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Pacification, re-existence, and territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia

Samper, Juan Antonio

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“We live in the territorio, and it lives in us”

Pacification, re-existence, and territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia

JUAN ANTONIO SAMPER

LUCSUS | FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES | LUND UNIVERSITY



“We live in the territorio, and it lives in us” Pacification, re-existence, and territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia

How do armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance shape bioculturally diverse places? This ethnographic study traces struggles in Colombia's Andinoamazonia during the post-2016 peacebuilding cycle. It reveals how this territory is shaped by the continuation of armed conflict and the opening of a new extractivist frontier that conceal the pluriverse of ancestral and rooted ways of inhabiting it. The latter are examples of place-based struggles for re-existence amid persistent violence.



JUAN ANTONIO SAMPER is a Colombian lawyer and social scientist working at the crossroads of sustainability, peace, and environment. His research is motivated by questions of bioculturality and people-place relations, which he approaches through ethnography and engaging his legal expertise to accompany communities defending their territories.



“We live in the territorio, and it lives in us”: Pacification, re-existence, and territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia

“We live in the territorio, and it lives
in us”

Pacification, re-existence, and territorial configuration in
the Colombian Andinoamazonia

Juan Antonio Samper



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Abstract:

My thesis is an inquiry into the daily experiences of civil society actors in relation to how armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance shaped the Colombian Andinoamazonia during country's current peacebuilding cycle. Despite two dozen peace agreements, and the signing of a comprehensive agreement in 2016, Colombia's protracted armed conflict did not end. The Colombian Andinoamazonia, a bioculturally diverse region historically affected by the armed conflict, was not exempt and became one of the deadliest places in the world to defend land and cultural rights. My research is an ethnographic account about representations and enactments of people-place relations as they configure the Colombian Andinoamazonia in everyday life. In short, I seek to understand how these processes of territorial configuration are experienced in this bioculturally rich and conflict-affected place.

The theoretical framework conceptualizes territorial configuration and shows how I operationalize it to the case of the Andinoamazonia. It is inspired by scholarship advancing discussions about territorio/territory, territorialization and resource control, and Andinoamazonian territorialities mainly within human geography and political ecology. I also draw from a wider range of scholarship on territorio/territory from Latin American human geography and political ecology. The empirical material is the result of several rounds of fieldwork in 2022-2024, where I used ethnographic methods like participant observation, go-alongs, and document collection. Narrative analysis, through a process of ethnographic abduction or retroductive reasoning, constituted the main strategy to analyse the empirical material.

I find that the Colombian Andinoamazonia has been historically configured by the heterogenous dynamics of armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance. During the current peacebuilding cycle, the reconfiguration of armed conflict and the opening of a new extractivist frontier in the Colombian Andinoamazonia have driven experiences of pacification. I define pacification as a deliberate strategy deployed by armed actors and a multinational corporation to conceal ancestral and rooted ways of living in the Andinoamazonia to impose territorial orders that enable armed conflict and extractivism. I also find that a confluence of peoples and communities in defense of the Andinoamazonia shape this place in daily life through practices of re-existence as they oppose imposed territorialities while enacting alternatives. Therefore, the main contribution of my research is an in-depth analysis about place-based approaches to sustainability science where I unpack how places are configured and how the imposition of territorialities of extraction or war result from the expansion/invasion of practices that conceal and threaten place-based ways of life.

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Kawsamkamaya. Mientras vivamos. While we are alive.

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Abstract

My research is an ethnography about representations and enactments of people-place relations as they configure the Colombian Andinoamazonia in everyday life. I look into how armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance shaped the Colombian Andinoamazonia during country's current peacebuilding cycle and people's daily experiences associated with that. Despite two dozen peace agreements, and the signing of a comprehensive agreement in 2016, Colombia's protracted armed conflict did not end. The Colombian Andinoamazonia, a bioculturally diverse region historically affected by the armed conflict, was not exempt and became one of the deadliest places in the world to defend land and cultural rights. Thus, I seek to understand how these processes of territorial configuration are experienced in this bioculturally diverse and conflict-affected place.

My theoretical approach is based on conceptualising territorial configuration and apply it to the case of the Andinoamazonia. It is inspired by scholarship advancing discussions about territorio/territory, territorialization and resource control, and multiple territorialities within human geography and political ecology. I also draw from a wider range of scholarship on territorio/territory from Latin American human geography and political ecology. The empirical material is the result of several rounds of fieldwork between 2022-2024, where I used ethnographic methods like participant observation, go-alongs, and document collection. Narrative analysis, through a process of ethnographic abduction or retroductive reasoning, constituted the main strategy to analyse the empirical material.

The Colombian Andinoamazonia has been historically configured by the heterogenous dynamics of armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance. I find that during the current peacebuilding cycle, the reconfiguration of armed conflict and the attempt to open a new extractivist frontier in the Colombian Andinoamazonia have driven experiences of pacification. I define pacification as a deliberate strategy deployed by armed actors and a multinational corporation to conceal ancestral and rooted ways of living in the Andinoamazonia as they impose territorial orders that enable armed conflict and extractivism. I also find that a confluence of peoples and communities in defense of the Andinoamazonia shape this place in daily life through practices of re-existence as they oppose imposed territorialities while enacting ancestral and rooted alternatives. Therefore, the main contribution of my research is an in-depth analysis about place-based approaches to sustainability science where I unpack how the imposition of territorialities of extraction or armed conflict result from the expansion/invasion of practices that conceal and threaten place-based ways of life.

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Samper, J. A., & Krause, T. (2024). “We fight to the end”: On the violence against social leaders and territorial defenders during the post-peace agreement period and its political ecological implications in the Putumayo, Colombia. *World Development*, 177, 106559. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106559>

Carvajal Vargas, C., & **Samper, J. A.** (2024). Pelando el cobre: ¿Un caso de minería ilegal para salvar al planeta? In L. Güiza Suarez & C. J. Kaufmann (Eds.), *Justicia ambiental y personas defensoras del ambiente en América Latina*. Universidad del Rosario.

Ituarte-Lima, C., Urzola, N., Lomanto, V., Gunasekera, N., Nardi, MA., **Samper, J.A.** (2024) Discussion paper on Biosphere Defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean & Written comments to the Escazú Agreement’s Draft Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters. Glawcal Lab at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and The Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment. <https://rwi.lu.se/publications/discussion-paper-on-biosphere-defenders-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

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1. Introduction

“The Andinoamazonia, dear Minister, is first and foremost a reserve of spiritualities”, were the opening words of Father Carlos, a priest and social leader. He addressed the then Minister of Mines and Energy of Colombia Irene Vélez who visited Mocoa, Putumayo in 2023 (Paper 1). The Minister came to meet with a delegation representing the confluence of peoples, communities, and organizations in defence of the Andinoamazonia on the 3rd of March 2023 (Figure 1). That was their own way of referring to the Indigenous, Campesino, Afro-Colombian, socio-environmental, and feminist communitarian peoples, communities, and organizations driving processes of territorial defence. She came with high-ranking public officials like the directors of the National Mining Agency, the Colombian Geological Service, two members of Congress, and the Mayor of Mocoa.



Figure 1. Minister's visit. Photograph taken and anonymized by the author.

Unlike in the past, this official visit was viewed favourably. It was well within the first year of Colombia's first popular government in recent history. Many saw it as an opportunity to influence the future of the territorio/territory. A chance to break away from extractivism and armed conflict. An occasion to articulate the alternative becoming of the Andinoamazonia as a place of life. After all, the government's slogan was "Colombia, a global power of life". The Minister's office even stated that their goal was to understand the socio-environmental conflicts in the region and receive proposals for alternative development. The meeting started at 8am. Shortly after, the Minister had to leave by orders of the President. There was an emergency involving the army that required the presence of the government in the Cauca, a department north of the Putumayo. This Minister was the closest government representative. The meeting was nonetheless seen through. By the end of the day, a document with a set of compromises was signed without the government's representative. One more compromise in the dozens of unfulfilled compromises that public agencies have made in paper to the peoples of the Andinoamazonia since the mid-1990s (MEROS, 2015).

The meeting took place in ASOMI, a civil society reserve owned by the Association of Indigenous Women of the Putumayo which gathers Indigenous women from five different Indigenous Peoples – Kamëntšá, Inga, Kofán, Siona, and Koreguaje. The attendees gathered in a large hall with a *tulpa* (a sacred fireplace) in the centre. I remembered the words of Pablo, an Inga construction worker who said to me that "where you can light a flame, you can organize". The tulpa was surrounded by a *mandala* (a circular shaped pattern using objects that symbolize Andinoamazonic cosmovisions and territorio/territory – the unity between the place and its peoples. Different ancestral and rooted relations with the Andinoamazonia were embedded in the making, the presentation, and the actions surrounding the mandala. They reflected the heterogenous composition of peoples, communities, and organizations defending the Andinoamazonia. Instead of singing the national anthem, a harmonization session led by a Kamëntšá grandfather and grandmother kickstarted

the meeting. Inside ASOMI's reserve, only the Indigenous Guard provided security. That was a specific demand to the government for the meeting to happen. Just a few meters away from the hall, a banner reminded visitors of where they were: the Andinoamazonia. A sacred relict where, from time immemorial, Indigenous men and women have weaved paths and stairs connecting the Amazonic plains with the Andean heights (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Banner in ASOMI. In English it says: "We are in a sacred relict of the so-called Amazonic Piedmont selva. It is here where the Andes and the Amazon kiss and give origin to one of the most biodiverse places in the world. For centuries, Indigenous men and women have made braids and stairs that connect the Andean highlands with the Amazonic plains". Photo taken by one of the authors.

This short mise-en-scène illustrates the essence of this thesis: how the configuration of a place occurs at the level of daily life. I understand the idea of territorial configuration as a process that is constantly in friction (Tsing, 2005). It results from the encounters between varied forms of being, knowing, governing, and managing places. It surfaces in and as scenarios through which people claim and defend their relationships to a place like schools, sports halls, convention centres, farms, roads, mines, monocultures, reservations, forests, selvas, etc. The vignette is a brief example of the friction through which different material and discursive practices

shape a place like the Andinoamazonia. It briefly sketches daily practices through which the Andinoamazonia is territorially configured.

1.1. Problem formulation

The Andinoamazonia is a fluid biocultural landscape spanning through different regions. In the snowfields of the Andes, it gives birth to the water that runs down the eastern slopes of the Andean Mountain range. Water that passes through *páramos* – alpine meadows characteristic of the Andean highlands – and cloud forests. Countless small streams that eventually find each other and, in *confluence*, form some of the major rivers that flow into the western Amazonic lowlands (Figure 3). The Andinoamazonia is thus woven by silver threads of flowing water only visible under the clear sky of a full moon's night. These silver threads make their own paths between rocks and crevices on the way to shaping some of the largest tributaries of the mighty Amazon River. They give biophysical form to the braids and stairs through which Indigenous Peoples have connected the Andean highlands with the Andean lowlands.

From north to south, the Andinoamazonia expands from central Colombia to central Bolivia (Figure 4). It extends over an area of approximately 2 million km² (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023). Its biophysical properties render it an ecological jewel. The landscape has vast amounts of species endemism, an extensive ecological connectivity area, and a gigantic torrent of waters that feed the entire western half of the Amazon river basin (Acevedo-Charry et al., 2021; Beveridge et al., 2024; Jenkins et al., 2025; Sierra et al., 2022).



Figure 3. Confluence. The Healer Creek flowing down the Andinoamazonic Piedmont into the Moco river. Photograph taken by Torsten Krause.

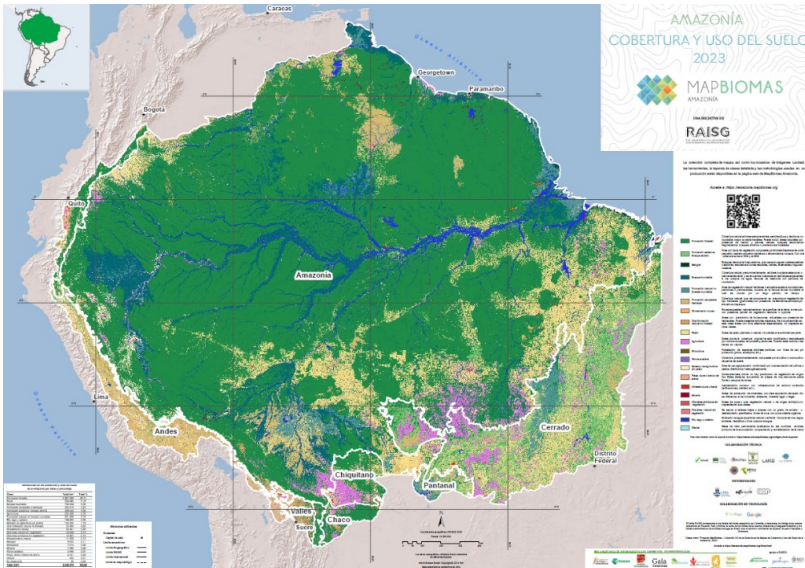


Figure 4. Map of the whole Amazon showing its land-uses. The whole western edge, shaped as a crescent moon, the whole Andinoamazonia. Made by MapBiomias. Taken from: <https://amazonia.mapbiomas.org/en/download/>

Over the past centuries, legions of ethnobotanists and ecologists have encountered this landscape and its peoples and went on to underscore the physical and spiritual connectivities at play there. For example, Bluntschli's (1921, p. 51) words, written over a century ago, illustrate this captivation. He affirmed that perhaps "there is no other place on earth in which the mighty force of the circulation of the waters appears with such transparency and obviousness before the spiritual eye of man".

But the Andinoamazonia also invites us to cultivate eyes for it as a *selva*. A form of (re)production of socio-ecological relations that are enacted everyday by Indigenous, Campesino, and Afro-Colombian peoples and communities that shape and constantly renew ancestral and rooted ways of being. As Kristina Lyons has suggested from over a decade of ethnographic work in the Andinoamazonia, a *selva* is more than a forest, which is a word that could also refer to a monoculture. It is a system of production of diverse socio-ecological relations with its own politics of life capable of recolonizing farms and minds (Lyons, 2014, 2020).

The Colombian Andinoamazonia is located in the western Colombian Amazon (Putumayo, Caquetá, Cauca, and Huila) and constitutes only a portion of the broader Andinoamazonia (Figure 5). The Putumayo extends along the border of Colombia with Ecuador and Peru from the eastern highlands, commonly known as the high Putumayo, to the Amazonic lowlands or low Putumayo. My fieldwork took place exclusively in the Putumayo, where the word Andinoamazonia is not only a description of the landscape but also an encompassing and politically relevant word. It is the Andinoamazonia the place that is defended by the peoples and communities in the region who have historically struggled for the recognition and guarantee of their land and cultural rights (MEROS, 2015).



Figure 5. Map of the Colombian Amazon. Maby by Institute Sinchi. Taken from: <https://siatac.co/la-amazonia-colombiana/>

Due to the subordinated incorporation of Abya Yala/Latin America to the global political economy since colonial times, the Andinoamazonia has become a complex refuge of biocultural diversity as different cultures have come to inhabit it (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Uribe, 1992; Zarate & Aponte Motta, 2020). At present, it is home to at least 116 Indigenous Peoples, themselves organized into thousands of communities that speak dozens of different languages. Andinoamazonia is home to very intricate histories of naming things and places.

Thousands of Campesino and Afro-descendant communities have also made this place their home by living with and in it, even during the harshest of periods (Cancimance López, 2015; Ramírez, 2021). All of them are living examples of rich lifeworlds whose relationships with the land are exemplified in notions of living life according to Laws of Origin, Major Laws, Own Laws, Words of Life, Sumak Kawsay, Buenos Vivires, Pensar Bonito, Vivir Sabroso, Alli Kawsay, and other forms of signifying the unities between place, identity, culture, knowledge, authority, and existence (Duque Acosta, 2023; Kothari et al., 2014; Mavisoy Muchavisoy, 2024; Rodriguez & van der Hammen, 2011; Zavala Guillén & Mosquera Muriel, 2025).

Betancourt-Santiago (2023) uses the term *ancestral/rooted territorialities* to refer to these wide, complex, and heterogenous relations to place. The ways of being, knowing, governing, and managing Andinoamazonia that play a role in configuring this place have been historically confronted and re-constituted by the imposition of territorial orderings of colonial occupation, post-colonial nation-state building, and development. As shown by the Truth Commission's report, Colombia's public forces, non-state armed groups, state agencies, multinational companies and different corners of the country's private sector were part of the broad and intricate intertwinement of actors of Colombia's protracted armed conflict (Comision de la Verdad, 2022b). Unequal land distribution is widely regarded as one of the conflict's root causes (Pizarro Leongómez, 2015). Throughout the armed conflict, more than twenty peace agreements have been signed (Giraldo Ramírez et al., 2019). The armed conflict's temporalities and geographies are varied and inextricable from the processes through which state-building and development shape places.

Peace is a historically central theme in Colombian politics. The territorial focus of the 2016 peace accords between the FARC-EP guerrilla and the Colombian government was a milestone as it explicitly recognized the differential effects of

armed conflict in different parts of the country. A notorious majority of municipalities in the Colombian Andinoamazonia were publicly designated as priority territories where the territorially focused development plans would be implemented. To the people of the Andinoamazonia, the peace agreement turned into an instance of expected disruption and an alternative for territorial peace with social justice (Paper 1). However, even though rural reform seeking to redistribute land was the first point of the peace agreement, its implementation after almost one decade remains minimal (Echavarría Alvarez et al., 2025). The 2016 accords did not end the armed conflict but reconfigured it, and so did Colombian peacebuilding after 2016 with the “Peace with Legality” and “Total Peace” programs (Paper 2). A paradox arose during current peacebuilding cycle. Extractivism and armed conflict intensified and further exposed the socio-ecological threats and vulnerabilities faced by places like the Colombian Andinoamazonia (Paper 3).

1.2. Research aim

My ethnographic study is about practices through which armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance shape the Colombian Andinoamazonia in the wake of a comprehensive peace agreement and the beginning of a new cycle of peacebuilding. I focus on the lived experiences associated with these processes of territorial configuration in the Andinoamazonia. To that end, I combine ethnographic methods centred around participant observation, go-alongs, and document collection. My research provides an empirical contribution to sustainability science as I inquire how bioculturally diverse and conflict-affected places like the Colombian Andinoamazonia are territorially configured. To that end, my research is guided along the following research questions:

1. How have armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance territorially configured the Colombian Andinoamazonia?

2. What are the lived experiences in relation to (a) the reconfiguration of armed conflict, and (b) the expansion of the frontier of extraction?

I position my research within the reflexive sciences (Burawoy, 1998). It is an empirical case that exemplifies a broader issue related to how bioculturally diverse places are territorially configured by conflict, extractivism, and resistance. My work is theoretically informed by scholarship advancing discussions about territorio/territory, territorial configuration and resource control, and multiterritorialities. Methodologically it lies exclusively within the of ethnography. That way I am able to conceptualize territorial configuration as a historically and geographically contingent process highlighting how people-place relations are dissolved and re-arranged in daily life as people enact diverse ways of inhabiting places. Therefore, I place my work within the arena of place-based approaches to sustainability science that give relevance to questions that investigate socio-ecological relations in clearly localized areas (de Vos et al., 2019). Place-based approaches offer contextualized theorizations, methodological reflections, and analyses that can be useful to structure knowledge produced by sustainability scientists across different spatial and temporal scales and locales (Andrade et al., 2023; Balvanera et al., 2017; de Vos et al., 2019; Graziano et al., 2019; MacGillivray & Franklin, 2015; Potschin & Haines-Young, 2013; Raymond et al., 2022; Wearne & Riedy, 2024).

I answer the research questions in three co-authored scientific articles. To date, two are published (Paper 1 and 2) and the third is a revised manuscript under review. I also strategically include empirical material and analytical reflections extending that which is included in the papers. In this sense, inspired by Isgren (2018) and Natar (2014), I do not view this kappa as a strict summary of the papers. I also view it as an academic creation centred on, but that also goes beyond, them. In doing so, the

sustained, iterative, and analytical work that characterizes my abductive approach is reflected here. What follows is a synopsis of the articles and how they address the research questions. Then, Table 1 summarizes my individual contribution to each paper:

Paper 1: Samper, J.A., Krause, T. & Lopez, J. (2024) “Everyone decided to declare war on the forest”: between territorial peace and pacification in the Colombian Andean-Amazon. *Ecology & Society*. 29(4). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-15589-290446>.

