Research Article

Natures, territories and the *Breath of Life.*

The maintenance of *Jagɨyɨ or Jafaikɨ* among the Murui people in the present, Colombian Amazon

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Received: 1 September 2025 | **Accepted:** 14 November 2025 | **Published:** 7 December 2025

Keywords: Murui; Uitoto; Amazon; defence of culture; territory; natures.

Abstract. *The Murui people's concept of* Jagɨyɨ *or* Jafaikɨ *signifies* Breath of Life*. This concept represents the genesis and the end of the Murui existence, as it was exhaled by* Moó *and the material world was created. Furthermore, it is the sole means through which human life is possible, as we*

breathe. This study presents Jagɨyɨ *or* Jafaikɨ *as a native aesthetics or philosophy of life. It demonstrates how this concept is perpetuated through the contextualisation of social practices according to events lived in and out of the territory of origin. I conducted interviews with several elders and participated in community events in Leticia in the context of academic projects and cultural rituals. Furthermore, I conducted a review of the relevant literature. I present four examples illustrative of the maintenance of* Jagɨyɨ *or* Jafaikɨ *has occurred in recent times: 1. The foundation of* Nɨmaɨrafiya *or the Indigenous School 'House of Knowledge'; 2. The cooling of the presence of illegal armies and the internal war in territories; 3. The* cooling *of daily life in foreign lands; 4. The contribution to the Commission of Truth's Final Report. I conclude that the symbolic and physical violence expressed through extractivist economies, internal armed conflict and displacement from the place of origin are the events recognised as decisive for the hybridization of social practices, and the maintenance of* Jagɨyɨ *or* Jafaikɨ *represents a strategy for the defence of the cultures, natures and territories of the Murui people, which may be regarded as* contemporaneous native aesthetics**.**

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1. Introduction

This article examines the role of representative elements in a *contemporary native aesthetic* in enhancing a society's resilience in the face of social, cultural, and economic challenges. It can be proposed that the term *contemporary* can be understood as strategies that are put into practice within a defined time range around the *present day*. Nonetheless, these strategies are inspired by a *native aesthetics* that originates from a time without time, they are updated, reinvented and contextualised according to the circumstances in which societies find themselves immersed.

In this context, the term *native aesthetics* can be understood as a set of dimensions of knowledge that shape our understanding of the self. These dimensions define what it means to be a subject in the world, and they inform our beliefs about who we are. However, this comprehension may be subjected to analysis from

disparate perspectives, including, for instance, the artwork. A number of authors have put forth the argument that the works of native artists should be understood as representations of an *aesthetic* that differs from the classical aesthetic tradition. This is how concepts such as visionary aesthetics (de Almeida, 2013) and aesthetics of place (Leuthold, 1998) have emerged within the field of visual arts and film, respectively. In his reflection on de Almeida's concept, the Asháninka-Shipibo-Konibo painter Del Aguila (2014:270) prefers to speak of sacred art. Similarly, Hopi cameraman Victor Masayesva Jr. (cited in Leuthold, 1998:1) posits that there is a distinct Indian aesthetic, which he believes begins in the sacred. The above conceptualisations demonstrate that native artistic expressions may be understood as a form of *aesthetics,* thereby facilitating the rethinking of art in a variety of contexts.

However, my understanding of *aesthetics* extends beyond the aesthetic of the artwork or performances of indigenous artists. My approach to some Amazon indigenous peoples, and in particular the Murui people (also known as Uitoto), has led me to understand *native aesthetics* as a *philosophy of life.* This is rooted in the sacredness of maintaining life itself, which permeates the everyday life of these societies. It is also performed, materialised and re-created. However, this goes far beyond the performance or artwork of indigenous artists. The *broad sense* of aesthetics proposed by Noguera (2002) provides a framework for my understanding of native aesthetics, informed by insights gleaned from the Murui people.

