourth potential project could be comparing perspectives between Arhuacos living in the lowlands of the Sierra Nevada to Arhuacos living in the highlands. This type of project could also reflect on Arhuaco's survival and whether their political strategies are sufficient to ensure the survival of their communities and knowledge.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CODE LANDSCAPE

Category name	Definition	Interview extract as example
Daily life	Descriptions of daily life, perspectives from both the Sierra Nevada and the cities	“There are different techniques, like the chinchorro. There are days for the chinchorro, and days for using hooks as well. When it comes to the chinchorro, we go out in a boat”
Spiritual elements	Spiritual tools and their related practices in Arhuaco's daily life	“It is something that allow us to learn a bit more about nature. As people, to reflect, think about positive things, and to take care of ourselves as people, not just thinking negative, but rather, thinking harmoniously”
Coexistence	The state of existing peacefully at the same time/place, in balance and harmony with each other	“Their commitment and responsibility are to become deeply involved in the sense of coexistence, right? With the environment, and not take something different.”
Interconnectedness	The state of having different parts/things closely connected and related to each other	“We don’t have a way of thinking distanced from nature. We don’t think that the role of nature is any different from our role. It is interconnected, at all times”
Worldview	Arhuacos conceptual map of the world, including values, beliefs and attitudes	“The worldview of the Arhuaco people is that humans are nature, and nature is human”.
Mother Earth	References to nature personified as a mother	“She is a person, a woman, because that’s where we live, where everything is born, everything that we consume. And we are part of all that, right”
Territory	Statements about Arhuacos ancestral land, which is seen and felt as sacred, including physical space, elements within that space and spiritual space	“That’s why we have been persistent in claiming our territory. Because the territory is sacred, it is the soul of the culture, the identity, the race”
Responsibility	The sense of duty to take care of the natural world	“Native tribes from here have their own laws, right? And it’s our duty here, on earth, to preserve and protect”

Mamos and Elders	References to the spiritual leaders of the Arhuacos, includes also the elders in the community	“The Mamo is the professor, because he is the one who knows how to make the pagamento. That is, they know what needs to be paid. So, one only fulfills this by doing the work.”
Spiritual Work	Work set out by the Arhuacos relating to the spiritual world	“Making the pagamento, for the water I consumed during the month, like paying a service every month, spiritually. It’s something like that.”
Preservation of culture	Expression about the desire for preserving Arhuaco culture and concerns about cultural survival	“The Law of Origin, is something that, for us as indigenous peoples, allow us to preserve our traditions, our language, our clothing, our craftsmanship [...] So, the Law of Origin practically encompasses everything in the history of a culture, with its territory, and what it [the law] does, is paying homage to Mother Nature”
Holism	The idea that parts of a whole are in intimate interconnection, such as they cannot exist independently of the whole, and that the different parts cannot be understood without reference to the whole	“We are not different things from another. The spirit of the body is part of nature [...] Because in itself, what Mother Nature is, is our energy”
Environmental perspectives	Concerns and critiques regarding non-indigenous peoples' actions in nature, including observations of climate change	“The moment we start extracting, extracting, extracting, of course, at some point, it [the land] will become like an immobilized body. It will stop serving”
Outside tools	A term used by the participants, referring to any elements coming from the outside world, ranging from foods they did not produce themselves to technology like phones and the Internet to infrastructure and machinery.	“The development is scarce. It must be strengthened further, and made a little stricter, and it must be made understandable to others who inhabit the territory”
Differentiating values	Expressions of differentiating values compared to non-indigenous people, and value changes within Arhuaco communities	“I see sometimes the Arhuaco change a bit, and leave his customs aside, because he assimilates a little more into the Bonachi society”

Disconnectedness	Referring to a lack of connection between non-indigenous people and nature	“Once the human being sees these elements as something to appropriate and do business with, we are directly disrupting that spiritual balance that exists in the universe”
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APPENDIX 2: TOPICS PARTICIPANTS MENTIONED WHILE DISCUSSING THEIR
RELATION TO NATURE

	Physical needs	Coexistence	Interconnectedness	Spiritualism	Pagamento	Responsibility	Reciprocity	Holism
A1	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
A2		x	x	x	x	x	x	
A3	x	x	x		x	x		
A4			x		x			x
A5	x				x	x		
A6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
A7	x	x			x	x		
A9	x	x	x			x		x
A10		x		x		x		
A11	x	x		x	x			
A12			x	x	x	x		
B1		x	x	x		x		x
B2	x	x			x	x		
B3	x		x		x	x	x	
B4	x		x	x	x	x		
B5	x	x			x	x		

**APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANTS PERSPECTIVES ON STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE ARHUACO
IDENTITIES**

	Traditional language (Iku)	Traditional Clothing	Endogamy	Traditional practices	Going back to the Sierra	Expansion of territory	Share knowledge with non-indigenous people	Law of Origin
A1							x	
A2					x		x	
A3	x	x	x	x			x	x
A4								
A5		x	x	x			x	x
A6						x		x
A7							x	x
A9						x		
A10								
A11							x	
A12					x	x		
B1						x		
B2	x	x	x	x				
B3				x				
B4								
B5				x	x	x		