In this article, we use a mixed-methods approach to explore material and symbolic elements associated to territorial conflict in the form of three wars on the forest in Andinoamazonia. We provide a historical overview on the relationship between peace and territorio/territory in the Colombian Andinoamazonia which directly addresses RQ1. Moreover, the paper partially addresses RQ2 in two ways. First, based on empirical material from my ethnographic work, we show how state and non-state armed actors make sense of their practices as they reconfigure the armed conflict around notions of protecting the environment and the territorio/territory. Second, we show how civil society actors defend the Andinoamazonia against imposed territorial orders in encounters with public institutions.

Paper 2: Krause, T., Zelli, F., Vargas Falla, A.M., Samper, J.A., Sjöstedt, B. (2025) Colombia’s long road toward peace: implications for environmental human rights defenders. *Ecology & Society*. 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-15206-300121>.

This article studies the situation of environmental human rights defenders in Colombia during the current peacebuilding cycle. We apply Fraser’s justice framework to a set of empirical contexts, featuring experiences from the Colombian Andinoamazonia which is where my main contribution to the paper was focused on. The article addresses RQ1 by providing detailed contextualization of the Colombian peacebuilding process after the 2016 peace accords. It also addresses RQ2 by

presenting evidence about how environmental and human rights defenders articulate their experiences of violence driven by the reconfiguration of the armed conflict.

Paper 3: Samper, J.A. & Rincón Flórez, J. (202X) The Mocoa Project: Mineral exploration and territorial conflict in the Colombian Andinoamazonia. *Antipode*. (Revised manuscript under review)

This is a qualitative study about the strategies deployed by a multinational company to territorialize a mineral exploration project and the experiences of environmental and human rights defenders opposing it. We describe and analyse those strategies as different forms of concealment that are experienced by peoples and communities of the Andinoamazonia as pacification. The empirical material is based on the research of both co-authors and the experiences of the second author as an environmental and human rights defender. This article directly addresses RQ1 by presenting an empirical example of the political ecology of mineral exploration. It addresses RQ2 by providing empirical evidence about how corporate and civil society actors enact and make sense of their own practices in relation to the advancement of and resistance against the expansion of a frontier of extraction.

Paper	Author contribution to the article based on CRediT (Contributor roles taxonomy)	Article's contributions to the thesis
1	Conceptualization methodology investigation writing (both original draft and review & editing)	Proposes an initial conceptualization of pacification. Presents empirical material showing everyday experiences of territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia.
2	Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing original draft review and editing	Examines territorial justice in Colombia. Empirically, shows how the Colombian Andinoamazonia is one of the most affected regions of Colombia by the fatal violence against environmental human rights defenders, one of the most gruesome forms of reconfiguration of armed conflict.
3	Conceptualization, methodology, investigation writing (both original draft and review & editing).	Provides an analysis about how mineral exploration shapes the territorio/territory through strategies of concealment and how EHRDs experience them as pacification.

Table 1. Summary of paper's contributions to the thesis.

I argue that, during the current peacebuilding cycle, the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia has been experienced through processes of pacification and re-existence. Pacification here describes the foreclosure of ancestral and rooted ways of being in, knowing, governing and managing the Andinoamazonia experienced by the people defending it. I find it to be a central experience driven by the practices and discourses of actors that impose the territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism. Examples of these experiences of pacification result from the state's militarization of environmental protection and non-state armed actor discursive co-optation of popular struggles for peace and territorio/territory (Paper 1), the intense and fatal violence against environmental human rights defenders in the region (Paper 2), and corporate strategies of concealment of the legal status, biocultural impacts, and material objectives (Paper 3).

However, I find that these impositions are not total. They enter into friction with the territorial orders defended by the peoples and communities. The latter orders are driven by a confluence of practices that *resist* imposed territorialities while enacting ancestral/rooted ones. Therefore, they configure the Andinoamazonia too. Through them, the territorial configuration of the Andinoamazonia is also experienced as a process of re-existence. My view of re-existence is inspired by the work of Linares Sánchez and Postigo Gómez (2023) with the Nasa indigenous people in the Colombian Andinoamazonia and Glockner et al. (2024) drawing on decolonial Latin American feminist geography. In the context of this thesis, I view them as practices of creative renewal or resurgence through which people experiencing the imposition of exogenous territorial orders simultaneously resist it and create alternative possibilities of life in the territorio/territory. This view deliberately awards societies who defend the territorio/territory, and the ancestral and rooted ways of ordering it, as agents of the present and not as monolithic agents of a traditional and romanticized past.

1.2. Thesis overview

The main argument of my thesis is that territorial configuration is a process through which imposed territorial orders enter into friction with ancestral and rooted territorialities. The dissertation is organized in two parts intended to take the reader through the different dimensions of the argument.

Part One contains the research design. It comprises the theory and methods chapters. In Chapter 2, I conceptualize territorial configuration and apply it to the case of the Andinoamazonia. It is inspired by the work of Rasmussen and Lund (2018) on territorialization of resource control, Haesbaert's (2013) work on multiterritorialities, and Betancourt-Santiago's (2023) work on Andinoamazonic territorialities. I also draw from a wider range of scholarship advancing theoretical discussions about territorio/territory from Latin American human geography and political ecology. In Chapter 3, on methodology, I provide a synthesis of the empirical material, my reflection on positionality and the limitations of this study, and a description of how I conducted the narrative analysis of the empirical material.

Part Two is composed of three chapters where I present and discuss my findings. In Chapter 4, I approach the first research question by showing how armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance have historically configured the Andinoamazonia. Presently, they express both temporal continuities and disruptions. In Chapters 5 and 6, I tackle the second research question. I present the larger portion of the findings pertaining how the territorial configuration of the Andinoamazonia after 2016 has been experienced in daily life. These chapters provide an empirical case about the way that imposed territorialities clash with rooted and ancestral ways of being based on the biocultural diversity of the Andinoamazonia.

In chapter 7, I conclude the thesis. There, I summarize the main findings, connecting them with the broader context, and highlight avenues for future research.

Part One: Research Design

2. Theory

My research is grounded primarily on a pluriversal and feminist epistemology. In my view, the former cannot be fully conceptualized without the latter's contribution to discussions about relationality and performativity, from where questions about the ontological unity between *cuerpos-territorios*/bodies-territories emerge. I follow Arturo Escobar's view that to talk about ways of being and knowing places, such as those increasingly vindicated by academics deploying the concept of *territorio/territory* to explain socio-ecological conflicts, is to talk about worlds (Escobar, 2020). Analyses about how places are shaped by and shape people's lives have much to gain from understandings of these processes as bringing into being or extinguishing worlds (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018). I view the pluriverse as an analytical tool to theorize alternatives to the One-World World view, where nature and culture are assumed to be only one (Law, 2015). In that way, I am able to approach Andinoamazonic people-place relations in a way that brings to the surface how some territorialities may foster, while others threaten, the possibility of (re)existing in this *territorio/territory* of differences, in this world where many worlds fit (Escobar, 2008, 2020).

In this chapter, I draw from a wide variety of scholarship broadly concerned with people-place relations in *Abya Yala/Latin America* to show how I understand the term *territorio/territory*. To me, it is the conceptual spinal cord of the thesis. Then, I explain how I conceptualize territorial configuration inspired by Rasmussen and Lund (2018)'s work in relation to territorialization and resource control, complemented by the work of Betancourt-Santiago (2023) and Haesbaert (2013) on multiterritoriality. I view territoriality and territorialization as related but different

concepts. Territoriality, or territorial ordering, to me refers to the dynamic and historical processes through which groups and individuals relate to, and therefore configure, the territorios/territories to which they are connected. Territorialization, on the other hand, I view as a snapshot created by an observer, such as me, so that an analysis of territorial configuration can be contained in time and place.

Territoriality allows me to think about territorial configuration with a temporal lens. Colombia's current peacebuilding cycle can therefore provide a context without losing sight of historical continuities and ruptures related to how the configuration of the Andinoamazonia has been experienced. Daily life is not disconnected from historical processes of territorial configuration. Everyday life is both a product of how biophysical and relational spaces shape people's experiences and practices and a stage where power relations shape these spaces into places (Bridge, 2011; Merriman, 2022). People's daily life offers glimpses onto how the historically subordinate incorporation of territorios/territories of Abya Yala/Latin America to the modern colonial capitalist system shapes people's lives and worlds (Alimonda, 2025; Svampa, 2019; Walsh et al., 2018). But what do I mean by territorios/territories?

2.1.1. Territorio/territory

Even though territorio and territory share an evident etymological origin, territorio is a conceptual contribution from Latin American social movements and academia that does not translate to territory as it is dominantly used in anglophone scholarship (Quiroga Manrique & Caretta, 2025). Academically, territorio is increasingly deployed by Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking scholars conducting research in Abya Yala/Latin America in a variety of fields concerning land and socio-environmental issues (González Gil, 2019; Halvorsen & Zaragocin, 2021; Lund,

2022; Lyons, 2023; Sandoval et al., 2017; Santos, 2021; Vargas Roncancio, 2024; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021).

Territorio is used to vindicate vast constellations of popular and ancestral knowledge practices that are at the base of historical struggles in defence of territorios/territories (Daigle & Ramírez, 2019; López Sandoval et al., 2017; Quiroga Manrique et al., 2025). Territorio opens the door to the construction of spatial identity in contexts of conflict associated to people-place relations (Panez Pinto, 2017; Zaragocin, 2024). It transcends the description of a biophysical landscape by incorporating socio-cultural elements like cosmovision, power, justice, history, and collective identification. The latter are based on the situated material, social, symbolic, and spiritual practices through which peoples and communities live in, know, govern and manage the places to which they are connected to (Anderl, 2024; Mavisoy Muchavisoy, 2024; Quiroga Manrique & Caretta, 2025; Quiroga Manrique et al., 2025; Santos & Silveira, 2001). I see territorio as inherently reflecting a biocultural and pluriversal perspective.

Feminist and decolonial dimensions to the concept of territorio in Latin American geography and political ecology have provided critical advancement to the concept. A prime example is the methodological contributions of cuerpo-territorio to the study of embodied and affective dimensions of people-place relations based on the ontological unity between the cuerpo-territorio/body-territory (Caretta et al., 2026; Quiroga Manrique & Caretta, 2025; Zaragocin, 2024; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021). I view this process as part of a larger effort to create theoretical and methodological openings to a pluriverse of spatial ontoepistemologies and collective experiences (both shared and differentiated) of dispossession, displacement, poisoning, and death in Abya Yala/Latin America (Cabnal, 2010; Cruz et al., 2017; Ulloa, 2016; Zaragocin, 2024; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021). Such openings are conducive to an academic praxis capable of encountering peoples' experiences, knowledges, and politics historically rendered placeless in socio-spatial theorizations (Anderl, 2024;

Lugones, 2003). Moreover, territorio/territory has a dimension of performativity in the way it is configured by people's practices (Butler, 1988). In the words of feminist scholars Quiroga Manrique and Caretta, territorio emerges from "*a relational view of space where people, their stories, and the more-than-human living beings*" constitute it through practice (Quiroga Manrique & Caretta, 2025, p. 6).

I have experienced a linguistic challenge in the use of territorio. I explored the position of using the English term territory. But I was inspired by scholars who affirm that how places are named matters and therefore there is a constant challenge associated to multilingualism (Caretta et al., 2026; Ferretti, 2022; Zaragocin, 2024). Zaragocin (2024) recognizes this challenge and proposes acknowledging some terms multilingually so "*they can co-exist and merge into a new term providing for political language that can speak to various audiences*" (Zaragocin, 2024, p. 2). She affirms this by reflecting about several issues related to translation: (a) what bilingual researchers gain by publishing in another language entirely, (b) the limits to political potential and radical understandings brought by translation, and (c) the feminist ethics of translating and translocating linguistically and culturally a situated concept. Following that very same rationale, I decanted towards territorio/territory, side-by-side, to explicitly acknowledge the origin of territorio but also my bilingualism, the audience of this text, and the institution from where it is published.

Territorio and territory have distinct conceptual origins (for a detailed account see: Quiroga Manrique & Caretta, 2025). But also, territorio is one of many concepts used in academia to theorize people-place relations from grounded anti/de-colonial perspectives (Caretta et al., 2020). In North America, for example, Indigenous scholars have contributed theorizations of *Land* that are both similar in practice to territorio's biocultural and pluriversal width, while conserving linguistic, historical, and ontoepistemological particularities (Benally, 2023; Betasamosake Simpson,

2020; Liboiron, 2021). The difference between these concepts is functional (Merriman, 2022). They differ in how land-connected peoples, across diverse biocultural regions, have taken them up within their situated struggles for re-existence and resurgence—struggles grounded in the many worlds expressed through ways of living in, knowing, governing, and caring for places.

2.1.2. Territorial configuration

I am inspired by the work of Rasmussen and Lund (2018) who have conceptualized territorial configuration as a process of creative destruction. It happens through non-linear events of frontier emergence and territorialization. In their words, the former describes how socio-spatial orders dissolve while the later refers to the dynamics that re-establish them (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018). Watts (2004) has suggested in a similar way that extractivism reconfigures territorios/territories too through the creation of what he calls governable spaces. All of the above directs the gaze towards how social practices and relations challenge and reproduce specific orders that render places legible for the purposes of controlling them (Scott, 2020). The notion of territoriality or territorial order highlights that the content and common sense of the dominant institutional understanding of a territorio/territory is always contingent, incoherent, and incomplete (Asher & Ojeda, 2009). Territorial orders are therefore multiple and have different temporalities (Haesbaert, 2013). In this sense territorios/territories can be viewed as accumulating the unequal times through which the practices connected to them shape them (Gange, 2019; Santos, 1978).

Champion (2019) inquired the implications of a shift from time to temporality as a unit of analysis. I understand his main argument to be that temporality is a necessary category in historical analysis as it binds time to human experiences of it. The category of temporalities becomes analytically useful to me as it opens avenues to

interpret daily practices and experiences in terms of continuities, disruptions, or cycles, and territorialities as dynamic, contested, and having a *longue durée*.

Extractivism and conflict feature prominently, though not exclusively, in studies of people/place relations in Abya Yala/Latin America and how they are transformed. Scholars have, for example, focused on the colonial, capitalist, and heteropatriarchal forms of oppression that drive the imposition of extractivist and conflict territorialities, generally experienced in terms of dispossession, marginalization, criminalization, and myriad other forms of violences marked in *cuerpos-territorios/bodies-territories* (Cruz Hernández & Bayón Jiménez, 2020; Svampa, 2019; Ulloa, 2015; Ulloa, 2016). Historically hungry for space, extractivism is a Latin American issue. This is not because the region is unique or extractivism unique to the region. Rather, it is so because most political economies in the region pursue paths of subordinated integration into global networks of production as suppliers of cheap labour and raw materials and customers of exogenously manufactured goods (Acioli Lopes et al., 2026; Bebbington, 2015; Gudynas, 2021; Svampa, 2019).

My thesis speaks to broader theoretical debates about how extractivism, armed conflict, and resistance shape Abya Yala/Latin America. This is a widening interdisciplinary field concerned with questions about access and control of *territorios/territories*. These analyses require a priori theories of justice like those that highlight distributional, participatory, and recognitional dimensions associated to access to, control of, and care for the environment (Harnesk & Isgren, 2022). For example, they emerge in the form of debates about land distribution, property, and sovereignty; the deployment of social and technical infrastructures (i.e. concessioning, exploration, license transfer, permission, prohibition, extraction, etc.); analyses regarding forced displacements; and the historiographies of the cumulative environmental, socio-political, and affective-embodied transformations

caused by the region's resource booms (Bebbington, 2015; Caretta et al., 2026; Cruz Hernández & Bayón Jiménez, 2020; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021).

Extractivism's hunger for space also reveals that it carries an inherent relation to conflict. That extractivism has affected the way territorios/territories are controlled is undeniable because it is an expression of how social power takes a geographic form (Bridge, 2011). It always will configure territorios/territories through the expansion of specific territorial orderings that invade and conceal others (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023). Historically, it has bred conflict since the process of expansion/invasion carries with it a multidimensional form of concealment of other territorialities (Dussel, 2008). The root causes of conflict, its historical continuities and ruptures, its instances of intensification, de-escalation, degradation and deterioration, and the question of building peace with nature thus become connected when extractivist territorialities (Lunstrum, 2014; Peluso & Watts, 2001). In this regard, Ide (2020) has already identified how political ecology offers avenues that counter the risks of depoliticization of conflict in peacebuilding analyses that incorporate issues of environmental management by highlighting how environmental change is embedded into historically unequal power relations.

2.1.3. Territorial configuration in the Andinoamazonia

Clearly connected to these academic traditions, Betancourt-Santiago (2023) argues that the histories of extractivism and conflict in the broader Andinoamazonia are reflected in how different territorial orders encounter each other there. He illustrates his point by juxtaposing ancestral/rooted territorialities against what he calls the colonial-statal-development triad of territorial orders. He names this process of imposition *territorial coloniality*, connecting it directly with a whole genealogy of scholarship about the ways that the territorios/territories of Abya Yala/Latin America have been configured during the long sixteenth century (Walsh et al.,

2018). The motley imbrication of territorialities that he describes, stresses questions like how and by whom the Andinoamazonia is governed and managed and according to which ways of being in and knowing it.

The ancestral/rooted territorial orderings speak to the diverse ways in which Indigenous, Campesino, Afro-descendant, and other land-connected peoples and communities inhabit the Andinoamazonia. It is explicitly recognized by its proponent as a constellation of groups whose territorial orders are highly complex to characterize in one category. Yet, they are also a fundamental historical-geographic collective subject to understand territorial configuration in the Andinoamazonia (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023). The category ancestral/rooted appeals to the long history of humanization of Abya Yala/Latin America but also to their myriad forms of expression occurring in the present. Ancestral/rooted territorialities result from practices of re-existence against, and some of which are at risk of being extinguished by, the necropolitical expansion/invasion of the colonial-statal-developmental triad of territorial orderings (Glockner et al., 2024; Linares Sánchez & Postigo Gómez, 2023; Mbembe, 2003).

The block of colonial, state-led, and developmental territorialities is juxtaposed with the ancestral/rooted territorial orderings. It is imposed through an always progressive and unfinished process of expansion/invasion (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023). To me, this view resembles Escobar's notion of occupation and Marxist theories of accumulation by dispossession (Escobar, 2014; Harvey, 2003). Enrique Dussel famously argued in his critique to modern European philosophy that the myth of the discovery of America was a constitutive element of modern euro-centric subjectivity as it strategically conceals 'its others'. He characterizes this process as the necessary manoeuvre to simultaneously centralize/universalize the modern/colonial experience and de-emphasize the subordinate inclusion of these so-called discovered territorios/territories and its peoples economically, culturally, politically, and ecologically. (Dussel, 2008). I use concealment to incorporate

Haesbaert's work about the multiple and never-ending dynamics of territorial configuration (Haesbaert, 2013). Concealment therefore points towards the ways in which some territorial orders are imposed onto others without meaning that the latter vanish into oblivion or those who enact them become uprooted. In a sense, concealment theorizes hope for living in a place. A much needed one from the Andinoamazonia to Palestine.

The germ of the block of imposed territorial orderings mentioned above is the colonial territoriality. I understand it as the discourses and practices that adequate a territorio/territory to imagine, access, explore, exploit, and dominate its raw materials and inhabitants' labour to the benefit of an exogenous economic process. Colonial territorialities are characterized by the emptying of life from places, both symbolically and materially (Fitzmaurice, 2014; Stoler, 2008; Wolfe, 2006). They result from the discursive concealment of existing territorialities to justify the emergence of new relations of exploitation of resources – minerals, fossil fuels, food, and medicine – and labour (Machado Aráoz, 2012; Porto-Gonçalves, 2011). Colonial dominion was imposed unequally in Abya Yala/Latin America (Uribe, 1992). The Spanish empire configure the Caribbean and the Pacific through export-oriented infrastructural and commercial control, much like the Portuguese in the eastern Amazon plains (Herrera, 2007). That colonial territorial ordering was not fully fledged in the Andinoamazonia. It was mostly exercised by missionaries and frontier militarism rather than consolidated infrastructural and commercial control (Zarate & Aponte Motta, 2020).