Noguera (2002) defines aesthetics as the "specifically human symbolic capacity to shape the world, that is, to construct culture" (p. 8). She characterises the modern aesthetic, which is predicated on the rationality of the good and the beautiful, as being *restricted*. The *restricted aesthetic* approach is disrespectful of other expressions of being, as it attempts to embrace them in a way that is exclusive and not conducive to dialogue or coexistence. Conversely, a *broad sense of aesthetics* entails "decentralising and, if necessary, dissolving the subject in order to accept plurality, *otherness* (otredad), otherness (alteridad), diversity and heterogeneity" (p.12).

The *broad sense of aesthetics* is aligned with my understanding of *native aesthetics*, yet it also diverges from it in a fundamental aspect. The author posits that a critique of the conventional understanding of aesthetics will facilitate the emergence of alternative forms of *aesthetics*. It is argued that some other *aesthetics* do not emerge from the space opened by the critique of *classical aesthetics*; rather, they have always existed, albeit silenced by modernity, in the localities in which they are lived. Nevertheless, Noguera's understanding of the *broad sense of aesthetics* does permit

the visibility of alternative aesthetics, such as the *native aesthetics*. Therefore, I understand *contemporaneous native aesthetics to be a strategy for the defence of a philosophy of life or aesthetics that is timeless in nature. This, in turn, implies the defence of cultures, natures and territories, which are composed of representations, materialities and other expressions of social practices that are contextualised according to circumstances in the present*.

This study presents an analysis of the *Breath of Life* of the Murui as a *contemporary native aesthetics*. It is based on semi-structured interviews with five wise men, representatives of three out of five Murui dialects (*Bue, Minika, Nipode*) in 2019 in Leticia (Colombia), and other informants. Furthermore, I engaged extensively with communities in Leticia in the context of academic projects and cultural rituals between 2018 and 2021. Also, an extensive review of the relevant literature was conducted. In the face of new contexts generated by extractivism, the presence of armed groups and illegal economies, as well as displacement due to internal conflict or the pursuit of economic opportunities, the Murui have sought to maintain the *Breath of Life* through the contextualisation of their practices. These strategies, therefore, constitute examples of a *contemporaneous native aesthetics*, as previously defined.

2. *Jagiyi*, *Jafaiki*, the *Breath of Life*

Murui are the first people created, who emerged from *Jofo, the hole,* placed in a specific place in the Amazon. They speak five dialects understandable among each other: *Minika, Binika, Nipode*, *Bue* and *Mika*. The *Breath of Life* is signified as *Jagiyi* in *Minika, Binika* and *Nipode* dialects, and as *Jafaiki* in *Bue* and *Mika* dialects. It inspires the social practices of the Murui and can be understood as their philosophy of life or *aesthetics*, and its maintainance as the *contemporary native aesthetics* of the Murui. This *aesthetic* reflects the way-of-being-in-the-world of their societies. The maintenance of the *Breath of Life* implies the pursuit of *ñue iyano* or *to be well, to live well*. The *good living* has been taught to the Murui by the Creator, *Moó*. They have transmitted to men and women throughout the ages the teachings of a *cool life*, signifying it *a healthy and tranquil life*. Being well is made possible by the maintenance and transmission of *monifue uai*, meaning it the *Word of life*, *Word of abundance*, *Word of coca, tobacco and sweet cassava*, which is the *Word* left by the Creator. This *Word* is in capital letters, for it represents the wisdom that has been transmitted from the beginning by *Moó* and is communicated by the Elders in *jibibiri* (i.e. the *mambeadero,* the place men reunite during the night), to those who are willing to receive it and make the *Word dawn with work* or *uai monaitaga.*

Along with the *Word*, *Moó* passed on the knowledge associated with the handling of *dɨona* (the tobacco plant) to make *yera* or *ambil* (tobacco honey) and *jibina* (the coca plant) to make *jibie* or *mambe* (coca powder). In these elements is deposited the spirit of the Creator, and of some other wise persons who have been sent with his counsel to direct the Murui. These elements are used ceremonially in *jibibɨrɨ*. The ritual is called *mambear*. The Mɨnɨka Kɨnerai explains in Candre & Echeverri (2008), "the breath of coca and tobacco reaches the breath of the person, reaches his heart when they suck ambil and *mambea* coca".

The Creator also explained to the Murui that when the elders gathered to share the *Word*, it was going to be *hot* or *strong*, therefore the women were in charge to *cool* the ritual *down*. Women were given the handling of the *fareka* (the sweet cassava plant) to prepare *juiñoi* or *manicuera* (a beverage from it). In addition, the Creator left the women the power to transform the poison into a *sweet* and *cold* drink, and this is how the women prepare *jaɨgabɨ* or *caguana,* a beverage made out of *juzitofe* (the *yucca brava* plant). The drinking of *juiñoi* and *jaɨgabɨ* in *jibibɨrɨ cools down* the men and their *word*. In this daily practice, the elders invoke the spirit(s) through the use of *jibie*, *yera*, *juiñoi* and *jaɨgabɨ*, and thus transmit the *Word of life*, based on the inherited knowledge that regains strength in the *mambeadero* (*Mɨnɨka, Fiokɨ Buinaima* from *Kanienɨ [Guacha]* Clan, Leticia, march 28th, 2019, 37 years old; *Bue, Kɨtobeizaɨ [Venado colorado]* Clan (Leticia, February 19th, 2019, 45 years old). The wise *Bue* man, explains,

> There are some (…) guiding principles that the Creator left through the *Word* of *coca* and *ambil*, (…) it goes well from generation to generation, then, those principles are the ones that the *mambeadero* is managed with, ujum, to be here is not to say 'I', it is 'we', for us it is forbidden to say 'I', '*Kue*' no, '*Kaɨ*', 'we', what we do is for all of us, ujum, that the one over there feels good, the one here feels good, everyone feels good with what we do (*Bue, Kɨtobeizaɨ [Venado colorado]* Clan, Leticia, February 19th, 2019, 45 years old).

Living well considers, among many aspects, the management of problems using the inherited knowledge, which implies the constant analysis of current situations and references to the narratives of origin or *rafue*. For the Murui, problems are understood as *uzifue* or *heat* (*calentura*). The *heat* manifests itself through bad times, illnesses, social conflicts, among others. It corresponds to imbalances in various dimensions that are caused by the disobedience of men and women when they consider their own well-being above that of others. These behaviours are usually caused by animals (*Bue, Kɨtobeizaɨ* Clan…).

It is necessary, then, *uzifue mananaitaja*, to *cool the heat*, for which they must sit in the *mambeadero*, analyse the situation. This way of understanding, approaching and solving the conflicts in the Murui is a parallel to how *the cooling of the heat,* its *sweeteness,* has been done from the beginning, by the Creator himself, in order to create the earth and give way to life. The Creator analysed the heat, sitting, thinking, *cooling it down,* sending it to the depths and life originated (*Bue, Ƚitobeizaƚ Clan*…). This is why to perpetuate the *Breath of Life*, the heat must be cooled. The wise *Miƚika* man explains it,

> *Sweetening, cooling*, well that is a dialogue is opened, a narration, that were given by the Creator, (…) *to sweeten* the environment, to say, *to sweeten*, how?, through our elements, that is a very solemn moment, I say, where our elders concentrate, connect with the spirit, with *Moó*, with the Creator, right? then, they start to play those narratives, how does it get *cold,* right? (...) you have to diet so that the *Word* has power (…), it is to love humanity, the people, that they live well, that we live well, that is why we don't talk about peace, we talk about good living, for us that is peace, it is *sweetened to cool,* to appease. (...) Each thing for us has its origin, and that origin is the one we have *to touch* and send that energy to where it originated there (*Ekƚi'raiaƚ [Almendra silvestre]* Clan, Leticia, February 20th, 2019, 45 years old).