The nation-state was born from the independence processes against European colonization, first in the Caribbean and later on in the rest of the Americas (Anderson, 2006). The then nascent nation-states inherited in many ways the form and content of colonial territorial orders. They exercised geographically differentiated control (Serje, 2012). They even inherited laws like the national sovereignty over the subsoil which continues to exist in legislations, untouched by

the centuries and unaffected by the progressive reforms from the waves of Latin American new constitutionalism (Gargarella, 2018; Gümplová, 2021; Scott, 2008).

Nation-states are too big, complex, and incoherent to be considered exclusively as an apparatus of capital accumulation. But, in the case of Abya Yala/Latin America, they inherited from their colonial precursors by continuing to offer their natural resources in the international market of global unequal exchange (Funtowicz & de Marchi, 2000; Hornborg, 2011; Quijano, 2007). Thus, the nation-state imposes extractivist territorialities in the name of national progress through internal expansion. In the Colombian case, the Andinoamazonia has operated as an internal frontier, inherited from colonial times as a savage and unruly, as the flipside of the nation, its internal and concealed other (Serje, 2011).

Developmental territorialities are imposed by practices of controlling space for broadly defined human progress (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Ulloa, 2010). The 20th Century, marked by an acceleration of demand of matter and energy from affluent societies, demanded the construction of another space-time, the underdeveloped/developing/southern one (Santos, 2015). Development became a project with social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions directed at further subordinating territories to fulfil the demands of capitalist modernity/coloniality (Escobar, 1995). In the name of development, space-times considered forever-not-yet-developed continue to be subjected to deep transformations in terms of access to and control of their natural resources and human-nature relations therein (Apffel-Marglin et al., 2016; Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Escobar, 2014; Ulloa, 2010; Uribe, 2011).

In the case of the Colombian Andinoamazonia, the imposition of colonial, state-led, and developmental territorialities find continuity as the armed conflict reconfigures and an extractivist frontier opens. Enacting and expressing ancestral and rooted territorialities therefore continue to constitute a form of re-existence that simultaneously opposed the imposition of the former territorial orders while

enacting alternatives. The juxtaposition of territorial orders theorized by Betancourt-Santiago (2023) is useful to capture how armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance configure the Colombian Andinoamazonia as a motley imbrication of territorialities with different temporalities, continuities, and ruptures that, like soil, sediment with history. These dimensions are observable at the level of peoples' everyday life. In the next chapter I turn to how I constructed and analysed the empirical material concerning how the Colombian Andinoamazonia has been territorially configured during the current peacebuilding cycle.

3. Methodology

Territorios/territories like the Andinoamazonia are not bounded, fixed, and homogenous spaces. They are configured in the friction of social encounters (Faier & Rofel, 2014; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Tsing, 2005). I understand social encounters as scenarios where people meet, clash, and grapple with each other (Pratt, 1992). Capitalism is uneven and heterogenous despite the unity of the exploitative relations that characterize it because it needs to be put into action – to be territorialized. It generates friction as the practices that enact it encounter those of peoples and communities whose social relations are territorialized differently (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018; Tsing, 2005).

Through ethnography, itself an analytically transformative and conceptually generative, it is possible to study and analyse encounters as moments of everyday life in which the struggles, clashes, alignments, and convergences about the becoming of a territorio/territory occur (Guber, 2001; Pleyers, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 2004). Everyday life practices and experiences are a central and multidimensional unit of analysis. They are embodied and material, symbolic, situated, performed, and temporal (Atkinson, 2015). Everyday life moments of encounter are incidents that are significant to ethnographers because they are exemplary (Emerson et al., 2011). They are not in themselves significant examples of a social phenomenon. Rather, their significance is a factor of the ethnographer awarding them the value of being empirical manifestations of a phenomenon.

3.1. Empirical material

I conducted an ethnography of territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia during a post-peace agreement transition. The empirical material is the product of using different ethnographic methods. In total, I spent nineteen weeks in ‘the field’ in four field excursions between 2022-2024. The main method for recording data I used was taking fieldnotes. They are a combination of handwritten text and drawings in my fieldwork diary plus in digital audiovisual files (written documents, photos, and videos) I keep in an external hard drive to ensure that participants, informants, and all the material are protected. Following Emerson et al. (2011) and Guber (2001), I view the writing and recording of fieldnotes as an activity that is embodied and situated, as opposed to neutral, where description and interpretation are inseparable.

Fieldnote taking is diverse and, with time, it became a skill that I honed with a personal touch. Some fieldnotes went through a process from immediate jottings that were later developed into broader bodies of text. Other notes were merely accounts of a particular day or period in a diary form. Others were drawings (Figure 6). Some fieldnotes were elicited by photographs of places, banners, and objects that helped me re-evolve memories. Others are more descriptive than interpretative while some are the opposite. They serve very different purposes. The former better support claims of something happening in a specific way while the latter would become input for other kinds of academic text. I complemented fieldnotes with audio recordings of events that I participated in, and during which I had permission and possibility to record. They are also complemented with documents that I learned about or had access to during fieldwork. Prior to fieldwork, ethical approval of my research was granted by the Swedish Research Ethics Council.



Figure 6. Drawn map of the Andinoamazonic region of Putumayo, Colombia, representing its rivers, paths, topography, and cities. Made by an informant during an interview on my fieldwork diary. July 2024.

The limitations of ethnography are well known. The methodology heavily errs towards particularities that make findings difficult to generalize. The construction of empirical material is inseparable from the ethnographer and the context making the data impossible to replicate even by the same researcher because no two contexts are the same. These limitations are compensated by the wealth and thickness of description and interpretation, however (Atkinson, 2015). All of those limitations apply to my research. I also experienced more particular limitations such as time, capacity, and permission.

My migration status in Sweden made the long and sustained fieldwork that characterizes ethnography impossible without losing my residence permit. Together with life and academic commitments in Sweden, that reality led me to decide it was more convenient to conduct fieldwork in shorter excursions that still amounted to substantial time in the field. During fieldwork, my capacity to conduct participant observation was limited by the number of significant events going on in parallel. This physically limited my capacity to participate and record an even bigger selection of encounters. Permission was also a limitation. And, to me, it constitutes a very important one in ethnography. Permission to participate, observe, and record

varied depending on the encounter and on my level of engagement. Putting in legal work at the service of the defence of the Andinoamazonia engaged my research and awarded me access to particular encounters while closing other doors. I never hid my engagement with the peoples and communities in defence of the Andinoamazonia. Nor did I have to start from scratch since I landed on my PhD having already conducted research with environmental human rights defenders in the region. My engagement with armed actors and representatives of the mineral exploration company was made impossible by that due to the impossibility of doing so without increasing the risks already faced by environmental and human rights defenders. At the same time, this provided me the opportunity to collect documents produced the former actors that I would not have expected them to share with me in a direct research encounter with them.

3.1.1. Participant observation

I awarded significance to events and gatherings as part of the politics of everyday life. There, the imaginaries and representations of the Andinoamazonia were either central or in dispute. The Colombian Andinoamazonia is a site where public institutions, NGOs, academic and research institutions, and local communities and organizations are constantly sponsoring encounters related to environment, development, and peace. The frequency of events and gatherings awards them an everyday life dimension. They were excellent sources of how different territorialities were expressed and enacted, as exemplified in these two excerpts regarding the copper exploration project in Mocoa, Putumayo:

Excerpt 1: Representative of the working group on food sovereignty and agroecology during the visit of Colombia's Minister of Mines and Energy to Mocoa in March 2023:

“Libero Copper is damaging environmental equilibrium, social fabric, cultural spiritual fabric, territorial fabric (which is the source of life), and the law”.

Excerpt 2: President of the Colombian Association of Mining Professionals during an event organized by Libero Cobre, July 2024 called Mining and Coexistence.

“Mining is a regulated sector... There is no such thing as illegal mining but illicit extraction... Because we follow the law, mining is responsible, it is environmental, it doesn't affect water negatively nor the ozone layer... It is important that we state this because we need our mining resources to generate processes of transformation.”

I conducted participant observation in at least twenty-one of these meetings and gatherings. They include environmental public hearings, participatory activities organized by policymaking institutions, socialization of regulations and concessions of titles to extract fossil fuels and minerals, accountability meetings regarding the state of the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, workshops organized by NGOs or public institutions, government visits, and a variety of events and actions organized by different sectors of civil society like local socio-environmental organizations, pedagogic and academic initiatives, extractivist companies, religious organizations, and Indigenous and Campesino communities.

The sheer amount of qualitative data that can be recorded about experiences of territorial configuration from only one event is potentially enormous. I reached this conclusion mostly in hindsight. Significance, as I said earlier, is context sensitive. The words and the actions, the practices and the gestures, and all that is perceptible, can become valuable empirical material about everyday representations and enactments of people-place relations. From the harmonization or lack thereof at a meeting, to how participation is handled, how the event is editorialized, who gets to take space and who does not, and how the concrete scenes are organized and by whom, it is possible to observe and record stark differences regarding everyday forms of representing and enacting these relations. The more I attended these meetings, the more details I was able to perceive. For an experienced ethnographer, someone who might understand deeply what things in a particular context might mean and with a honed insight to their function, someone who no longer needs explanation or repetition to understand the role of harmonization or a mandala for

example, a few events likely lead to saturation. However, that was not the case for me.

After all this time, I cannot capture the full range of material, spiritual, and symbolic dimensions through which the pluriverse of Andinoamazonic territorial orders are represented and enacted by different peoples and communities in just one or few moments of ethnographic encounter. Further, depending on permission my capacity to record differed. Sometimes I could record the audio, sometimes I had to jot and fill-in my field notes later. On other occasions I had to completely rely on my memory to avoid being the only person with a notebook in the room. On these occasions, my role as researcher was not hidden or clandestine but I chose to read the room and observe instead of focus on in-situ writing or recording. And yet, other times, I limited myself to collecting documentation, particularly regarding the practices of armed actors and the mineral exploration company.

Aside from the vibrant political everyday life of Mocoa that had no shortage of events, and sometimes as a result sometimes of attending these events, I participated in other kinds of encounters. Going to and from the places in which events took place – some of which were outside Mocoa in venues outside of town or in other municipalities altogether, would sometimes turn into go-alongs. Moreover, as a result of building rapport with organizations in the field and of conducting research in an area where Lund University colleagues do so too, I participated in a supporting capacity during different kinds of workshops that were not organized by me. Two examples are my supporting role as translator during the visit of a delegation representing a Northern Irish NGO that was interested in learning about the work on gender and peace in the Putumayo done by an umbrella organization called Tejedoras de Vida and my supporting role as working-group facilitator during a cuerpo-territorio workshop organized by Paula Sanchez and Barbara Schrötter that was part of the former's doctoral research where several of the women from the Tejedoras de Vida organization also participated.

3.1.2. Go-alongs and going along

Aside from participant observation, I conducted over two dozen go-alongs and experimented with the different forms the method can take. After my master's thesis on the experiences of human rights defenders and social leaders in the Putumayo during the aftermath of the peace agreement, I reflected about whether the interview format had limited my inquiry into the experiences of territorial defence. That is how I adjusted my approach to explore the method of go-alongs or narrative walks, which has been deployed by sustainability scientists to inquire about people-place relations where the local participant or informer, not the researcher, is seen as the 'knower' of the biocultural landscape and its conditions (Jerneck & Olsson, 2013; Kusenbach, 2011).

Kusenbach (2011) describes two limits in relation to understanding peoples' lived experience of place. The narrative limit relates to aspects of awareness that do not tend to arise in the forms of narration allowed by an interview because their source might be of another sort of expression. The situation limit refers to the interview situation that in order to be constructed necessitates pushing to the background context-sensitive reactions and interactions that constitute the very experiences that the researcher may be after. A third limitation, intersubjective limit, is identified by Madison (2020) who argues that social research demands from the researcher more than verifying facts and information. It mandates dialogue that admits the "complex realms of individual subjectivity, memory, yearnings, polemics and hope... [that are] inseparable from shared and inherited expressions of communal strivings, social history, and political possibility" (Madison, 2020, p. 26). All of these limitations resonate with my reasoning to choose the go-along method.

Some go-alongs occurred only one-time, and were meant to be so, while others were intentionally repetitive. Nonetheless, every go-along was unique. An example of intentionally repetitive go-alongs are the almost daily hikes to The Healer stream from Pueblo Viejo (Paper 3). What turned go-alongs into a useful method for me

was that the very biocultural landscape affected the form and function of how accounts were narrated by participants. For example, most go-alongs featured interactive elements that were out of my control like caressing a plant, seeing the flowers of a blossoming tree at a distance, or even coincidentally running into acquaintances. Sometimes the go-along had an interview spinal cord, like the case of Luna. On that occasion, the whole interaction, since we met in Mocoa, rode a motorcycle to the river, then crossed it by foot and walked up the mountain to where we dialogued for about two hours, gave a variety of layers about how Andinoamazonic territorialities are articulated by a practitioner that the go-along allowed me to capture better than if we had contained the interaction in an interview situation.

Sometimes the go-along was more quotidian, like my visit to Orlando's farm in which the tour of the farm that I received before sitting down over a drink of *agua de panela con limón* was integral. Walking with Paulina or Franca to the Healer from Pueblo Viejo almost daily was always a source of history of the village through memories, stories, gossip, and so on, as they had lived there for decades. This method of go-alongs or narrative walks is something that I walked into quite intuitively for they "...can sensitize ethnographers to the idiosyncratic sets of relevances" through which informants experience territorial configuration (Kusenbach, 2011, p. 191).

One day my thesis advisor and I were invited to the Resguardo Inga de Condagua for some *maito* by the Chasoy sisters. *Maito* is an ancestral dish of the peoples of the Andinoamazonia. Chiro plantain, potato (or rice nowadays), and fish are grilled inside a *sirindango* leaf. Loving to cook as much as I do, I happily volunteered to help peeling the boiled chiros and preparing the *sirindango* leaves (Figure 7). Later on, while the *maitos* frilled, I asked Estella to please show me the *sirindango* tree. We walked down a few metres, and she showed me the tree. Estella said that the *sirindango* is an important member of her *chagra*. *Chagras* are ancestral

Andinoamazonic spaces Indigenous Peoples have cultivated for thousands of years as a source of food and medicine. Cultivating to be cultivated. She told me that the leaf of the *sirindango* is for cooking, the root is medicine when boiled in water, the ripe fruit provides red colour to textiles like the *chumbe* that she was wearing around her waist, and the seed can be used for making accessories like earrings and wristbands.



Figure 7. Making maito with the Chasoy sisters. Photograph taken by Torsten Krause.

I still have the wristband she gave me that afternoon. I also carry with me the shared memory of going along with her in her *chagra*. I remember her hands caressing the leaves and her gaze when she saw the ripe papayas on the tree. With all the divisions that have happened in the Inga de Condagua community because of Copper Giant Resources' exploration project, Estella told me one year later that she could not go to her *chagra* alone anymore so she wasn't able to care for it as much as she would like to (Paper 3). Cultivating the *chagra* is an important practice for many Andinoamazonic Indigenous Peoples like the Inga, Kamëntšá, Quillacinga, and many others. These practices are part and parcel of their everyday territorial

relations, culture, and collective identity. Many plants in the *chagra* have spirits whose permission is essential in order to use the plant as food or medicine, like making *maito* (Figure 8). Next to where we ate the *maito*, a wooden banner read “We defend the territorio/territory living our culture”. Estella saw me looking at it and spoke to me the words I use on the title: “We live in the territorio/territory, and it lives in us”. This is but one example of how go-alongs permitted me to access everyday expressions of Andinoamazonic territorialities by making visible some of their aspects that in other research scenarios might remain invisible.



Figure 8. Eight maitos being grilled over a home-made grill. Photograph taken by the author.

The act of going along was another dimension to the method. The go-alongs I described up until now are intentionally contained or repeated research encounters where the informant’s knowledge of the place plays a strategic role. It elicits heterogenous narrative accounts by being the scene of unexpected situations and expands the intersubjectivity of the research encounter. Viewed as such, the go-along cannot accommodate a part of my work that was also a source of empirical material and that gave this ethnography a dimension of political engagement (Juris & Khasnabish, 2013b). Ethnography can demand exercising different participant roles, one of which can be that of accompanier or co/labourer (Escárcega, 2013;

Juris & Khasnabish, 2013a). This is a role that I understand as being highly contingent on the kind of work that the ethnographer can provide during or resulting from fieldwork. It has direct incidence in the construction of the empirical material. In my case, I never hid my legal background and with time I started to understand how it could be a form of co/labouring with research participants and informants.

During the second half of the PhD, together with colleagues from Lund University with whom we are trying to incorporate legal advocacy as part of our research. We have intervened as third parties in two judicial processes in Colombia: a constitutional class action that 105 residents of Mocoa are advancing against the state and the mineral exploration company and the Constitutional Court's review of the Escazú Agreement. We also have legally intervened to protect the personal data and integrity of environmental and human rights defenders (Paper 3). Going along, like Escárcega (2013) affirms, allows researchers to transcend working on or about social struggles in order to also work with the them; accompanying, going alongside them. Ethnographic engagement means co/labouring with them.

3.1.3. Documents

Collecting documents was an integral part of my research. I divided them into two large groups. One was legal and political documents like local law and regulations, municipal and regional development plans, parts of legal and administrative proceedings files, court rulings, criminal and disciplinary accusations against public officers, pamphlets, public communications from civil society organizations, etc. The other one was the documentation produced by the mining exploration company Libero Cobre and its Canadian mothership Copper Giant Resources (or Libero Copper and Gold as it was called prior to April 2025) and the Comandos de la Frontera – Ejército Bolivariano (CDF-EB) armed group.

Collecting documents extended my empirical material as they themselves are objects with sites, contexts, and movements of and not just text or discourse. As

said earlier, particularly in relation to the second group of documents, it was a conflict sensitivity strategy to avoid increasing risk of my informants. Asdal & Reinertsen's (2022, pp. 19-20) approach to documents as both discursive and material as well as representative and constitutive of social realities turned them into significant instances of how the practices of some actors are enacted and made sense of by them in these objects. They argue that documents are both material and discursive because they are not just the words they contain, the discourse in and of them, but also, they are things in themselves. They are the product of specific practices and may even produce practices of a certain kind. Methodologically speaking this makes a difference from other text-based methods because their discourse and materiality are both sources of empirical material.

3.2. Reflexivity and positionality

Ide and Beddoe (2024) suggest that a heuristic to begin reflecting about the research process is to think about one's own thinking. To pay attention to the emotions and thoughts as well as the boundaries and power dynamics in research relationships. To me, following Nastar (2023), this means that reflexivity involves checking questions of assumptions, identity, relationships, and experience. Several of these topics are reflected in a question that a research collaborator and co-author asked me one day. We had written and published a book chapter where we combine an autoethnography of the co-author's experience as an environmental and human rights defender in the Andinoamazonia and a socio-legal analysis about the mineral exploration project called the Mocoa project carried out by me (Carvajal Vargas & Samper, 2024). After the publication, we learned that scholars involved in the book's contributions had previously undisclosed relationships with the mineral exploration company. This quickly raised questions about the role of academia. My co-author, being an outspoken opponent to the project, asked me: "*what is the position of academia in relation to the defence of the Andinoamazonia?*".

The question is an excellent point of entry to reflect about how I think I affected the research process. Earlier, during my master's degree, I used a framework that drew a dualism between insider and outsider to reflect about how I had in some ways experienced an insider position (i.e. language, national, and cultural syntonies to some degree) and in some other ways I was an outsider (i.e. being from Bogotá located hundreds of kilometres away, living abroad in Sweden, affiliated to a Swedish university, and having never lived in the Andinoamazonia). I still consider that that reflection highlights a crucial nuance in which my identity affected the research and how I related to the people and places that took part in it. Throughout the PhD I have had the chance to deepen that reflection a bit more. Being a qualified lawyer in Colombia and undertaking the biggest training in ethnography so far are two important characteristics that affected my relationships with participants, informants, collaborators, and the places where we encountered each other. They enabled my social scientific practice and gave me the chance to participate in specific contexts due to what I brought into the encounters. Doing so, I transcended to some extent the dichotomy of insider/outsider by introducing profession, vocation, engagement, and training into the mix in ways that affected how I accessed and constructed the empirical material.