When it is not possible *to cool the heat* in the *mambeadero*, it is necessary to perform a dance in *ananeko* or *maloka*, it signifies, "the one from the house below, from the earth", which is the image of *a biko*, "the celestial house" (*Bue, Ƚitobeizaƚ Clan…).* In the dances people *step on the evil*, they send it down where it has to be. In the preparation of the dance people have to *dawn the evil*, they have to hunt the animal that is *heating* up the atmosphere. The wise *Bue* man explains it as,

> A dance (…) it is done according to the situation and the time, right?, for each thing, when there is something that is not right, the elders sit down and analyse, then, "ah, we have this problem, for this problem the Creator left a way to appease, to *cool down*, and this is appeased with this type of dance or ritual dance", (…) we are going to bring those animals that harm us here to the party, but as food, (…) the ritual is precisely to *combat that heat*, that evil, that is what *we step on*, that is why the dance is *by stepping on*, (…) *we bury it down* there because God has already sent it to the depths, that's why *joyaniikiƚ reikiƚ* (*the heat of the animals*) is down there, God has already *stepped on it*, it has no reason to come here *to bother*, to disturb the human (*Bue, Ƚitobeizaƚ [Venado colorado]* Clan, Leticia, February 19th, 2019, 45 years old).

 http://dx.doi.org/10.13135/2384-8677/12799

In this understanding, *mambe*, *ambil*, *manicuera*, *caguana*, *mambeaderos*, *malokas*, the *Word*, dances, songs, healings, narratives, among other Murui *elements* or *representations*, as well as the poetics of their knowledge, can be understood as expressions of their *aesthetics* of *Jagiyi/Jafaiki* or *Breath of Life*. By poetics I mean their signifying of existence, in expressions such as *dawning the Word* (*uai monaitaga*), *cooling the heat* (*uzifue mananaitaja*), *basket of knowledge* (*nimaira kirigai*), or, *hunting the disease to cure and heal* (*kue iyaie finoitikue jiyoyena*).

3. The maintainance of *Jagiyi, Jafaiki or the Breath of Life*: The *contemporary native aesthetics* of the Murui people

I present four cases that aim to illustrate the maintenance of *Jagiyi/Jafaiki* or the *Breath of Life* as a strategy for the defence of cultures, territories and natures, which I call the *contemporary native aesthetics* of the Murui people. The cases I present are i. The foundation of *Nimairafiya,* the Indigenous School 'House of Knowledge'; ii. The *cooling* of the presence of illegal armies and the internal war in territories; iii. The *cooling* of daily life in foreign lands; iv. The contribution to the Commission of Truth's Final Report.

3.1 The foundation of Nimairafiya *or* Baitajá Onona Jofo*, the Indigenous School 'House of Knowledge'*

The rubber boom (1880-1930) had a profoundly detrimental impact on the people of the Amazon. The extractivist economy not only prompted changes in the social practices of the locals due to the integration of the global economy into local societies, but also because it was a violent and slave-like economic practice based on coercive indebtedness. From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th, global contexts had a significant impact on localities in the Amazon. This, coupled with a lack of understanding of the Amazon inhabitants' perspectives and discourses, led to the justification of their 'civilisation' at any cost. The demographic decline of the Murui due to the rubber industry was significant. It is estimated that the Murui comprised 60,000 people at the end of the nineteenth century. However, by 2005, there were only 6,444 Murui living in Colombia, according to official statistics (Anonymous, 1995 [1913]; Gómez, 2014a, 2014b; Pineda, 1995; Zárate et al., 2017).

The rubber tapping industry first arrived in the Murui territory in 1890. Since 1903, Julio Arana has managed the business in the area under the company Casa Arana Hermanos. In 1908, Arana formed a partnership with English businessmen to establish the Peruvian Amazon Company. However, the

company was dissolved in 1913 following the revelation of its involvement in atrocities committed in the Amazon. Nevertheless, Arana continued to extract rubber in an exploitative and oppressive manner, which was seen in Peru as a civilising enterprise of savage tribes engaged in anthropophagy. The denunciations of other countries were viewed as interference in the territorial border dispute with Colombia. In Colombia, the narrative shifted to portray Colombian rubber tappers as fulfilling evangelistic missions and facing abuse at the hands of the Peruvians. The ongoing tensions between the countries and mounting international pressure led to the appointment of an arbitration commission to delimit the border, a process that had been postponed since colonial times. In 1924, Colombia and Peru signed the Salomón-Lozano Treaty, in which Peru recognised Colombia's rights north of the Putumayo River. In 1928, the Peruvian Congress ratified the Treaty, leading to the cessation of Arana's activities in Colombia (Anonymous, 1995 [1913]; AZICATCH, 2017; Casement (2014 [1911]); Gómez, 2014a, 2014b; Pineda, 1995; Steiner et al., 2014; Zárate et al., 2017).

Following these events, the Colombian government appointed the Capuchin Missions to oversee the education and social organisation of the native Amazonian peoples. Notwithstanding, the new cultural transformations that occurred, the church, as noted by the Murui elders, allowed for communication with and understanding of the 'whites'. Similarly, the Murui organised themselves politically with the help of some religious people, which enabled them to demand the return of their ancestral territories from the national government. As a result, both the government and the Catholic Church were required to return governance over the territory to the Murui (*Minika, Kanieni Clan...; Minika, Eki'raiai Clan...*; *Bue, Kitobeizai Clan...*).

In 1988, President Barco transferred ownership of the land to the local population, including the Murui, under the designation of a *resguardo*. This is how the *Gran Resguardo Predio Putumayo* was established. It comprises 5,879,000 hectares, which corresponds to Arana's radius of action (Pineda, 1995). However, the Caja Agraria had the intention of excluding the premises of the Casa Arana in La Chorrera from the resguardo with the objective of establishing it as a tourist attraction. Upon learning of this, the Murui elders, along with representatives of other communities, decided to take action to address the situation and claim the building for other purposes.

According to the *Minika* men from *Eki'raiai Clan* and *Kanieni Clan*, the leaders analysed that given the historical context, it would be unfeasible to transform the site into a tourist centre. They argue that the area *has already been paid for with the*

blood and suffering of their grandparents. The elders interpreted that accepting the transfer of the Arana rubber centre, *maintained by the pain of the ancest*ors, into a tourist destination would be akin to failing to grasp the gravity of the situation. They emphasised that such a decision would not do justice to the memory of those who sacrificed themselves. *The challenging period in history had to be transformed into a positive outcome. The house was to be converted into a centre of rebirth, a seedbed, fostering new growth*. Following analysis in *mambeaderos*, the decision was taken to convert the site into a school. This would provide an educational facility for the future. The school, which is now known as *Nimairafiya* or *Baitajá Onona Jofo* or Indigenous School House of Knowledge.

Furthermore, in light of the new reality, the school was envisioned as a hub for educating children and young people on the harmonious integration of their indigenous knowledge with Western knowledge, with the objective of serving society and fortifying the Murui culture. The school was established at the end of the 1990s and has subsequently hosted university training programmes. These have required a syllabus that includes final projects based on the two ways of knowledge, namely traditional knowledge and Western knowledge.

3.2 The cooling *of the presence of illegal armies and the internal war in territories*

The FARC-EP guerrilla began establishing a permanent presence in the Murui territories around 2002, coinciding with their expansion into southern Colombia and the establishment of the "demilitarised zone" in Caquetá. This occurred while negotiations between the guerrillas and the government of President Pastrana (1998-2002) were ongoing. From the end of 2003, President Uribe (2002-2007) deployed military forces with the objective of recovering the territories. The indigenous population began to experience the effects of the internal armed conflict. The army assumed control of the territories, effectively supplanting the traditional authorities. This was a necessary consequence of the conflict, as acknowledged by the interviewees. With the signing of the Peace Accords during the Santos government (2010-2017) with the FARC-EP (2016), this guerrilla group is no longer present as an organisation in the area. However, other organised groups and dissidents remain in the territories.