I started the PhD with an already established network of participants and informants whose experiences as social leaders and human rights defenders I had studied previously. Sustaining my proximity to them throughout the research process, as I learned about the risks they face in daily life, enhanced my sensitivity to the bioculturally diverse and conflict-affected characteristics of the research setting. In particular, I made the conscious decision to rely almost exclusively on documentation produced by specific actors, with whom I did not want to be seen, to avoid putting already established research relations at risk. Here, my positionality affected my research in two clear ways. First, I consciously directed my attention towards deepening my engagement with and accompanying environmental human rights defenders, and, with time, also a broader selection of civil society actors who

participated in different encounters related to the defence of the Andinoamazonia. And second, I limited my engagement with specific agents to public scenarios and to what they express, and how, in the documentation they produced that I collected.

The question about the position of academia also had another layer. Doing academic work, such as writing a paper or a book chapter with a research collaborator who does not necessarily trade in publications. I learned that engaging in this activity demanded not only open communication but also active encouragement. It also demanded revising the assumption that agreeing to participate in a qualitative study equals to agreeing to write it down in a potential publication. Revising the assumption meant checking in throughout the creative process and learning to perceive and address different constraints like navigating different levels of prioritization in the face of deadlines. The temporalities of the researcher and those of the participant have different rhythms (Echeverri & Román, 2008). Crucially though, the aftermath of publishing translates into unequal prospects. I am very thankful to my colleague Valentina who encouraged me to check-in with the co-author after the publication of the book chapter. Without that encouragement, the dialogue that led to this portion of the reflection would never have happened.

3.3. Analysis

The extended case method is a way to position ethnography within the reflexive social sciences. Burawoy (1998) proposes a set of dialogues that commit researchers in specific ways. The first dialogue commits the researcher to explicitly recognize their intervention as I did in the previous subsection. Now, I focus on the second and third dialogues. The second dialogue commits the reflexive researcher to recognize that the social situation under research is contingently connected to broader social forces, reducing the study's replicability but enhancing its capacity to show how the general and the particular interact. The third dialogue commits the

researcher to a scientific practice consisting of continually confronting theories with empirical scenarios. Ethnography mirrors these two dialogues as its analytical process demands iterating between description and interpretation (Atkinson, 2015; Guber, 2001). I visited and revisited fieldnotes, recordings, and documents at different moments and with different ideas in mind. This is how Guber's notion of description-interpretation or Atkinson's view that ethnographic creativity comes from the iteration or juxtaposition of data and ideas resonate with my view of my work being reflexive (Atkinson, 2015; Guber, 2001).

Reflexive science demands fine-tuning the analysis constantly as the juxtaposition of ideas and empirical material leads to constant renewals in the relationship between observation and theory. Atkinson (2015), speaking as a practitioner of ethnography, has called this analytical process ethnographic abduction. In interdisciplinary scenarios, practitioners of sustainability science and researchers who deploy mixed methods, have used the term retroduction or retroductive theorizing to describe the process of continuous dialogue between ideas and data (Longo et al., 2025; Mukumbang, 2023; Nastar et al., 2018).

My thesis is positioned within sustainability science and is ethnographic. Therefore, I see my analytical process as being equally described by both forms of reasoning. In practice, they refer to what in my experience has been the same intellectual, imaginative, and creative process derived from asking myself, '*what is going on here?*' and later on '*is that still going on there?*'. However much time I spent obsessively inspecting my empirical material, sorting my fieldnotes, listening to recordings, transcribing, coding themes, reading transcripts, re-coding, making new notes elicited by looking at the empirical material once more, categorizing, re-categorizing, re-inspecting, re-reading, and re-listening, both in my office in Lund and on the banks of the Mocoa river, analysis to me is not exhausted by these actions. It also includes the process of taking a necessary step back when writing, when engaging in the '*graphy*' of ethnography. The step back, where my attention

turns to the research questions driving my dissertation as a whole, reconnect the empirical material to the themes of my research.

In my case, I approached the iterative process of juxtaposing empirical material and ideas using narrative analysis. This approach has been described as observing qualitative research encounters as social acts that are narrated, thus having form, function, and movement (Cortazzi, 2001). In this view, encounters are enacted speech events rather than strict and credible representations of a memory or an experience assumed to be inner to the research participant. Speech events are a core feature of social everyday life and come in different forms (Atkinson, 2015). They can be conversations, interviews, dialogues, and other intersubjective interactions between the researcher and a participant. They can also be the result of social actions observed and recorded or even read by the researcher. The latter act of reading is important because it highlights that narrative analysis contains but also transcends thematic strategies used in coding text and transcripts (Cortazzi, 2001). Narrative analysis therefore opens the possibility to analyse together what people say and what they do, where, when, how, and to or with whom.

Speech acts have different dimensions that become elements of analysis by paying sustained attention to language. They have movement – they go to and from places, including to the researcher’s hands. They have function – like building a collective stance about or identity around something, presenting a positive image about a social actor, or presenting an issue to an expert whose work consists in building cases like doctors, lawyers, and researchers. And they have form – dialogue, interview, interruption, presentation, story, etc. Narratives plot events and experiences in time and space, giving them features like narrator or teller, audience, and their relationship aside from the unit of the story (Cortazzi, 2001).

I have previously mentioned the making of a mandala and the harmonization of gatherings as a practical manifestation of ancestral/rooted Andinoamazonic territorial orders. It is a radically different form of enacting territorial orders to

others like the equally ceremonious standing up to sing the national and regional anthems of Colombia and the Putumayo, common in public hearings, corporate events, and encounters with representatives of public institutions. While anthems speak of the glory of independence, the wealth of a region or nation, and invite people to put their hands on their hearts and sing or hum half-subconsciously; the mandalas contain a selection of objects and symbols that belong to the territorio/territory, which become the centre of the space for a moment and invite the attendants to reflect about where they are and what is at stake. In relation to questions of territorial configuration, for instance, they are speech acts with specific forms and functions within everyday moments of encounter. They highlight different dimensions of a place, such as scalar issues reminding the audience that they are in Colombia, the Putumayo, the Andinoamazonia, or the mountains of Mocoa.

In cases like the one illustrated above, the general and the particular interact in specific forms. The alliance of the state and capital in the ordering of a territorio/territory or the strategic dismissiveness of the national symbols through the adoption of ancestral/rooted ones like a mandala to re-order it, or even the tactical adoption of an anthem to infuse an encounter with an air of officiality are symbolized in my account of these moments of everyday life. Ethnographers have long argued that ethnography is abductive and conceptually generative because the iterative analysis confronts the researcher's ideas with everyday life moments, subjecting them to refinements and modifications due to the essential tensions between generality and specificity (Atkinson, 2015; Guber, 2001; Tsing, 2005). Ethnographic abduction or retroductive theorizing in my view can both be described as the process through which the researcher decentres and transforms their system of categorization to renew concepts and generate new questions.

The road towards the theoretical framework exemplifies that iterative process. It is the product of sustained bouncing between empirical material and ideas that started

before the PhD. Then, my attention was drawn to the practices of territorial defense which was the main analytical unit of my PhD project proposal and my first-year seminar. Halfway through the PhD I changed the unit of analysis to territorial relations but without an everyday life component. But when I had already conducted most field research, I realized how the object of my study actually was the daily experiences of territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia associated with extractivism, armed conflict, and resistance.

Part two: Findings and discussion

In Part two I present and discuss the findings of my PhD. I build mainly on the empirical material and analysis in the papers. I also include expanded details of the papers' empirical material which gives the kappa its hybrid format.

I answer the question of how have armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance configured the Colombian Andinoamazonia during the current peacebuilding cycle in Chapter 4. There, I provide a historiography of how these phenomena have impacted this territorio/territory in the *longue durée*. By showing how the Colombian Andinoamazonia has been subjected to waves of imposition of territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism, I demonstrate that present experiences of territorial configuration are connected inextricably to processes that pre-date the current peacebuilding cycle. They are are manifestations of larger temporalities of territorialization.

How these processes of territorial configuration are experienced in daily life is answered in Chapters 5 and 6. Each chapter provides a partial view about these experiences. In Chapter 5, I show how the imposition of territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism are experienced in daily life as pacification driven by practices of violence and concealment. Chapter 6 complements this view by demonstrating how territorial configuration is not just something that happens or is imposed onto people but also something they actively do through everyday practices of re-existence from where ancestral and rooted Andinoamazonic territorialities resurge.

Based on the following three chapters, I show territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia is a process with multiple temporalities. For example, as I show in Chapter 4, exploration endeavours are similar in timeframe despite being a century apart from each other. The analytical relevance of this is predicated in the influence that temporalities have on daily life experience. Nuances like how, where, and when does the imposition of exogenous territorial orders emerge, intensify, de-escalate, evolve, etc. are useful to analyse how the imposition of armed conflict and extractivist territorialities drive different experiences of territorial configuration.

I also show how territorial configuration is not exhausted by the imposition of territorialities. The imposition of territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism have on people's daily lives. But territorial configuration is also driven by the practices through which ancestral and rooted territorial orders re-exist through a politics of opposition and alternatives. Contesting the imposition of extractivist and armed conflict territorialities constitutes a politics of opposition that is but one face of a coin. The other face is the politics of alternatives through which a confluence of peoples and communities enact and express that the Andinoamazonia is a territorio/territory of life. I show how objects like native seeds serve as a temporal boundary to connect present struggles with those that happened before. By the same token, I show how the naming of places encodes traditional ecological knowledges that continue to guide present practices, turning them into relevant and contingent forms of knowing places instead of relics immune to history.

4. Extractivism, armed conflict, and resistance in the history of the Colombian Andinoamazonia

The territorial configuration of Abya Yala/Latin America has been connected to long histories of conflict, extractivism, and resistance. In this brief historiography I stress the role that they have played in the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia. I argue that the concept of Andinoamazonia currently transcends the description of a biophysical landscape as it is the setting, placeholder if you will, of a pluriverse of territorialities. In that way, the Andinoamazonia is a biocultural landscape. The historical trajectories of peoples, communities, movements, and organizations defending the Andinoamazonia shape and are shaped by it. But also, that of the agents who have intervened this territorio/territory to extract its so-called riches and exploit its inhabitants. Biocultural landscape connectivities are reflected in myriad ways of being in, knowing, governing, and managing it. However, some of these have been historically concealed as part of broader strategies to configure the Colombian Andinoamazonia through militarization and extractivist exploitation.

Deborah was a youth representative at the local government of Valle del Guamuez, Putumayo when she invited me to participate in a radio show she hosted. She interviewed me about environmental conservation in the Andinoamazonia. After the interview, she offered me lunch. The garage at the entrance of her house led to the kitchen through a corridor on the left side. A long poster was hanging on the wall of the corridor (Figure 9). It must have been between 1.5 - 2 meters long and

recorded a history of the Putumayo. The poster's authors were the NGO Asociación Minga in collaboration with a group of local organizations. The timeline covered the period 1900-2013.



Figure 9. Snippets from the timeline. Taken from a video of the timeline recorded by the author.

4.1. Conversion of souls, extermination of bodies, and occupation of territorios/territories

The timeline started with a well-known double assault on Indigenous lives. For a long time, the Putumayo has been the name given to the landscape connecting the Andes and the Amazon the Putumayo river's basin, born in Sibundoy, Putumayo (Casement, 1997). The Putumayo was the setting of a wave of catholic missions seeking to convert Indigenous Peoples and the rubber genocide conducted by the Arana house with the acquiescence of the governments of Peru, Colombia, and the U.K. (Hardenburg, 1912). This double assault happened in parallel but with different rhythms. Unlike the rubber genocide, by the turn of the 20th Century the religious missions had been converting Indigenous communities and claiming their territorios/territories for centuries in the Andinoamazonia.

Andinoamazonic Indigenous Peoples, like the Inga and Kamëntšá, christianized since the XVI Century, underwent processes of transculturation (Pratt, 1992). This is regarded as a major consequence of the government-sponsored conversion missions carried out by missionaries from Bogotá and Europe. In their ignorance about, or spite towards the native populations, they saw in the latter only enemies, infidels, and savages in need of salvation. Their souls, bodies, and territorios/territories had to be christianized (Figure 10). Indigenous Peoples' will to survive without fully jeopardizing their ancestral cultures explained their strategic adoption of christianity (Bonilla, 2019). Cultural and territorial fragmentations, displacement and sedentarization, exploitation, and annihilation were amongst the outcomes of this double assault. It did not reflect a process of exclusion. Instead, it constituted the gradual, contested, and often aggressive marginal inclusion of Indigenous Peoples into the nation-state (Uribe, 2020).



Figure 10. A banner inside the cathedral of Mocoa with the biblical passage from Matthew 28:19: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. Photo taken by the author.

In the main square of Mocoa stand the buildings of local government and the Cathedral of Archangel Saint Michael. There, as well as in many other municipalities in the Putumayo, once a year, the Inga and Kamëntšá people

celebrate the Bëtsknaté (Kamëntšá) or Atun Puncha (Inga). A great day of forgiveness. A day to reconcile with Mother Earth. I had the privilege to be there during the 2023 edition. It was the Monday before Ash Wednesday. The second field excursion of my PhD. There was a mass, a march, and a mingle. By the time I arrived at the cathedral, the mass was ongoing. I stood with one foot inside and another outside, so to speak. The priest invited everybody to prayer. The prayer led to singing in Inga. Wooden wind instruments and drums accompanied the song. Let us pray, the priest continued in Spanish, a few minutes later.

I was too far back to see the priest. I wondered if it was Father Carlos but then I concluded it probably was not. Him being from Sibundoy meant he was probably giving the mass up there. I remembered what an informant with whom I had met just a few days before in Bogotá told me. “Take pictures of the event because I cannot attend this year”, he said. And so, I did. But not during mass. Outside of the cathedral, members of the Nasa Indigenous Guard had closed the street (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Members of the indigenous guard blocking the street in Mocoa's main square. Photograph taken and anonymized by the author.

Waves of people started to exit wearing their traditional clothes and garments after the mass. Flags started to rise. I couldn't help but notice that among the different

flags, someone lifted a Colombian flag upside down (Figure 12). A powerful symbolic gesture.

The march went eastwards from the cathedral and then turned north towards a school in front of the municipal market. Two elders, one holding the upside-down flag and another the Putumayo's flag, both playing the harmonica, welcomed the procession into the school yard. People began dancing around it (Figure 13). After a short speech about the importance of reconciling with mother earth and to defend the territorio/territory, a celebration started. A celebration that was clearly a protest too.



Figure 12. People exiting the cathedral after mass during the Bëtsknaté (Kamēntšá) or Atun Puncha (Inga). Photograph taken and anonymized by the author.



Figure 13. Bëtsknaté/Atun Puncha. Photograph taken and anonymized by the author.

4.2. Petroleum and the seeds of re-existence

By mid-century, the timeline turned to a new wave of extractivism. U.S. oil companies (such as Pure Oil Company, Sinclair Exploration Company, Texas Oil Company – Texaco, and Colombian Gulf Oil Co.) had already started to explore for the black liquid gold by the 1920s in the Andinoamazonia. Large-scale extraction began in the 1960s (De la Pedraja, 1993; Gomez López, 2005).

In 1963, the first oil well was drilled and the settlement of Santana, where many workers came to live, was founded. What followed were decades of oil exploration and extraction, exposing the sovereign indifference and contempt with which the state historically governed and managed the Andinoamazonia (CNMH, 2015). These activities were conducted by foreign multinational companies without any kind of accountability (no exploration permit or obligation to repair damages) nor the recognition of, and therefore not even close to holding the consent from, the ancestral owners of the land (CNMH, 2015).

Sixty years later, I was sitting in the back seat of a green Chevrolet Swift from the 1990s with two colleagues and Orlando. We took a turn right in the town of Santana as we made our way to La Hormiga, Putumayo from Mocoa. We were scheduled to attend a seed exchange and then a workshop with a youth organization facilitated by him and Deborah. Seed exchanges are a situated form of resistance to the imposition of genetically modified seeds and monocultures in the Andinoamazonia (Figure 14). This practice is shared by Indigenous, Campesino, Afro-descendant peoples and communities, and feminist communitarian organizations in other parts of Abya Yala/Latin America (Ulloa, 2013, 2016).

However, this form of resistance has not been free from violent reaction. On the 11th of September 1998, while giving mass, father Alcides Jimenez was assassinated by the FARC. He famously gave native Andinoamazonian seeds instead of hosts during the holy communion. He turned the flesh of Christ into the seeds of Mother Earth.

He encouraged food sovereignty through the cultivation of local plants and opposed agro-extractivism like the widespread monocultures of coca for illicit use. He cautioned against the use of gasoline and other polluting inputs for the production of cocaine paste as well as the polluting chemicals used to cultivate and destroy these crops by armed actors, state and non-state alike.

Shortly after we took that turn to the right, a pipeline surfaced. A radical representation of the metabolism between the subsoil and the surface. It ran parallel to us for about one and a half hours. The road and the pipeline one century after the first exploratory oil drillings. From the backseat of a car driving down the oil road to La Hormiga from Santana I saw common Andinoamazonic landscapes, a few farms, the rising Andes mountain range in the background, *cananguchales* (palm trees that fixate underground water found all around the Amazon), and a constant interruption in the shape of a pipeline (Figure 15).

The arrival of multinational companies exploring and extracting oil brought people too. Many were escaping the period of socio-political fragmentation elsewhere in the country. A historical period nowadays known as The Violence (Fals Borda & Umaña Luna, 1962). They were looking for peace, following the government's promise of land to work on. Some of them became the base of the first organized labour movements in the Putumayo. Throughout the second half of the 20th Century, oil workers organized to demand the end of the exploitative "veintiocheo"¹, the creation of new municipalities, and the provision of public services (Devia Acosta, 2004).

¹ "Veintiocheo" from the Spanish No. 28 (veintiocho) was a form of forced precarization through labor rotations used by the foreign fossil fuel companies in Colombia during the 1900s through which workers would rotate every 28 days, therefore never making it past their 30-day trial period nor staying long enough at work to organize a union.



Figure 14. A selection of Andinoamazonic native seeds exhibited during a seed exchange in La Hormiga, Putumayo. Photo taken by the author.



Figure 15. Oil Roads. Photo collection made by the Author.

I met Joana during my master's thesis fieldwork in 2021. I had had the chance to interview her about her experiences defending human rights on that occasion. She was the first person to tell me about the oil labour movement and its role in the history of social mobilization in the region. By early 2024, she had been staying in Mocoa for some time, away from her land and family for security reasons. She had just returned from an unknown place. She had been granted refuge thanks to an

NGO's rapid reaction after word-of-mouth news alerted that she was targeted for assassination due to her work as a human rights defender.

We met several times to talk about human rights violations and the prevalence of their occurrence in scenarios of territorial defense. One time, in early 2024, we met as she was planning to run for a seat on the Putumayo's regional assembly and was frustrated because she missed her son. She said she sometimes felt like she was afraid of turning into her mother. Her mother and uncle were union organizers. They were members of the Putumayo's union of frontier oil workers. The history of this organization traces back to the oil workers' movement from the mid-1900s. Both of her relatives were murdered. Notwithstanding, or perhaps as a result, she has become an active opposer of the expansion/invasion of extractive capitalism in the Colombian Andinoamazonia and documenter of the human rights violations associated with the practices which these enclaves impose territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism.

4.3. Armed conflict and peace with social justice in the Colombian Andinoamazonia

Several things start to build up in the timeline from the 1980s onwards. By the end of the 20th Century things converge around the armed conflict. Coca plantations for illicit use have consolidated in the region. Drug lord Rodriguez Gacha had established his operations, planting the seeds of paramilitary armed organization to secure the corridors of the gangster's supply chain of coca paste production and export. Following his assassination in the Caribbean Sea, the operation disseminated and, shortly after, insurgent guerrillas, especially the FARC-EP, consolidated territorial control (CNMH, 2015). Eventually, the phenomenon of paramilitarism arrived to the Andinoamazonia, escalating the armed conflict as

disputes over these so-called strategic corridors of raw materials, licit and illicit, intensified.

Stuck in the middle, determined to demand their rights, the cocalero campesinos mobilized in the mid-1990s for political recognition and participation (Ramírez, 2001). This mobilization became iconic. Shortly after, Father Alcides Jiménez was murdered during Sunday mass and the massacres of El Tigre, El Placer and La Dorada were carried out by paramilitary groups (CNMH, 2011, 2012). The Plan Colombia's implementation at the turn of the century intensified the armed conflict heavily. A war on drugs that led to the increased militarization of the Colombian Andinoamazonia, and the generalized degradation of armed conflict bred fear, hate, poisonous desires for vengeance, and violence de-sensibilization among the population. Politics, armed violence, and organized crime tightened their entanglements (Comision de la Verdad, 2022a; Pizarro Leongómez, 2015). To the peoples and communities stuck in the middle, the state turned into troops and planes flying around, spraying the Monsanto-made, now Bayer-owned, herbicide Glyphosate onto the Andinoamazonic peoples and landscapes (the same cancer-linked chemical that the genocidal government of the settler-colonial state of Israel has sprayed over the lands of my Lebanese ancestors in 2026). In Colombia's war on drugs, this strategy proved to be an ineffective measure to eradicate crops of illicit use. These aerial sprays effectively poisoned many Andinoamazonic cuerpos-territorios/bodies-territories (Lyons, 2016).

Now, several decades later, it is public knowledge that the Plan Colombia was not just ineffective but triggered a whole reconfiguration of the coca supply chain and Colombia-U.S. military and security cooperation (Mejia & Restrepo, 2016; Yoss & Reust, 2024). Paramilitary armies demobilized, though many groups did not disarm, during a peace agreement with the Colombian government signed in 2005 (Sánchez Jaramillo, 2023). Moreover, the turn of the millennium unleashed a second wave of oil extraction and, in response, a new iteration of the social mobilizations against

extractivism and armed conflict (CNMH, 2015). Common yet differentiated lived experiences of armed conflict started to be articulated in scenarios of territorial defence. It is from these mobilizations that, arising as a signifier of the pluriversal solidarities intertwined in this territorio/territory, the Andinoamazonia appears, in speech and text, as a situated biocultural and political concept.

By the mid-2010s, the timeline ends. Under the umbrella of defending the Andinoamazonia, a confluence of Campesino communities, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, feminist communitarian and socio-environmental organizations, and peri-urban and rural villages had successfully organized. From the Andean highlands to the Amazonic lowlands, the struggle to defend the Andinoamazonia through the promotion of its alternative becoming as a pluriverse of ancestral and rooted territorialities became a widespread form of resistance to extractivism and armed conflict because to resist is not to endure.

In 2014, more than fifty rural and ethnic communities in the low Putumayo went into strike against the expansion of an oil extraction site and the military operations of the state's armed forces to forcefully eradicate crops for illicit use. They were seen as drivers of confinement, disappearances, assassinations, and extrajudicial executions. Violent impositions of territorialities of extractivism and armed conflict. The strike led to the consolidation of the MEROS – the Spanish acronym for the Roundtable of Social Organizations of the Putumayo, the Baja Bota Caucana, and Cofanía Jardines de Sucumbíos, where the project of an integral and alternative development plan for the Andinoamazonia was born (MEROS, 2015). It also led to the Colombian government agreeing to finance, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, a territorial development plan coordinated by the MEROS. In 2017, just a few months after the Peace Agreement was signed, the PLADIA 2035, as this Andinoamazonic integral development plan became known, was finished. It presented a 20-year strategy for territorially focused, alternative development of the Andinoamazonia (Cantor Sandoval, 2017). However, the

PLADIA's communitarian strategy went into the background as the communities, peoples, and social bases who participated in its making prioritised the new programs of the 2016 peace agreement instead (Paper 2).

Had the timeline been longer, it might have highlighted the negotiation and signing of the peace accords between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government. It might have also highlighted the FARC's de-mobilization, disarmament, and transition to a political party. Also, the murder of social leaders and human rights defenders like Marco Rivadeneira and hundreds of others in the aftermath of the peace agreement due to their participation in the peace agreement's implementation programs would have been certainly been there (Álvarez Camargo et al., 2022; Castro et al., 2021; Guevara et al., 2017; Ulcué Campo et al., 2018; Ulcué Campo et al., 2019). It might have also shown images of the fatal torrential avenue that ravaged Mocoa on the evening of the 31st of March 2017 and the reactivation of the copper and molybdenum exploration project one year later in the mountains upriver from the city (Paper 3).

Looking historically at the roles that conflict, extractivism, and resistance have had in the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia reveals several different relevant temporalities. This overview connects the resistance of Indigenous Peoples of the Andinoamazonic Piedmont who fought to the end against the Spanish catholic colonization with the celebration of the Betsknaté in the cathedral of Mocoa in the 2023. Even though many ancestral territorialities transcended beyond the material world, as peoples like the Andakís became the jaguars that roam the Andinoamazonia, they continue to reveal themselves to the guardians of ancestral knowledge/practices in the present. The fight of the Murui-Muina, Bora, Ocaina, and Andoque peoples to survive the genocide perpetrated by a rubber boom during the turn of the twentieth Century, even if that meant changing their ways, is inextricable from the labour mobilizations for decent working conditions in the twentieth Century against the exploitative labour conditions

imposed by North American corporations and powerful drug lords during the petroleum and coca booms. The crystallization of the struggles for territorial peace with social justice from Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, Campesino communities, and environmental and feminist communitarian organizations who experienced the merciless waves of violence and degradation of the armed conflict in the Andinoamazonia during the turn of the millennium constitute a crucial moment of resurgence of ancestral and rooted Andinoamazonic territorialities.

The role of extractivism, conflict, and resistance in the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia shows the influence of these spatiotemporal processes in the construction of collective identities in the Andinoamazonia (Ramírez, 2021). At the same time, it illustrates how inhabitants and the ancestral/rooted territorialities reflected in their daily practices have been affected by extractivism and conflict through biocultural fragmentation: a combination of cultural and corporal invisibilization and biophysical hyper-visibilization of the territorio/territory's raw wealth (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Lyons, 2020). This oxymoronic view of the territorio/territory, both empty and to be emptied, has been quintessential for the imposition of specific territorialities in the Andinoamazonia. The remaining discussion focuses on my findings about how territorial configuration in the Andinoamazonia has been experienced and contested by the peoples and communities in defense of the Andinoamazonia during the current peacebuilding cycle.

5. Imposed territorialities: The reconfiguration of armed conflict and a new extractivist frontier in the Andinoamazonia

5.1. Pacification as violence under the guise of peacebuilding

After the 2016 peace agreement the number of studies and publications about the Colombian peacebuilding process grew notoriously. Many of them are highlighted in Paper 1's review of literature on territorial peace. The number of academic publications using the keywords post-conflict, post-agreement, and post-peace agreement increased exponentially in 2015 (Figures 16 & 17). That was the year after the re-election of the Santos government that promised continuity to the then ongoing peace negotiations with the FARC-EP.

From the beginning of the 2020s, as the peacebuilding process entered the second half of the first decade of implementation, the quantity of publications stabilized at a much higher rate of occurrences than before 2015. Despite the similar pattern of increase, it is also notorious that the increase in post-conflict occurrences was almost three times higher than “post-agreement” and “post-peace agreement” together. Moreover, the former has begun to stabilize at more than twice the number of occurrences. This shows that in academic publications about the Colombian peacebuilding process in the Web of Science database after 2016, the term post-conflict became more common than the other two.

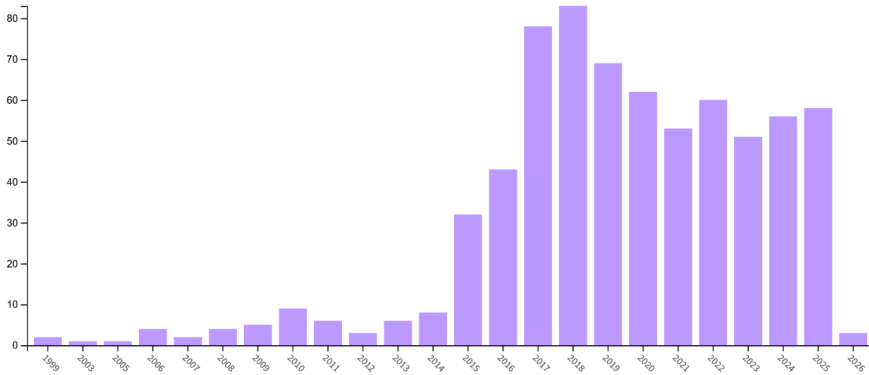


Figure 16. Number of academic publications with keywords "Colombia" AND "post-conflict" in the Web of Science database between 1999-2026. Bar chart elaborated by the author.

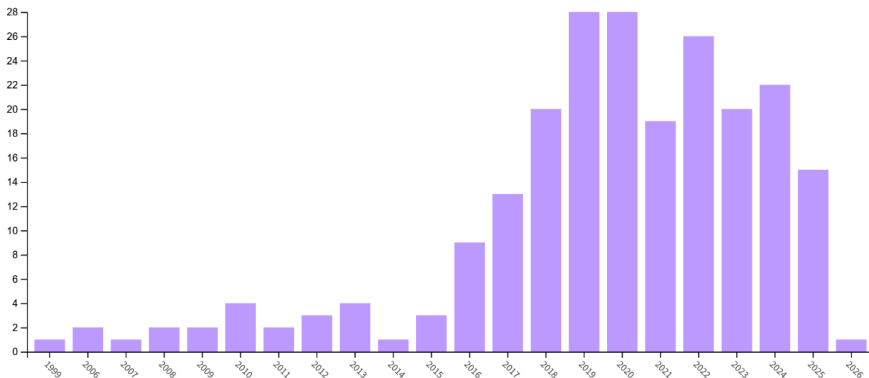


Figure 17. Number of academic publications with keywords "Colombia" AND "post-agreement" OR "post-peace agreement" in the Web of Science database between 1999-2026. Bar chart elaborated by the author.

The term post-conflict suggests that there is no more conflict and in the case of Colombia that is only partially right. The armed conflict between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government ended comprehensively with the almost complete demobilization, disarmament, and transition of the former into a political party. I find the post-conflict an analytically stifling temporal frame, however. The

protracted armed conflict did not finish with the 2016 peace accords but quickly reconfigured as recognized by the Colombia's highest courts (Corte Constitucional, 2018; Corte Suprema de Justicia, 2018). The total peace initiative of the Petro government aimed at demobilizing, disarming, and transitioning remaining guerrillas and organized armed groups. It was at best ineffective and arguably a failure (Human Rights Watch, 2026). The term post-conflict in this context obscures relevant temporal layers associated to the continuities and ruptures that the 2016 accords brought.

Framing the aftermath of the peace agreement as a post-conflict period closes avenues for the analysis of how, during this time, conflict intensified or de-escalated and how it affected different places. I advance the position of conceptually disarming the imprecise temporal framing of Colombia as going through an era of post-conflict, in favour of conceptualizations using post-agreement or related terms that do not signal the end of conflict but the beginning or renewal of peacebuilding cycles. After all, prior to the 2016 peace agreement, Colombian governments had signed over twenty different peace agreements with varying degrees of success in terms of demobilization, disarmament, and transition to politics with paramilitary groups and other insurgent guerrillas like the M-19 since the 1980s (Giraldo Ramírez et al., 2019).

Temporal frames such as post-agreement enable analyses that nuance peacebuilding not just in Colombia, because peace agreements do not necessarily address root causes of conflict in a way that transforms power relations or ends violence (Höglund & Kovacs, 2010; Tellez, 2019). I argue that analyses on the differences between peace and pacification – which have been recognized by scholars studying Colombian peacebuilding to show the simultaneous experiences of peacebuilding, reconfiguration of armed conflict, and reproduction of root causes of territorial conflict – are clearer if there is contextual distinction between post-conflict and post-peace agreement.

Paper 1 already contains a qualitative distinction between peace and pacification. The article focuses on how the latter is exercised through violence under the guise of peacebuilding. Based on a review of literature on territorial peace and a selection of empirical work, we show that peacebuilding in the Colombian Andinoamazonia did not overcome the logics that reproduce the root causes of conflict. In line with studies like Olarte-Olarte (2019) and Rincon Florez (2022), we found that territorial conflicts during the post-agreement period became framed in reduced ways by state institutions such as in terms of security or environmental and risk management. We further show how security was a frame used by both the Duque government's Artemisa military operation and the pamphlets through which the CDF-EB exercised territorial control in the Colombian Andinoamazonia. We also highlight how environmental framings are a site of dispute, showcasing the encounter between the local environmental authority of the Colombian Amazon and a group of Indigenous, Campesino, and Afro-Colombian people. The framing of the Amazon as a forest by the former was taken as an imposed frame, a gaze particular to a form of being in, knowing, governing and managing the Andinoamazonia that did not resonate with the latter's view of the territorio/territory, provoking them to resist by yelling "selva" every time they heard the word forest.

The discursive securitization of territorial conflict is inextricably connected to, and even mirrored by, material realities in the Colombian Andinoamazonia. In Paper 1 we review plenty of literature showing how these discourses legitimizes military and policive interventions in Colombia (Ahumada 2020; Álvarez-Giraldo & Pimienta Betancur, 2021; Le Billon et al 2020; Velez Torres & Lugo-Vivas, 2021). In the Andinoamazonia, these discourses legitimized violent interventions by state and non-state armed actors. These interventions imposed extractivist territorialities and reinforced a neoliberal development model based on exporting legal raw materials and illicit products, often under obscured conditions of social and ecological exploitation. Empirical evidence from Paper 2 complements this view showing the violence against, and the prevalence of assassinations of,

environmental human rights defenders and territorial guardians in the Colombian Andinoamazonia (particularly in the Putumayo and Cauca departments).

Reduced environmental framings of territorial conflict, on the other hand, are limited in their capacity to offer channels for the defence of ancestral/rooted territorialities and the uprooting of the conflict's causes. In Paper 1 we show how protecting the environment was both a discursive strategy of both state armed forces during the Artemisa Operation and non-state ones like the CDF-EB. In fact, the latter even co-opt the historical discourses of social struggles by stating they defend the territorio/territory too (Figure 18). However, they do so while exercising old practices of de-legitimization, stigmatization, and fear instigation towards environmental human rights defenders and forcing communities to cultivate crops for illicit use while entering into the total peace process opened by the Petro government.


I collected at least a dozen pamphlets and communiqués published by the CDF-EB during fieldwork. Figure 18 is an exemplary piece because it illustrates many of the aforementioned issues. Starting from the bottom, their slogan “we defend life, territory, and the environment” discursively connects territorio/territory to life and environmental questions and coopts the language of the peoples, communities, and organizations who struggle for territorial peace with social justice. Their de-legitimation of social leaders and environmental human rights defenders is based on calling into question their influence by casting doubt about whether they have “social bases” or not. As my own research prior to my PhD shows, having a social base means receiving support from a community or group people and is one way to determine a person's social leadership (Samper, 2021; Samper & Krause, 2024). Stigmatization is also clearly visible in the accusation that some environmental human rights defenders have ties with an armed group with which the CDF-EB is known to have combatted against in the Andinoamazonia for several years during the post-peace agreement period. Such accusations have been commonplace

throughout the whole armed conflict, as found by the Truth Commission's report. There, they call it *a mode of war* through which armed actors involved and victimized civil society during the armed conflict by accusing them of being 'on the other side' when they did not cooperate with the armed group (Comision de la Verdad, 2022a). Finally, the instigation of fear is tied to suggesting that if they wanted the human rights defenders eliminated, this would have already happened.

**COMANDOS DE LA FRONTERA – EJERCITO
BOLIVARIANO**

C D F – E B

A LA OPINION PUBLICA



Por medio del presente le comunicamos a la comunidad putumayense a sus organizaciones sociales de diferentes tendencias políticas, étnicas, religiosas y culturales etc.; a Colombia y el mundo.

1. Que nuestra organización no tiene como política obstaculizar a los líderes y lideresas que desarrollan un trabajo organizativo y objetivo de base, con las comunidades campesinas, indígenas y afros.
2. Que se viene presentando en el departamento un fenómeno con unos llamados "líderes y lideresas" que se presentan en diversos escenarios a nivel regional y nacional, como voceros de los campesinos y cocaleros; pero en el terreno, no cumplen ninguna función organizativa. Vividores de las dificultades sociales.
3. Tenemos conocimiento que algunos de estos personajes se escudan en nuestra organización argumentando que los tenemos como objetivos militares; para solicitar protección del Estado a través de la UNP. Para que los ubiquen en ciudades y en algunos casos fuera del país, como exiliados.
4. Hay unos y unas que ungen como neutrales defensores de Derechos Humanos, pero coordinan y reciben orientaciones de los jefes de las disidencias del frente 1° "Carolina Ramirez" de éstos, tenemos fotos y videos de las reuniones con alias "Danilo" y otros comandantes de estas estructuras; en determinado momento las haremos publicas.
5. El caso de [redacted] nuestra organización nunca a intentado atentar contra sus vidas, de haber tenido un plan contra estos ya se hubiese materializado.
6. Dejamos constancia que en ningún momento los hemos declarado como objetivos militares, por nuestra parte no tienen inconvenientes.
7. Seguiremos empeñados en transitar caminos de paz y reconciliación nacional, con el gobierno del presidente Gustavo Petro, en aras de construir una Colombia en paz y con derechos sociales para todos los que habitamos este suelo patrio.

Montañas del putumayo, noviembre 13 del 2022.

Dirección General
Comandos De La Frontera – Ejercito Bolivariano
C D F – E B
"Defendemos la vida, el territorio y el medio ambiente"

Figure 18. Pamphlet published by the CDF-EB dated 2022-11-03 that I received from an informant during fieldwork on 2022-03-14. The picture has been anonymized by the Author to delete personal information.

In Paper 2, we complement these findings by showing how the Andinoamazonia is facing the reconfiguration of armed conflict in a particular way. Up until 2024, it was the region in Colombia with the highest assassinations of environmental human rights defenders both in absolute terms and per capita. Furthermore, we show a correlation between this violent phenomenon and the increase of coca crops for illicit use. Not only is this a known source of income to the CDF-EB, but, as shown by the United Nations Office Against Drugs and Crime, it is correlated with the violence against environmental human rights defenders (InSight Crime, 2025; UNODC-SIMCI, 2025). The territorial control of this non-state armed group in the Andinoamazonia increased. The reconfiguration of armed conflict also configures the territorio/territory through the expansion/invasion of a form of large-scale agro-extractivism in the form of increased cultivation of monocrops for illicit use. The reconfiguration of armed conflict is also connected to the continuation of historical injustices like maldistribution, marginalization, and misrecognition against the peoples and communities of the Andinoamazonia who seek to live, know, govern, and manage their territorios/territories free from the impositions of armed conflict.

The territorialization of the armed conflict after 2016 in the Andinoamazonia was generally experienced by informants and participants as a form pacification driven by the practices of violence under the guise of peacebuilding. That view, however, would be challenged by a whole other set of experiences. I mean those associated with the mineral exploration project to which I turn my attention in the next chapter. So far, pacification was a way to describe the experiences of territorial defenders related to the practices of armed actors through which territorialities of armed conflict were imposed in the Colombian Andinoamazonia. As defined up to this point, I found it challenging to link it to how the territorialization of a mineral exploration project in the Andinoamazonia was experienced by them. However, pacification continued to be a term used by informants on the ground who were opposing the exploration project to describe their experiences (Paper 3). Conceptualized the way it was in Papers 1 and 2, as a form of violence in the guise

of peacebuilding, pacification fell short when looking at how the practices and discourses of a multinational corporation to advance a mineral exploration project were experienced. I found it was necessary to expand the concept in order to analyse the everyday life experiences associated with the imposition of extractivist territorialities too.