The cooling of the armed conflict began in the mambeaderos. This is also referenced by Tobón (2008) in the analysis he conducted in Araracuara, where he summarizes the findings with the words of a Muinane elder, who stated, "The best weapon is the Word" (p. 143). I gathered further testimonies that enabled the conflict to diminish in intensity and to be managed in a different manner. However, in the context of the weapons, several criminal acts did occur. The

mambeaderos were able to establish a distance from the guerrillas and were not permitted to cohabit with the communities. In order to provide a reference point for the response, it was necessary to consider the events that had occurred during the rubber tapping. The desire to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past was a key factor in the decision to resist. The Word was also used in negotiations with the guerrillas, and the management of nature allowed the isolation of the conflict in the Corregimiento del Encanto, "nature itself lends itself to protect, ujum, then, we can say that our way of concentrating did work, right?, our spiritual way of moving nature (...) that is, it is not us, it is nature, the Creator, that is why it is to him that we comply" (*Bue, Kɨtobeizaɨ Clan*). The same was mentioned in the case of Corregimiento de La Chorrera, the elders warned the guerrillas "the day you kill someone here in front of us, the jungle itself will swallow you up (...), and look that the guerrillas had to leave, they felt that, well, they felt that snakes were coming, that sticks were falling, that they were coming as if we were cornering them like this, they had to leave, you know?" (*Mɨnɨka, Kanienɨ Clan).*

In the case of La Chorrera, as the wise *Mɨnɨka* man from *Ekɨ'raiaɨ Clan* explained, the guerrillas settled for a while and gradually gave orders within the community, but the elders insisted that they stay away, especially when they saw them armed, "because what they carry is not for shooting panguana (small fowl), it is for humans, Therefore, there [stay away]". But the atmosphere became different when a commander arrived who supplanted the traditional authorities, wanting to shoot people, to which the *mambeadero* also responded, "they all *stood up (...) the baskets,* right?, of each clan, of each people, everything, because that was a very different time, that is to say, the time was changed, right?"; and this helped, because the impact was not so great,

> because we kept, let's say, the *Word of tobacco and coca*, which is our strong point, that is, that's what we take care of ourselves with, that's what we defend ourselves with, everything, but not only the fact of having here [*mambe and ambil*], but we have to speak, we have to, let's say, *tune in to the Word. The Word is not from [us], it is from the Creator himself*" (…) Until that guerrilla commander came to understand that here in Chorrera there is power, 'there is power', he said, 'and in other parts, in other indigenous places they say, I have killed, I have killed priests, I have killed, but here *they sweetened my heart, they sweetened me*', right?". *We sweeten their hearts, their souls, for us it becomes a support stick, their rage, for us it is food, it is peanuts, it is ambil, it is like that, perfume,* their mind, let's say, their politics (...) that is like that, *we change it into a Word of coca, a Word of ambil, a Word of life* (*Ekɨ'raiaɨ [Almendra silvestre]* Clan, Leticia, February 20th, 2019, 45 years old).

The guerrilla left after clashes with the Colombian army in 2013. That day there was an attack in El Chorro, an important place for the Murui, "there are people there for us, down there, and on top of that they did that" (*Minika*, *Eki'raiai Clan*).

3.3 The cooling *of daily life in foreign lands*

This section presents examples of the *cooling of the heat* that has occurred outside the territory of origin, whether due to forced displacement or displacement in search of economic and educational opportunities. The wise *Nipode* man from *Amenani [Palo] Clan* (Leticia, 18 June 2019, 60 years old) was a leader at the Corregimiento of Puerto Santander. He was compelled to leave the community in 2014 due to threats to his life from the FARC guerrilla group. This followed his denouncing of the death of his son at their hands and other misunderstandings regarding the presence of the guerrilla group in his community's territory. He subsequently fled to Bogotá, where he took another plane to Leticia. In Leticia, a number of *mambeaderos* have been set up by people who live in the city and originate from the Corregimientos, such as Nokaido. The practice of the culture in Nokaido and the support of his colleagues have enabled him to navigate the challenges of displacement and cope with the associated stressors, "in 2018 I got much better because I met friends from La Chorrera territory, (...) there we *mambeamos, well, my thinking has changed*, well, I feel happy (...) That, to say, well, *we more or less calm our pain to turn it into joy*, because that's the only way we can calm down".