5.2. Pacification as concealment

Mineral exploration projects are resource-making practices (Bridge, 2011). Paper 3 provides an overview of the history of this project from its inception in the late 1970s until the present. Its temporality, spanning through decades, resembles the temporality of oil exploration conducted by North American companies too in the Colombian Andinoamazonia one century earlier. As such, this resource-making process has its own particular frontier dynamics that are inseparable from the processes of territorialization and concealment of nation-state consolidation and development (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Rasmussen & Lund, 2018). Based on Papers 2 and 3 and extended empirical material, I show how the company strategically navigates contested legalities and fragment biocultural connectivities aimed at selling a nightmare in a dream's disguise. These strategies are experienced in daily life as a kind of pacification that operates through the concealment of ancestral and rooted territorialities for the sake of expanding an extractivist frontier.

5.2.1. Navigating contested legalities

From Papers 2 and 3 it is possible to gather that almost half a century has passed since the inception of the Mocoa project. Protests against the mineral exploration project in the Pueblo Viejo village, one of the closest villages to the exploration site, occurred when exploration activities have intensified. The first mobilization, in May 2018, led to the adoption of a municipal law (Municipal Agreement 020 of 2018)

which prohibited certain mining activities including exploration of metals for mid- and large-scale mining like those of Libero Cobre, as a member of the House of Representatives of Colombia who prior to 2022 had held a seat in the Putumayo's assembly explained to me. A second protest took place in early 2025, right after the annulment of the municipal law in late 2024, and the notorious acceleration of drilling activities by the mining company that followed despite the legality of its actions still being contested by other state and Indigenous Peoples' laws.

One of the earliest documents produced by Libero Cobre that I encountered thanks to an informant who shared it with me was one called "Exploration Mining-Environmental Guide", dated October 2021. The document was not a publicly available document but instead was elaborated fulfilling the requirement to provide the local environmental authority with the company's environmental management plan. I interpret the document as, above all, an act of self-regulation or self-governance in which the company outlines the rules and principles under which it would conduct its mineral exploration activities.

In page 20, of which I provide a snippet below, the company acknowledged the overlap between the mining licenses, a forest reservation, and two indigenous Resguardos from early on (Picture 19). The conclusion of the company is also clear. They affirmed that neither the communities who collectively own these Resguardos nor the forest reserve would be affected by the company's activities because, in the company's opinion, the prioritized zone of exploration was distanced from them. In any case, the company further concludes, they would directly engage with the ethnic communities through unmediated dialogue to channel expectations and build trust. Because the company alone concluded that the indigenous communities would not be affected without showing evidence of having asked them, no mention was made about obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent nor to activate the consultation processes that, according to the Judgements T-129/11 and C-395/12 of

the Constitutional Court, ought to be conducted even during the exploration phase with directly affected communities.

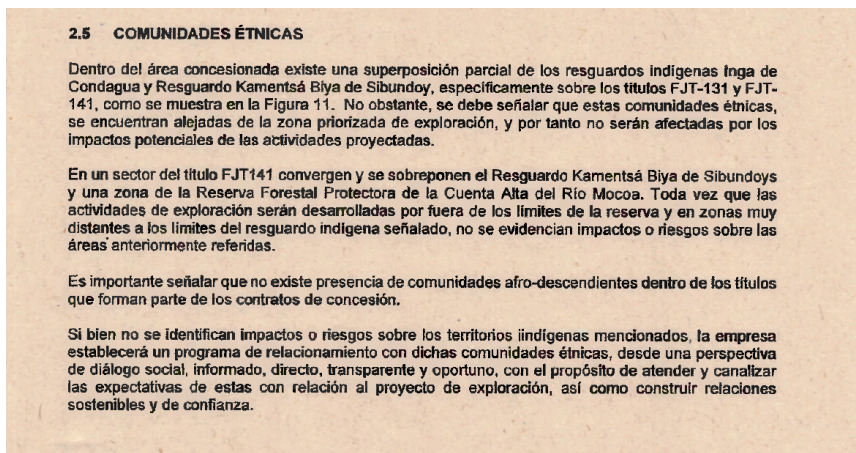


Figure 19. Snippet from Page 20 of the Exploration Mining-Environmental Guide by Libero Cobre.

In June 2022, Mocoa’s Justice Tribunal published Judgement 034 (T2DA – 024). In it, the court ordered the company to begin the consultation process with the Inga of Condagua Indigenous community, which collectively owns one of the Resguardos that the company knew were overlapping with two of their mining licenses. As stated in the judgement’s summary of the case, the company alleged that the Ministry of Interior had certified that there was no presence of Indigenous communities in the area where the exploration activities were licensed, meaning there could not be any communities affected by their activities. Moreover, they argued that they had socialized the project with over 40 communities around the municipality of Mocoa and adopted measures to compensate possible environmental damages and impacts. Based on those arguments, the company requested the court not to protect the constitutional right to self-determination of the Inga de Condagua people. Mocoa’s mayor’s office intervened too, as stated in the court’s summary of the case. In this intervention, the mayor’s office accused Libero Cobre of conducting exploration activities despite their licenses being suspended by the municipal law from 2018.

Signing the consultation agreement that the court ordered was a cause of celebration for the company. In a press release published online in late 2025 the multinational company hailed this as a milestone and provided a short historiography of the process that led to the consultation agreement. In their account, the consultation process did not begin after a court decision ordered it to start. Nor does it say that during the procedure leading to the 2022 court order, the company argued to dismiss the Inga de Condagua's right to self-determination – the very same right they boast that they protect and promote in their celebratory press release. To them, the consultation process was not ordered by Mocoa's Justice Tribunal but the result of *“a 2022 review by the Ministry of Interior confirming the procedencia (applicability) of prior consultation for the Inga Condagua Nation, arising from legal questions to earlier certifications”* (Copper Giant Resources, 2025, p. 3).

In Paper 3 we show how from the very information provided by the company, the claims made before Mocoa's Justice Tribunal were substantiated. There, we refer to a corporate radio show and a corporate newsletter. The radio show featured countless examples of interactions between the company and different communities in Mocoa. They invited the communities to bring forward to the corporate offices detailed information about their needs and grievances so that the company, in the spirit of being a good neighbour, could support them. I listened to how they boasted about their contributions to them. Every episode I listened to featured guests thanking the company for their support. A teacher expressing gratitude for the donation of electronic devices to a rural school. A sports instructor thanking them for donating equipment for kids' sports. A community organizer sharing how the company (unlike the state!) supported the construction of a church. A kid thanking them for the new tablet the company gave them. An agricultural association representative thanking them for donating input to raise hens. A local leader thanking for the help fixing a bridge and paving a road. A small business owner who makes uniforms thanking them for choosing him as supplier. On and on and on it went.

Meanwhile, from the newsletters I found that the intervention of the Mayor of Mocoa's office in the legal process was also substantiated. As the selection of newsletter in excerpts 3-6 show, in these documents the company is quick and proud to confess undertaking exploration activities during the period that the municipal law prohibiting them was in place despite being forbidden.

Excerpt 3: Newsletter dated 15th of November 2022 titled "Liberio Copper significantly expands potential size of the Mocoa deposit":

"Following the initial exceptional results from the maiden drill program, Liberio Copper continues to expand and refine the target areas surrounding the Mocoa deposit... Liberio Copper and the project team have received strong support from the local communities, municipalities, and various government agencies, and we look forward to strengthening these relationships as the project advances... Liberio Copper is currently advancing systematic exploration of the Mocoa project and is continuing the soil sampling program, prospecting and mapping across the entire district scale property".

Excerpt 4: Newsletter dated 6th of December 2022 titled "Liberio Copper extracts copper metal from the Mocoa deposit with the National University of Colombia, the first copper produced in the country":

"Liberio Copper & Gold Corporation is pleased to announce that, together with the National University of Colombia (UNAL), we have extracted metallic copper from pulp from the Mocoa copper-molybdenum deposit in Colombia".

Excerpt 5: Newsletter dated 2nd of February 2023 titled "Liberio Copper completes drill access to the Mocoa porphyry copper molybdenum project":

"Liberio Copper & Gold Corporation is pleased to announce the completion of the new San Jose access to the Mocoa porphyry copper-molybdenum project located in Putumayo, Colombia. The access is 2,100 metres in length for the transport of drills and supplies, which eliminates expensive helicopter support for drilling activities around the deposit area. In accordance with the cooperation agreement signed with Montclar (see news release November 29, 2022), the access was co-planned with the community".

Excerpt 6: Newsletter dated 7th of February 2023 titled "Liberio Copper continues to expand the potential of the Mocoa porphyry copper molybdenum deposit":

"Liberio Copper & Gold Corporation is pleased to announce that the ongoing field program has identified new occurrences of leached cap in outcrop which is consistent with the leached cap that occurs directly over the Mocoa deposit... The continuation of the systematic field mapping and sampling program has successfully located

several new areas of leached cap in outcrop immediately adjacent to the Mocoa deposit... Since July 2022, the company team has collected a total of 928 rock samples and 694 soil auger samples”.

Since the High Administrative Court’s Judgement in mid-2024 annulling the municipal law, the company clearly accelerated its exploration activities. By October 2025, as shown in excerpt 7, the company now called Copper Giant Resources had already expanded its operations. All of these activities have happened despite a regional law (Ordinance 848 of 2022) that forbids large-scale mining still being in effect:

Excerpt 7: New dated 7th of October 2025 and titled: “Copper Giant defines third high-grade porphyry core at Mocoa and confirms northern extension of Breccia corridor”

“Copper Giant Resources Corp. is pleased to report assay results from drill hole MD-049, confirming the norther extension of the Mocoa breccia corridor, and from MD-050, defining a new third high-grade core. Two drill rigs continue operating as part of Copper Giant’s 14000-metre resource expansion program at the flagship Mocoa copper-molybdenum project in Putumayo, Colombia”.

However, the Andinoamazonia, as said before, is home to hundreds of indigenous peoples and thousands of communities. In the Colombian Andinoamazonic region of Putumayo the Inga Indigenous People are organized into many communities and they are one of fifteen different Indigenous Peoples whose ancestral home is the Andinoamazonia. In mid-2025, in a press release signed by authorities of the fifteen Indigenous Peoples of the Putumayo, they manifested their steadfast opposition to the mineral exploration project and demanded the caducity of the mining licenses and the declaration of the Andinoamazonia as a sacred place subject of rights. (Paper 3).

The law configures space as it enables the assumption of a domain where practices are legitimized or not. But at the same time, acts themselves configure perceptions about what is legal or not. This requires navigating contested legalities where there is a pluriverse of ancestral and rooted territorial orders and selectively concealing

the permissions and prohibitions these orders establish. The sources enabling the domain of illegality of large-scale mineral exploration activities in the Colombian Andinoamazonia are plural. They come from the law-making and judicial powers of Colombia but also from ancestral/rooted legal systems that predate and resist those powers and are authoritative in their territorios/territories. The Colombian Andinoamazonia emerges in relation to Copper Giant Resources' mineral exploration project as a frontier whose order regarding the different prohibitions of large-scale mining activities (including exploration works) needs to be concealed and subverted for the Mocoa project to consolidate across different sectors (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018).

It only took the annulment of one of those laws for exploration activities to accelerate. That is how the ancestral and rooted territorialities that seek to configure the Andinoamazonia as a territorio/territory free of extractivism dissolve. While the dissolution is not full, because it was only one local law that was annulled, it is enough for the configuration of the territorio/territory through the acceleration of mineral exploration activities enabled by the assumption of their operating within a domain of legality. New drilling sites and holes exist now. They have names, locations, depths, and so on. Reality becomes a perception where the mineral exploration activities are legal when that status is, at best, contested. Navigating contested legalities is a corporate strategy that conceals the frontier dynamics of mineral exploration as it dissolves the ancestral and rooted territorialities. Concealing the impacts of mineral exploration makes the ethnography of the company's activities alone unreliable to know how people are experiencing this imposition of an extractivist territorial order, however. Without taking away the spotlight from the company's actions but beginning to look into the practices of defense of the Andinoamazonia, now I turn to who is being affected to reveal the second layer of concealment.

5.2.2. Fragmenting biocultural connectivities

Navigating contested legalities partially enables the imposition of an extractivist territoriality as the expansion of a frontier of extraction dissolves ancestral and rooted territorial orders. Although, by looking at that strategy alone, I cannot reveal who is affected and how. Revealing how an extractivist project configures a territorio/territory beyond its frontier dynamics requires broadening the vision too. It requires zooming out to a context where the discourses and practices of a multinational mining company can be seen next to the experiences of the peoples and communities in defence of the Andinoamazonia (Paper 3).

The creative destruction of territorial configuration refers to how this process dissolves and re-establishes socio-spatial orders (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018). In this case, the resource frontier emerges as the result of the destabilization of ancestral and rooted territorial orders as the multinational company navigates contested legalities. But the creative dimensions to territorialize mineral exploration operates through other strategies. It does so via the fragmentation of Andinoamazonic biocultural connectivities, that are expressions of ancestral/rooted forms of being, knowing, governing, and managing the territorio/territory (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Romero & Ramos-Prado, 2021).

In Paper 1, we provide evidence of a visit of the Minister of Mines and Energy to Mocoa in 2023. During the build-up to that encounter, a preparatory meeting was held where I participated as secretary to a working group discussing the spiritual dimension of the conflict associated with the mining threat looming in the mountains. The working group's discussion was presented to the Minister one day later, describing the spiritual conflict and outlining proposals to overcome it. "The mineral exploration project is fragmenting the territorio/territory, and the way forward requires seeing that everything is connected", said the grandfather who presented their discussion.

The argument of fragmentation of the territorio/territory is layered. Yet I couldn't believe my eyes when I observed the fragmentation occurring in real life in its most literal form. In Paper 3, we provide empirical evidence of the spatial imaginaries of the multinational company about the Colombian Andinoamazonia. This imaginary is the product of collecting a set of documents produced by the company including a social media post and a communication to a news agency I had privileged access to. Taken together, we show that the company recognizes that the project is on the Andean piedmont and describes this landscape as consisting of two biomes, the Andean biome and the Amazonic one. The mineral exploration project, they argue, is located on the Andean biome of the piedmont. It is not *in* the Amazon, they exclaim. It is in the Andes. They even map it (see Figure 3 in Paper 3). The frame is that the Andes and the Amazon are not connected (Paper 3). There can be no such thing as being in the Andinoamazonia. A line divides them. The Andinoamazonia has no place in this imaginary as connected biophysically, much less bioculturally.

Knowledge of the territorio/territory is an expression of the system of values derived from being in it in specific ways. The Andean Piedmont divided into two biomes is an entirely different world to the Colombian Andinoamazonia of the confluence of peoples and communities who historically wove and defend the territorio/territory. In the methodology chapter, I share a vignette about a go-along with Estella at the Inga de Condagua Resguardo. During that encounter she told me that she and her sisters were not able to come to their *chagras* due to them being outspoken in their opposition to the mineral exploration company's activities, including the consultation process (Paper 3). Going along with her, as we returned to the house where her sisters and my supervisor were cooking *maito*, she stopped and caressed a coca plant and spoke a few words in Inga. It was almost involuntary. I kept walking, not knowing exactly what she was doing. After a few steps I looked back at her. It was like she had forgotten that I was there. She gathered herself after a few moments and looked at me staring at her. "I feel guilty because I haven't taken care

of them as I should” she said as she started to catch up. A spontaneous moment of communication showing the act of being affected (Favret-Saada, 2012).

Who is the rightful community or authority is a sensitive question. The company knows this. At the start of the project, there was no community nearby that could be directly affected, according to the company’s own documentation (Figure 19). By the time they realized that flying in drills and equipment by helicopter was not viable any longer, the Montclar community had to be included to co-construct the road path as it is easy to infer from excerpts 5 (above) and 8 (below). Despite their efforts to deny the right to self-determination of the Inga de Condagua community when the latter demanded constitutional protection of their right to self-determination to the court, they were forced to conduct a consultation process. And in the end, they celebrated that they, indeed, are an example of how to conduct mineral exploration respecting Indigenous People because they, unlike others, knew who the rightful authority was.

Excerpt 8: Newsletter dated 29th of November 2022 titled “Libero Copper enters into mutual benefit agreement with the local community for the exploration of the Mocoa copper project”

“Libero Copper & Gold Corporation is pleased to announce that it has entered into a ‘Cooperation Framework Agreement for Participation and Generation of Shared Benefits’ for the exploration of the Mocoa copper-molybdenum deposit with the community of Montclar. The Montclar community is the only community near the Mocoa deposit”.

The Montclar community mentioned in Excerpt 8 is not an Indigenous community in the sense that the community is not organized as an Indigenous Cabildo that collectively owns their land thus governing and managing it in the form of an Indigenous Resguardo. There are Indigenous People who live in Montclar, which is territorially ordered as a rural village within the municipality of Mocoa. That explains why they are not mentioned in the Exploration Mining-Environmental Guide’s chapter on ethnic communities shown in the previous subsection. The company is proud to announce their engagement and agreements with the Montclar

community to their English-speaking audience. Carefully hiding, however, that in their interaction with local authorities they vehemently argued that there are no communities nearby that would be affected by their mineral exploration activities.

But the mountains of the Andinoamazonia are neither Montclar's nor Condagua's alone. These two communities may be closest to the exploration site. The latter's Resguardo even overlaps with the licensed area. It is not the only Indigenous Resguardo that does so. They are undoubtedly peoples and communities of the Andinoamazonia too. So are all the communities, organizations, action boards, cooperatives, and associations whose needs the company wanted detailed knowledge of to share how good of a neighbour they are in their radio show by providing them support through a form of solidarity economy (Scott, 1985). So are the more than forty communities with whom the company said they socialized the project during the legal process that led to the 2022 court order to start the consultation process.

The multinational company, however, is bent on fragmenting biocultural connectivities to minimize the question of who is directly affected by their activities as much as possible. Based on their own accounts, the least number of communities affected the better for their exploration endeavour. They celebrate the consultation agreement and call the Inga de Condagua community a Nation, as if they were representatives of the whole Inga people or the only ancestral owners of the mountains of the Colombian Andinoamazonia (Copper Giant Resources, 2025). These tailor-made notions of community allow the company to paint the picture to an audience with an unnuanced gaze about the Andinoamazonia that the locals are behind the project. In an extremely gross manifestation of this, the director of the company tells its shareholders in a letter that the locals feel like the project is theirs as shown in excerpt 9.

Excerpt 9: Newsletter dated 2nd of January 2025 titled “Libero Copper 2024 achievements and 2025 vision: a letter from the president and CEO Ian Harris:

“Dear shareholders,

When 2024 began, Libero Copper was already built on two solid pillars: our unique experience advancing large-scale copper projects and the tremendous Mocoa asset – one of the largest undeveloped copper-molybdenum deposits in the world... Throughout 2024, we have taken these relationships [with ‘the community’] and turned them into tangible project progress. Locally, we’ve strengthened our credibility so much that Mocoa is now ‘their’ project, not just ours.”

Fragmenting biocultural connectivities conceals the biocultural unities of the territorio/territory reflected in how people live in it and how, in turn, it lives in them. The fragmentation of the Andinoamazonia into demarked biomes conceals how the Andinoamazonia has historically been the product of biocultural weavings (Paper 3). The question of who is affected by an extractivist project is certainly not for the owner of the license to decide. However, Colombian mining law transfers that particular governance responsibility to exploration companies implicitly due to the de-regulation of mineral and fossil fuel exploration since the early 2000s, and the historical contempt with which state institutions at the national level govern the Andinoamazonia. A prime example of that contempt is the certification that there were no ethnic groups in the licensed area that the Ministry emitted to the company. I do not have evidence of that certification nor of the company lying about their actions.

As a matter of fact, I have found that it is by not lying that they best conceal. They carefully curate and script the way they narrate their own actions in documents that have varying forms and functions. For example, the large-scale nature of their operations, conducting exploration activities since 2022, and their community support appear in the newsletter because they serve the function of showing they are in business to the English-speaking world of investors and stock traders. Meanwhile, other forms of communication serve other functions. The minimization of the scale of their activities and the inexistence of affected communities belong

primarily in their interactions with government and judicial authorities. And, as I show later on, the innocent quest of pursuing knowledge for knowledge's sake is infused in their interactions with the media and the people in Mocoa.

I argue that the question of who is affected by an extractivist intervention requires a biocultural perspective (Paper 3). Bioculturality can be defined as a dynamic process, an ever-ongoing dialogue of nature and culture that re-starts and recreates itself at every turn of history that, as a perspective, seeks to integrate the biophysical properties of a space and the sociocultural properties through which it becomes a place (Romero & Ramos-Prado, 2021). The biocultural perspective reveal invisible drivers of socio-ecological losses and threats (Krause et al., 2026). The territorialization of the mineral exploration project in the Andinoamazonia establishes a territorial order in which their project is accepted socially, as the company becomes portrayed as the good neighbour they want to be seen as. That social acceptance, however, can only be proven by fragmenting the biocultural connectivities that configure the Andinoamazonia. The knowledge-practices through which the territorio/territory is historically configured by its peoples, its indissoluble biophysical and socio-cultural characteristics, and the confluence of collective identities attached to it ought to be concealed to impose the extractivist territoriality.

Here I showed several instances of Andinoamazonic biocultural connectivities being fragmented by the activities of mineral exploration. I refer to several empirical examples in and beyond the papers that show how Indigenous, Campesino, Afro-Colombian, urban, peri-urban, and rural peoples and communities are directly affected as the biocultural connections shaping their territorial relations are concealed. The life of a coca plant in the *chagra* guarded by an Inga woman is a biocultural connection of territorial management of the Andinoamazonia impaired by intra-community fragmentation over the exploration project's presence. This concealment is a form of pacification. The everyday Inga knowledge/practices of

cultivating a *chagra*, an example of a pluriverse of biocultural connectivities of the Andinoamazonia that configure the territorio/territory as a place of life, are pacified exactly when they are most needed to resist the forces of expansion/invasion of extractivist territorialities.

The experiences of pacification through which the mineral exploration project imposes an extractivist territorial order begin to appear as Andinoamazonic biocultural connectivities are concealed. But this concealment alone does not offer a full view of how the exploration project establishes a territorial order. While a territorial order starts to be visible with the fragmentation of the Andinoamazonic biocultural connectivities, it does not show exactly what this territorial order is for. To complement that view, it is necessary to go to moments of encounter to reveal the third layer of concealment. To consolidate the territorialization of extractivism, the Mocoa project needs to be sold as a dream thus concealing a nightmare and pacifying the peoples and communities in defence of the Andinoamazonia pointing it out.

5.2.3. A nightmare in a dream's disguise

The creative destruction process through which the territorialization of the mineral exploration project occurs begins to unfold. Ancestral and rooted territorial orders become destabilized as the company navigates contested legalities. Simultaneously, an extractivist territorial order becomes partially re-established through the fragmentation of biocultural connectivities. Experiences of pacification through concealment slowly become more visible. But what exactly the territorial order of mineral exploration looks like requires looking into what mineral exploration is as a practice that not only seeks to find mineral deposits but also to establish the basic foundations for a mine to be feasible. It requires showing the political ecology of mineral exploration (Paper 3).

In July 2024, one month before the annulment of the municipal law forbidding the mineral exploration project, the mineral exploration company hosted an event in Mocoa called Mining and Coexistence (Paper 3). After this carefully curated event went off-script, the national direction of the company spoke a truth (see Excerpt 3 in Paper 3). A few weeks later, as I was looking online for photographs taken by the company during the event to make sure that the identities of people who might be at risk were not exposed, I stumbled into a news report about this exploration project published by Climate Tracker Latin America (Arias Tamayo, 2024). The news report attempted a kind of neutral coverage by highlighting the different perspectives of the territorial conflict associated to the Mocoa project. However, the article relied heavily on the Colombian subsidiary's head of communications who argues that "so-called leaders" provoke conflict. I could not help but notice the resemblance of this de-legitimation tactic against social leaders and human rights defenders with that of the CDF-EB armed group (see subsection 5.1.). The territorial conflict, to the employee, is based on a baseless fear. He himself is from Mocoa, he argues, and the news report quotes him:

"I understand that people in Mocoa are afraid of a process of extraction, but an exploration process will only tell us what the territory has. That doesn't hurt anybody, not even the environment."

They are quite clear. Mineral exploration is not the practice of opening an operating a mine. Rather, it is to know if that can be done. I do not doubt them even though we show how it already affects the biocultural landscape (Paper 3). The knowledge they are behind of is not neutral nor harmless, nor is the process of gathering it as shown earlier. Mineral exploration, quite simply, seeks to enable the further territorialization of extractivism. As Olofsson (2020a, 2020b, 2025) suggests, the role of explorers is to sell a dream of a mine. In that sense, the directors of Libero Cobre are not lying when they say that they will not open a mine. Again, by not lying they conceal most effectively. They will sell the licenses to someone who can, of course. That is the business of mineral exploration (Olofsson, 2020b). Ideally,

they will sell for an amount that covers return of investment and profit. This means that the mineral exploration company needs to portray something attractive to those who have the political and economic power to (i) buy-in to the exploration endeavour expecting a short- to mid-term return of investment, or (ii) purchase the license when it is ripe, and proceed to open, operate, and police the mine. The Canadian multinational company is paving the road to a mine. And the road better not be disturbed by locals. They ought to be decoration not obstacles. They have to be portrayed as behind the project. And if they aren't, then it is necessary to divide them in order to show only those who are, or whose favour the company has earned. This truth that the company representatives so easily and clearly say – that they will not open a mine – is powerfully concealing. The company needs to strategically disguise a well-known nightmare.

The territorialization of mineral exploration fragments Andinoamazonic biocultural connectivities in order to create what I term as a *preliminary territorial order*. This preliminary order, or preliminary territoriality, creates a climate of fear and anticipation regarding the possibility of a new, large-scale extractivist intervention, a nightmare. However, the preliminary itself, that they are not going to open a mine (chiefly because they do not have the capacity to do so), is useful to conceal the material end goals of the project – large scale mineral extraction – by disguising their activities with the robes of the noble quest of the pursuit of knowledge.

Disguising the nightmare as a noble pursuit is a mighty concealer. Its function is to cloak with a veil of invisibility the vast constellation of ancestral and rooted knowledge practices that configure the Andinoamazonia that are held and defended by those who oppose the project. Such ontoepistemological manoeuvre symbolically empties the territorio/territory of the pluriverse of knowledge practices that configure it and de-legitimizes its practitioners as agents that configure it. The territorio/territory is thus rendered discoverable. The doctrine of discovery in action (Fitzpatrick, 2008). The noble pursuit of knowledge has never been so noble in

modern/colonial times (Tsing, 2005). In this case, it serves a key function to impose and sustain a territorial order that permits the expansion of an extractivist frontier. To sell a secure, feasible mine dream, they paint a convincing picture suggesting that the socio-spatial order that paves the road for a large-scale mine is going to be upheld and that it is was never an imposition but a discovery (Paper 3). A nightmare in a dream's disguise.

So far, I have shown that, through violence and concealment, the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia during this period has been experienced as a multifaceted form of pacification. However, that does not say much about how the peoples and communities of the Andinoamazonia re-exist in the territorio/territory through their politics of opposition and alternatives to armed conflict and extractivism. Pacification as a form of concealment does not remove their agency nor deterritorializes them to the extent that ancestral and rooted territorialities are extinguished (Paper 3). Rather, they adapt. They re-exist.

6. Andinoamazonic re-existences

Daily experiences of territorial configuration in the Colombian Andinoamazonia as a form of pacification driven by practices of violence and concealment through which territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism are imposed paints only a partial view. The Andinoamazonia is also shaped by everyday practices of re-existence through which ancestral and rooted territorialities resurge. Such view offers insight into the contingency of Andinoamazonic re-existence and territorial defense more broadly.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) conceive of contingency to explain how structures, identities, and meanings are never total nor fixed in space and time. Place-based approaches to sustainability echo this idea of contingency in order to explain how places are not sedentary either, but rather they are continually evolving through different temporal, spatial, and social scales (MacGillivray & Franklin, 2015). Similarly, the process of territorial configuration is a continuous becoming through which territorial orders are dissolved and re-established thereby affecting how territorios/territories are known, governed, and managed (Betancourt-Santiago, 2023; Rasmussen & Lund, 2018). In the case of the Colombian Andinoamazonia, I view the confluence of ancestral and rooted territorialities as expressions of re-existence (Paper 3). These are everyday practices of a variety of agents in defense of the Andinoamazonia. They simultaneously contest the imposition of exogenous territorialities (like those of armed conflict and extractivism) and enact a pluriverse of ancestral and rooted ways of being, knowing, governing, and managing the territorio/territory.

6.1. Contesting imposed territorialities

In paper 1, we show a discursive confrontation with underlying material and spiritual dimensions associated to the life generating abilities of the selva. The selva is the name for the pluriverse of systems of production through which ancestral and rooted territorialities are named and take shape in the Colombian Andinoamazonia (Lyons, 2016, 2020). The selva is a source of life and medicine, a system of biocultural reproduction. It is not the same thing as a forest. The selva entered the meeting with the environmental authority both in word and in practice (Paper 1). A male howler monkey was one of its representatives in the meeting. Like the people yelling selva every time they heard the word forest, he interrupted the state official on several occasions too with deep and loud howls. The audience giggled. I could tell that the composition of the audience could not be captured within one category of Indigenous, Campesino, or Afro-Colombian. Neither could it be entirely captured by categories like farmer, social leader, or environmental human rights defender. It was a heterogenous group. A confluence. And they were there defending the Andinoamazonia discursively. Against words perceived to legitimize imposed practices to govern and manage the territorio/territory as a forest they yelled selva.

I find this to be an instance that speaks to Kristina Lyons' analysis about how Andinoamazonic people have cultivated eyes for the selva, which to her refers to more than just a gaze of the tropical rainforest. Lyons affirms that the selva "is a mode of relating or, better yet, of learning to think relationally... For these farmers, bosque [forest] potentially simplifies this complexity, given that it can refer to a single species of tree" (Lyons, 2014, p. 223). Moreover, she argues that the practice of cultivating eyes for the selva transcends the emergence of an environmental subjectivity because through these practices people also *configure the selva* through temporalities that exceed the temporal boundaries of state politics and even social mobilization (Lyons, 2016). Throughout the period of negotiation and early implementation of the 2016 peace accords, she also traced the emergence of

campesino subjectivities such as “selvasinos”. They differentiated themselves from the idea of the *colono campesino* – a category historically tied to the migrant and also marginalized population claiming and colonizing land in the Andinoamazonia – by positioning themselves as aides of the selva’s process of recolonizing farms and minds (Lyons, 2020; Ramírez, 2021; Van Dexter & Ingalls, 2022).

The discursive tension between the forest and the selva reflects an onto-epistemological conflict between different actors who claim to know, thus advancing specific ways to govern and manage, the territorio/territory. The selva as a heterogenous mode of production and reproduction promotes territorial orders in the Andinoamazonia that contest the imposition of territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism (Paper 1). The enactment of these ancestral and rooted territorialities advances some of the objectives of the peace agreement such as rural reform, political participation, and territorially focused alternative development within the realm of possibilities allowed by the selva (Papers 1 and 2).

In June 2025, two years after the encounter between the forest and the selva (Paper 1), the local environmental authority of the Colombian Amazon passed an environmental regulation that declared the mountains of Mocoa as an area of high environmental sensitivity. In it, they ordered a land-use vocation for environmental conservation and agroecology in the area (Corpoamazonia, 2025). Furthermore, it ordered the suspension of all licenses and permissions for the exploitation of metallic minerals, the construction of roads, the diversion of rivers and water bodies, and the concession of water for industrial activities, among other things. This resolution drew upon a wide source of scientific knowledge including geography, geology, ecology, land-use science, hydrology, etc. and showed the multidimensional environmental sensitivities of the Colombian Andinoamazonia leading to the conclusion that large-scale mining activities go against the recommended land-use in the territorio/territory. The showed a generous amount of knowledge about the territorio/territory that already inhabits and configures it.

A lot of people celebrated this resolution. I remember sitting in my office receiving messages attaching the 186-page document. Later on, the representatives of several different Indigenous communities of the Andinoamazonia sued the local environmental authority because it imposed an environmental conservation territoriality without consulting them. The District Court of Mocoa, through Judgement No. 2025-0075 published the 10th of November 2025, suspended the environmental regulation to protect the claimants' right to self-determination. This situation made visible the fears and discomforts that the people yelling selva every time they heard the representative of the environmental authority speak of forest when talking about the territorio/territory. The authority proved that they remained locked in the same way of knowing, governing, and managing the Andinoamazonia as a forest that a few years before had started to enter into tension with the defenders of the Andinoamazonian selva.

During the last decade, Andinoamazonian peoples and communities with historically common struggles for territorial peace with social justice found avenues to advance their causes through the government-led implementation of the 2016 peace accords (Paper 2). Historical demands for rural reform, recognition of collective identities, and enhancement of political participation were incorporated into the peace agreement's programs. These avenues were opened for both struggles seeking to recognize new claims to territorio/territory, collective identity, and political participation but also to advance already existing ones (Paper 2). However, this proved to be far from a panacea. Taking part in them became a driver of violence against social leaders and environmental human rights defenders and other grassroots initiatives for territorial peace with social justice, like the PLADIA 2035, were partially deprioritized by the peace accords' programs (Paper 2).

The commonality of these historical struggles for peace and justice cannot be understood as a homogeneity. In research prior to my PhD, I had already hinted at this when I highlighted that the struggles through which Andinoamazonian

communities make a stand for memory and place do not exclusively contest imposed territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism but also can occur between different communities (Samper, 2021). Chaves et al. (2020) spoke of endogenous tensions to describe how the promises of peace and social justice that underlie struggles for territorio/territory in the Andinoamazonia, have also led to land tenure hybridizations between the collective and the individual. They interpret this hybridization as a strategy to redress historical injustices associated with the imposed territorial configurations of armed conflict and the systematically unfulfilled promises from the pluriethnic, multiculturalist regime of Colombia.

In the previous chapter I showed an example of these endogenous tensions. The fifteen Indigenous Peoples of the Putumayo, including representatives of the Inga people, manifested their opposition to extractivism, demanding the caducity of the mining licenses of the Mocoa project as well as the protection of the mountains of Mocoa as a subject of rights. The Inga de Condagua community nonetheless signed a consultation agreement with the multinational company and during the process members of this community like Estella and her sisters were threatened to the point that they could not go back to tend their *chagras*. On top of that, the multinational company celebrated the consultation agreement and pointed out that they, unlike the local environmental authority that tried to protect the Andinoamazonia without respecting the self-determination of indigenous peoples, knew who the right authority was. As shown in excerpt 10, they problematically refer to the Inga de Condagua community as a Nation, a word used in North American Indigenous politics to refer to a People, like the Inga People whose representatives signed the statement mentioned earlier or like the Kamëntšá People whose Biya de Sibundoy community's Resguardo also overlaps with the licensed area and no consultation process has been started with them.

Excerpt 10: Newsletter dated 9th of October 2025 titled: “Copper Giant completes prior consultation agreement with Inga Condagua, securing full social license at Mocoa”

“The Agreement with the Inga Condagua Nation is authoritative because, under Colombia’s intercultural framework and ILO-169, only Condagua may represent itself... This approach has practical force. As a recent example, in September 2025 the Third Civil Court of Mocoa (the “Court”) suspended Resolution 0631 after finding procedural faults in prior consultation—including tutelas filed by the Inga Condagua Nation. While Copper Giant previously clarified (June 25, 2025) that 0631 did not apply to its existing titles and permitted activities, the Court’s decision underscores why direct, lawful consultation with the rightful authority matters.”

The opposition to the forest was a discursive contestation against the imposition of territorialities, but from a position of self-determination and autonomy. That opposition is fickle. It is not exempt from tensions within. And these tensions can be used to advance extractivist territorialities. In this case it is clear that the self-determination of a community is given by a multinational company a weight that raises an important question about who the rightful authorities are, what for, and whose self-determination ought to be respected in relation to a project like the Mocoa project. The mountains of Mocoa are the ancestral home of a lot of Indigenous Peoples who live in hundreds of communities, many of which radically oppose the mineral exploration project. Moreover, the intervention of the environmental authority, while attempting to defend the Andinoamazonia, did not succeed precisely because it reproduced the marginalization that during the meeting a few years earlier the confluence of people yelling *selva* were cautioning about.

Contesting imposed territorialities in the Andinoamazonia has led to a confluence of peoples and communities whose struggles for land reclamation and political participation are common but differentiated. But contestation alone is limited. Here I show two expressions of its limits. Endogenous tensions may arise along the way of organizing around historically common struggles and some interventions, however noble, may hinder the fundamental value of autonomy underlying these reclamation of rights to land and political participation. In parallel, and equally important to the contestation of imposed territorialities, the daily practices of countless people and communities shape the territorio/territory in ways that revitalize ancestral and rooted ways of being in, knowing, governing and managing

it. Like drops of water falling from a rock onto the stream of a creek that in turn flows down between crevices as it makes its way towards becoming a river, myriad instances of daily practices are enacted from where the Andinoamazonia constantly re-emerges.

6.2. A confluence of alternatives

It is in Paper 3 where I settled for the term Andinoamazonia instead of Andean-Amazon in English as used in the previous papers. This is a result of a conversation with Paper 3's co-author regarding form. Andinoamazonia works both in English and Spanish. But more importantly, avoiding the hyphen in Andean-Amazon was a relevant aesthetic intervention in favour of reflecting the territorio/territory's biocultural connectivities by merging linguistically into one unhyphenated word that which is connected bioculturally into one territorio/territory. The word Andinoamazonia is the product of territorial weaving. And so is the biocultural landscape it describes. The biocultural wealth of the Andinoamazonia emerges daily from practices that weave ancestral and rooted territorialities and is maintained through a dynamic process of confluence of these Andinoamazonian knowledge/practices.

Here I provide two short ethnographic vignettes that illustrate this confluence. Confluences, as said before, is a term used by the peoples and communities defending the Andinoamazonia, as well as local scholars, as they come together in common struggles (Rincon Florez, 2022). It is a metaphor of the behaviour of water as it flows down the Andinoamazonian landscapes until it becomes mighty rivers. I see confluence as the political movement of agua-cuerpos-territorios/water-bodies-territories to defend themselves (Zaragocin, 2024). These vignettes contain two scenes of a pluriverse of practices so big and wide that no ethnography could capture. They illustrate two cases of confluence. In the first one, I show how a group

of people comes together and dialogue around the question of caring for the Andinoamazonia. The topics covered in the dialogue, as well as some of the interventions, are accounts that seek to make sense of all the different things encompassed in the word Andinoamazonia. Confluence here is inter-relational, the act of coming together, of organizing around a place where a flame can be lit. In the second one, I provide an account of a go-along with Luna. To me, Luna embodies one of many different ways of being in and knowing the Andinoamazonia as a biocultural landscape, where the biophysical and the socio-cultural are intertwined in histories, languages, and daily practices. These vignettes provide a glimpse of how ancestral and rooted relations to the Andinoamazonia also configure the territorio/territory by advancing a confluence of alternatives through which it re-exists against the imposition of territorial orders.

The historical struggles for the defense of the Andinoamazonia are narrated as a confluence of ancestral and popular knowledge/practices that configure the territorio/territory in daily life. The confluence appears materially and discursively in objects and practices such as mandalas and harmonization rituals that serve particular functions in encounters with agents like the multinational company and public institutions. By invoking places like the mountains of Mocoa as a living being to different Indigenous Peoples (Figure 3 in Paper 3), known through a variety of names that encode cosmovisions and biocultural connectivities like *Iaku Wasi* and *Alpa Mama* (Inga), *Tabanok* and *Tsabatsán Mama* (Kamëntšá), the Andinoamazonia emerges as a sacred world of many worlds (Paper 3).

6.2.1. Back to seeds of re-existence

It was the first week of November 2023 in the middle of the afternoon. This specific week was packed with events commemorating the week of native seeds. It could be seen as part of the selva's broad process of recolonizing farms and minds (Lyons, 2020). This gathering was one of the commemoration's first events and its aim was

to open a dialogue about the Andinoamazonia, its meaning and its care. The gathering happened at a community hall resembling a Maloca, which is a traditional indigenous community house. This resemblance was mostly felt inside. We sat down on the wooden floor around a *tulpa*.

“How do we take care of native seeds in the Andinoamazonia?” was written as the title on a portable whiteboard that lied in front of the tulpa (Picture 20). We were about twenty people. We began with an exercise of presenting ourselves with an Andinoamazonic seed instead of our names. Thinking of Estella and her sisters, I chose sirindango. For about 90 minutes, we held a dialogue about taking care of the Andinoamazonia and the role that cosmovision, knowledge, memory, practice, and the commonalities of social struggle play in constructing its meaning and relations.



Figure 20. How do we take care of native seeds in the Andinoamazonia? Photo taken by the author.

The dialogue began with the role of Andinoamazonic music and arts. We also covered the 2017 torrential avenue in Mocoa that claimed so many lives and continues to live as a shadow lurking over the survivors’ hearts and minds. The territorial weaving implicit in the word Andinoamazonia, and the reclamations of the indigenous peoples of the High-Putumayo, like the Kamëntšá, for recognition as Andinoamazonic came up too. We talked about the invisible world and the people who tell the stories about the invisible spirits of the mountain and the selva. I thought

about a song from my childhood about singing with the voices of the mountain. Luna said that the Andinoamazonia is so sacred that it does not need to be blessed by any priest, so one must appreciate it by knowing and recognizing what it has, the life it gives.

The people that were gathered in the maloca with me had different identities and backgrounds as so often happens in these kinds of Andinoamazonic encounters. Like Miguelito, a Kamëntšá taxi driver who said to me that he had been civilized and that was why he couldn't speak his mother language, some of the people around me fit the categories of Indigenous, Campesino, or Afro-descendant in their own ways. In the room I was in, however, I heard many stories of people's past and current struggles, each one being different from the other, but all of them told together, in confluence, in common becoming, in defense of the Andinoamazonia.

Sacha Inchi, a Campesino man who lives in a farm on the edges of Mocoa with his wife, pointed out that the mobilization of the campesinos cocaleros in the 1990s was a pivotal event in the historical trajectory of the defense of the Andinoamazonia. Many agreed. Luna added that to her it was important to recognize that the history of social mobilization in defense of the Andinoamazonia goes back centuries and that it is inextricably linked to the waves of colonization that have taken place and sedimented on the territorio/territory. Arazá, an environmental activist from Mocoa, added that to her it was crucial to validate the confluence of struggles and of historic events that have led to the present context. She added that the word Andinoamazonic is a term that has been appropriated by the confluence of peoples and communities in defense of this territorio/territory for a reason, to unite around the territorio/territory like we did around the *tulpa*.

The Andinoamazonia was not necessarily a widespread concept during the time that the Father Alcides was alive as he handed out the seeds of Mother Earth. I attended the monthly ethno-campesina fair in Mocoa several times. The communal hall on the way to the Pepino River where it is celebrated since 2017 as a means to support

Indigenous and Campesino victims of the torrential avenue was crowded sometimes. And sometimes it was not. On this one occasion, during the commemoration of the Andinoamazonic native seeds in 2023, it was packed. I remember overhearing a teenager selling some seeds while his mother was away from the stand. He would say “amen” every time he made a sale. He made me and several other people smile. A person queuing behind me to pay for handicrafts asked their companion where he got the Sacha Inchi seeds. “From little Alcides back there” he replied. I wondered if the teenager knew anything about the real Alcides. I wondered if he had heard of this priest who also said amen handing over seeds in church in Puerto Caicedo instead of hosts. The priest who defended the Andinoamazonia and was shot before he was born. Seeds cultivating the Andinoamazonia.

Throughout my research, I have noted how the word Andinoamazonia enters the language of the Putumayo’s local politics around the mid-2010, in the aftermath of the National Agrarian, Ethnic, and Popular Strike from 2014. In the case of the Colombian Andinoamazonia, the PLADIA 2035 was a concrete political result of this mobilization that coined the term Andinoamazonia from the outset, from its title. Here the notion of Andinoamazonia commences a process of consolidation within the discourse of the confluence of peoples and communities in defence of the territorio/territory, life, peace, and democracy. Although the implementation of the PLADIA 2035 lost import due to the arrival of the peace agreement’s programs of territorially focused development and illicit crop substitution, the legacy of these histories of struggles found an avenue into the regional law mentioned in Chapter 5: the Departmental Ordinance 848 of 2022 which outlines the elements of a public policy for a campesino, pluriethnic, communitarian, and family-based Andinoamazonic agriculture (Jimenez, 2022).

In her work of gender and peace in the Colombian Andinoamazonia during the aftermath of the 2016 accords, Rincon Florez (2022) argued that women cannot be

portrayed only as victims of what she called the avalanche of pain of this historical period. To her, the Colombian Andinoamazonia is a hydrosocial territorio/territory, showing how water, bodies, and land are ontologically united. She shows that from these unities a range of ethical, spiritual, and political ways of living the in the Andinoamazonia emerge and are a source of collective agency that configures the territorio/territory as they find each other. Like the waters, she concludes, through unity women become stronger. My view of confluence is inspired by her approach. Practices become the source of resurgence and collective agency when those who enact them find each other in encounters that become scenarios of territorial defence. However, these scenarios are not the only domain of confluence that sustain collective agency. Another realm is that of the dynamics of ancestral and rooted subjectivities that configure the territorio/territory, to which now I turn.

6.2.2. Ethnocampesinology

The go-along with Luna began a lot before than I expected. Those days people were complaining about the cold in Mocoa. Some even wore jackets. An uncommon sight even in the mid-Putumayo. The cold weather had to be the first topic. But it was not. It was Luna's son. She had just dropped him off to football practice before meeting me in the roundabout where the Colombia and San Francisco avenues cross. "He has a football fever", she said. We met by the 24-hour bakery called Santopán (Holy Bread). I hopped onto her bike without realizing that the go-along was beginning. Our destination was the mountain. The cold weather was the second topic. That's when the go-along started, thinking back. "My knowledge says that the selva has a harmony or a balance", she said. "That's why if it is cold here, it is hot somewhere else". We stopped in a traffic light before climbing the hill towards the old town of Mocoa. The motorcycle struggled with the uphill. Luna threw kisses at the bike as we climbed slowly. "Hiya!" she yelled. As the end of the slope was near, we were laughing after she confessed that she treats her bike as a horse.

The bike needed gas and we made our way towards a gas station. On the way, I was thinking about when to start the go-along, convinced it had not started yet. She suddenly asked me if I was aware that after giving birth you have to sign a document if you want to keep your placenta. “The placenta! Something so internal and personal”. I hesitated, unsure what to say. “It’s the woman’s, not the hospital’s!”. We arrived at the gas station. The horse was riding empty. “Gimme five thousand pesos of gas, please... With no water mixed in and a little bit of love, if you can be so kind”, she said to the guy operating the station. Then she looked at me. “Do you drive a motorcycle?” I said no. “Car? Mule? Horse?”. Bicycle I replied. “Look at the counter, *veci*” the operator said. She received a little bit of love. Received six thousand and paid five. I smirked. Precisely that same morning I had read the national news, which is to say the news from Bogotá. The opposition was complaining that the government’s gasoline subsidies were too high and the government was risking breaking its expense rules. Long live solidarity, I thought, and resistance.

The Churumbelo, the diagonal horizon of Mocoa that descends towards the Amazon from the Andean heights, was clear and green (Figure 20). I mentioned how pretty it looked. We were stuck in a stop-and-go – a term used to describe when the two-lane Andinoamazonic have only one lane available, usually due to small landslides. A woman holding a stop and go sign and a walkie-talkie controlled the traffic. Her partner was on the other side of the signal. In our tongue it is called “Auka Wasi”, Luna said, referring to the Churumbelo. *A house with no name* in Inga. That is where the *aukas* live. Auka, an Inga word that means both nameless and savage. “An old word”, I commented. “As old as history. I remember that the grandfathers spoke of the aukas”, said Luna. “I heard that some people call this the door of the jaguar”, I said after a short pause that to me felt long. “Oh yes. The grandfathers speak of people who would go missing around here. There was a tiger [jaguar] that made people disappear. That was before this land was called Colombia, before the Putumayo even. And when the colonizers came, the Indigenous People killed the

tiger. The tiger turned human, they say. That’s how the fury disappeared.” Powerful metaphor, I said. “It is true! I don’t doubt it for a second”, Luna replied quickly. I worried. I hoped I didn’t ruin the whole go-along before it even started. As if it had not already started.



Figure 21. Mocoa and the Churumbelo in the background. Photograph taken by the author.

We crossed the Caliyaco River. The water was green. “The Rumiayaco River is so green when it is sunny”, I commented. “Here it is the Caliyaco”, Luna said. “It is only upriver that it is called Rumiayaco. Rumi is stone in Inga. Here it is Caliyaco because people collect limestone (cal in Spanish) from over there”, she said as she pointed to the riverbanks. A bilingual word. “Further down”, she continued, “it is called Dantayaco because the Dantas (tapir in English – see the Cover) sometimes go there to drink water”. I thought about the names of things and their performativity, the names associated to practices. I knew from earlier that yaco means water in Inga. I thought about how the Putumayo and Caquetá rivers, two of the biggest Andinoamazonic affluents to the Amazon River change name when they cross the border to Brazil and become the Içá and Japurá. A biocultural and a geopolitical one that change the names of things that cross them.

“And how do you call the Pepino River”, I asked curiously when I noticed we were crossing it. “I don’t know”, she said. “There are ancestral names that we have lost. Imagine how beautiful it would be to research the ancestral names of our different beings. To be able to call them by their name, the ancestral one, not the baptized one. The Pepino is auka in some way, now... Look, we arrived! Here is where we walk to the mountain”. Along the way I hoped to bring the topic of *ethnocampesinology*. She had presented herself that way a few days earlier during the gathering kicking off the commemoration of the Andinoamazonic native seeds and it sparked my curiosity about where the term came from and what she meant by it. That is when I thought the go-along would start.

We started walking and I tried to control the conversation by reminding her that she had used the word *ethnocampesinologist* to describe herself and that I wished to know where it came from. “It comes from encountering so many professionals” she started and then looked at the Mocoa river which we were crossing over a metallic hanging bridge with wooden tiles (Figure 21). She leered and carried on “There are very sensitive scientists and scholars who come here to work. They like to introduce themselves when they meet us. A lot of them speak like this. They say, ‘I am a *something-logist*’. Logists, logists, logists, logists. And then I looked at myself and said, my father is Indigenous, my mother is a Campesina, so Luna is an *ethnocampesinologist*. Easy. I don't put my father aside. I don't put my mother aside. I usually walk around with things that identify me. Sometimes I wear some elements that identify the countryside, the normal rural campesina woman. And well, that’s how I came up with it, in the context of a beautiful thing that is the defence of life...”. An iconically ancestral and rooted explanation.



Figure 22. The Mocoa river from the bridge during the go-along with Luna. Photograph taken by the author.

After crossing the Mocoa river we began climbing the Churumbelo which no longer looked like the diagonal horizon we saw from the road. Now we were walking up its slopes. I told her that I had encountered the term *ethnocampesino*, or *ethnocampesina* to be precise, before. I pointed out the *ethnocampesina* fair as an example. But I said I had never encountered it as *ethnocampesinology*, as connected to *logy*, a field of study and knowledge. She stopped and pointed out at a yage vine. “Let us sit here”. I wondered if she was suggesting to me that I sat or asking permission to the invisible spirit of the yage plant to sit and use it as an object of dialogue. I sat down after her just to be sure. By then she was already tapping the ground next to her indicating where she wanted me to sit. We were close to her house. I could hear a sound of a creek flowing down to the Mocoa river. Then she said:

“Look, I just think it is nice to know that I can dialogue on the same ground with the professionals while carrying with me the thinking of the campesino according to which I can say something about any given situation. Things can be this or that way from the campesino worldview. But also carrying the ancestral thinking from the dialogues with the grandparents, with the grandmothers, with my Inga ancestors, and conclude and say, of course, that situation can also be that other way. So, for example, in the campesino tradition you know that the *rastrojo* [fallen dry leaves] is part of the cycle and you need it to fixate nitrogen in the soil. The Inga ancestral knowledge says that some things can only be harvested depending on the moon cycle like the *guadua*. In the Inga cosmivision we have a spirituality about asking permission to the invisible spirits in order to use the mountain’s beings for food and medicine and my mother also said it was important to thank god before eating dinner. These are things become blended when I work on my *chagra*.”

Luna embodies an example of Andinoamazonic confluences where many layers of ancestral and rooted ways of being and knowing the Andinoamazonia combine. Despite their disappearance through centuries of colonization, pan-Amazonic language diversity continues to be among the highest in the world. This linguistic diversity is a pluriversal repository of socio-ecological knowledges encoding detailed taxonomies of living things, weather cycles, landscapes, and rules and practices governing and managing their uses and effects (Krause et al., 2026). In previous research, I suggested that the imposition of territorialities of conflict produces detachment and oblivion which could be described as processes of deterritorialization (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018). However, this would lead to suggesting something contradictory if some forms of territorial configuration are implicitly taken to mean they bring the end of territorios/territories (Haesbaert, 2013).

The way I see it now, the destabilization of ancestral and rooted territorialities through the imposition of territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism does not mean the elimination but the concealment of the former (Paper 3). There is a process of adaptation undertaken by the peoples and communities defending ancestral and rooted territorialities which is integral to the friction that characterizes processes of territorial configuration. Ancestral and rooted knowledge practices that configure territorios/territories are not static. They are not nostalgic objects of a traditional

past. On the contrary, they are present acts of constant resurgence that are performed and made sense of by their practitioners in different ways that serve different purposes. Ethnocampesinology serves a function, particularly in research encounters where the matter of who the knower is does not follow the traditional assumption of it being the researcher. The term borrows the academic technique of latinizing practices to give them the agency of producing knowledge in order to vindicate the ethnocampesino practices as effects of ancestral and rooted ways of shaping the territorio/territory. This is another way confluence operates. Ancestral and rooted Andinoamazonic territorialities re-exist in the daily practices of the peoples who reclaim them as contingent forms of being in, knowing, governing, and managing the territorio/territory.

7. Conclusion

During my PhD process, I set out to ethnographically inquire how the Colombian Andinoamazonia has been territorially configured in relation to armed conflict, extractivism, and resistance and what the daily experiences of this process of territorial configuration have been like. The current cycle of peacebuilding presented a strong context during the time the research took place. It is characterized by the simultaneous implementation of the 2016 peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government and the continuation of peacebuilding through government led programs called Peace with Legality (2018-2022) and Total Peace (2022-present) (Paper 2). The peace agreement signed in 2016 renewed the promises of territorial peace with social justice with its territorially focused programs that prioritized, among other territorios/territories, the Colombian Andinoamazonia (Paper 1). However, I found that during this period, the armed conflict reconfigured and an old extractivist project reactivated as armed actors – state and non-state – and a multinational company deploy a set of practices driving daily experiences often described as pacification (Papers 1 and 3).

Pacification here refers to the way that the practices and discourses of actors that impose the territorialities of armed conflict and extractivism are experienced as they foreclose, spatially and temporally, ancestral and rooted Andinoamazonic territorialities from being expressed and enacted. My doctoral thesis provides empirical evidence of these experiences of pacification such as the militarization of environmental protection and discursive co-optation of popular struggles for peace and territorio/territory by state and non-state armed actors (Paper 1), the deadly violence against environmental human rights defenders that makes the Colombian

Andinoamazonia infamously violent to defend these rights (Paper 2), and corporate strategies of concealment of the legal status, biocultural impacts, and material objectives of mineral exploration (Paper 3).

I also find that the experiences of pacification, and therefore the territorial orders imposed by the reconfiguration of armed conflict and the opening of a frontier of extraction, are not total. They enter into friction with the territorial orders of ancestral and rooted peoples and communities who resist and enact alternatives to them. The latter order the territorio/territory through daily practices that constantly revitalize ancestral and rooted ways of being in, knowing, governing, and managing the Andinoamazonia. I argue that they result from a confluence of practices of Andinoamazonian re-existence that also configure the territorio/territory. Altogether, the territorial configuration of the Colombian Andinoamazonia looks rather like a dynamic and motley imbrication of territorialities.

These experiences are not exclusive to the Colombian Andinoamazonia. The reconfiguration of armed conflict in Colombia continues to have territorially differentiated effects and manifestations throughout the country. How the practices through which armed conflict is territorialized during recent, present, and future peacebuilding cycles, demands continued research attention. In that regard, the upcoming elections in Colombia might constitute a new turning point in the country's peacebuilding agenda since the Total Peace programs failures have been well demonstrated (Human Rights Watch, 2026). More broadly, a view of armed conflict and peacebuilding as cyclical provides nuanced and valuable perspectives about temporal features such as intensification and de-escalation given the challenges faced by peace agreements to address root causes of conflicts (Höglund & Kovacs, 2010; Tellez, 2019).

Moreover, more than half of the critical mineral deposits for an energy transition are on or adjacent to land-connected peoples' territories (Lèbre et al., 2020; Owen et al., 2023). This means that the opening of extractivist frontiers as well as the

reactivation of exploration projects with suspiciously long temporalities under the discursive guise, and without clear material connections, with the energy transition, demands critical attention (Paper 3). I think that it is necessary to critically interrogate what I identify as a widespread assumption that all critical mineral exploration projects are inherently tied to legitimate energy transition objectives. This requires sustaining ongoing efforts to critically inquire how state and corporate actors deploy transition frames and to identify the nuances in relation to transition-driven interventions and the territorialities of extractivism and conflict that they impose. A tragedy of the energy transition would be it turning into one of the most profound examples of territorial coloniality in this day and age given the location of deposits, the temporalities of exploration and extraction activities, and the material interests behind them.

Regarding place-based approaches to sustainability science, I think that continued and sustained ethnographic research offers valuable insights about how places are configured. As mentioned before and shown by my research, the imposition of extractivist territorialities resulting from the expansion/invasion of green extractivism threatens ancestral and rooted territorial orders. The reconfigurations of armed conflict and war in the present decade in different locations demand that critical researchers persist showing the brutal and often inhuman ways they configure territorios/territories through the annihilation of life as seen in the eco/genocide currently perpetrated by Israel against the people and territorio/territory of Palestine. Most importantly, the daily practices through which land-connected peoples oppose these impositions while enacting alternative and liveable futures, even in the midst of the most heinous conditions of existence, mandates enduring consideration and visibilization. The antidote to concealment begins with visibilization. In relation to all of the above, ethnographic endeavours offer privileged, insightful, and engaged perspectives.

In this sense, the concept of confluence and other autochthonous metaphors constitute themselves promising avenues to renew theories seeking to explain people-place relations with a biocultural perspective. This is particularly important in the broader Amazon region given the variegated visible and invisible drivers of biocultural diversity loss that demand that researchers transcend hegemonic perspectives about these territorios/territories being mainly biodiversity hotspots and carbon sinks (Krause et al., 2026). The Amazon region is configured by an intricate interconnection of ecological, social, and political process that continue to shape it (Franco Cassino et al., 2025; Levis et al., 2024). People who live in the territorio/territory that, in turn, lives in and through them.

Therein lies what I think is the core message of Father Carlos's words to the Minister with which I opened the dissertation. The reserve of spiritualities means that the Andinoamazonia is an invaluable repository of sophisticated human ecological knowledge practices. Their resurgence is a matter that place-based approaches to sustainability science ought to continue defending persistently. My research ultimately suggests that the protection of bioculturally diverse places, such as the Andinoamazonia, hinges on actively and constantly encouraging conditions that enable ancestral and rooted territorialities to flourish. For the case of the Amazonia, the empirical evidence supporting this is already extensive (Duarte Ritter et al., 2025; Fa et al., 2020; Garnett et al., 2018). From my perspective, this endeavour involves making visible the actions of public and corporate actors when they fail—fully or partially—to uphold internationally recognized rights to self-determination and autonomy. It also requires showing how these failures affect land-connected peoples' autonomy. Furthermore, it entails opening channels through which nation-states meaningfully cede land, authority, and resources to these peoples. Doing so will further enable them to govern and manage their territorios/territories which strengthens their capacity to withstand the external economic and political pressures through which territorialities of death are imposed.

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