Similarly, *malokas* have been constructed in urban areas such as Leticia, where the Murui have settled for various reasons since the rubber boom. The construction of *malokas* does not necessarily result from the formation of a *malokero*. Rather, they represent intercultural initiatives designed to maintain the *Breath of Life,* thereby allowing the cultures to be practised in foreign territories. The dances performed there allow for the maintenance and transmission of knowledge from the source territories. The wise *Minika* man from *Yoreba (Ortiga ponsoñosa) Clan* (Leticia, 22 April 2019, 67 years old), states that, "when the first indigenous people who arrived in Leticia, they brought in their bags, in their basket, yucca sticks, coca sticks, seeds for food, for planting, so that's where they always stayed because *that was our mission, to preserve the culture here*, and for that reason every woman, every man came with their seeds, and the few who knew how to speak the language, well, they began to exchange them, so that's why the first *Maloka* was built in Leticia".

As previously stated, the territories and Leticia are home to a number of indigenous peoples, who have been affected by cultural and territorial transformations. *Mambeadero* and *maloka* experiences offer a unique opportunity to engage with different cultures in a way that was not possible in the past. The *maloka dances* provide a forum for various clans and peoples to come together to celebrate special events and to *cool down the heat*. This fosters the development of what Echeverri (1997, p. 31) refers to as "pan-ethnic community identities in current contexts".

3.4 The contribution to the Commission of Truth's Final Report

The Truth Commission (CEV, by its acronym in Spanish), established as part of the Peace Accords between the national government and the FARC-EP in 2016, facilitated dialogue and listening sessions with the participation of Colombia's ethnic peoples, including the Murui people. The Final Report (CEV, 2022) states that 1. During this period, the colonialist treatment, structural racism and the continuum of violence against indigenous or native peoples were exacerbated; 2. The violence suffered has caused disproportionate collective, individual and territorial damage; 3. The deployment of armed groups in indigenous territories is due to their use as rearguard, refuge and armed confrontation zones, and to the establishment of routes and enclaves of licit and illicit economies. The aforementioned practices in the Murui territory, presented above, can be located in these findings.

Following an in-depth analysis, the CEV identified seventeen distinct ethnic macro-territories that were exploited as armed conflict corridors. The Murui people reside in two of these macro-territories: the Southern Corridor of Colombia, which connects with Peru and Brazil, and the Lower Caquetá Corridor, which connects with Brazil. In both corridors, the FARC-EP was the dominant illegal armed group. These macro-territories are distinguished by their geopolitical location, which has facilitated the transnational transport of cocaine, as well as their remoteness, which has enabled the expansion of coca leaf cultivation for drug trafficking and the establishment of laboratories for cocaine production. Following the signing of the Peace Accords, the area is now under the control of other groups (CEV, 2022).

The Truth Commission placed the victims of the armed conflict at its core, and as a result, there were opportunities to engage in listening and dialogue that helped to counteract the damage caused by the war. In these macro-territories, the CEV acknowledges the indigenous peoples' commitment to engaging in dialogue with the key stakeholders involved in the conflict, including the state

and the security forces. As previously outlined, in the CEV documentary 'La travesía de la Comisión de la Verdad en el Amazonas' (2020), the elders of Amazonian communities conducted the necessary *consultations to determine which knowledge baskets could be opened and which could not.* It should be noted that the accounts of violence recounted to the commissioners originated during the rubber tapping era. However, to gain a comprehensive understanding, it was necessary to delve into the indigenous communities' own narratives. As a Bora leader aptly observed, "to talk about the truth, we have to talk about it *from the origin,* right?". Furthermore, the video scenes frequently feature references to the elements of the *Murui's Breath of Life,* including the *malokas, mambeaderos,* use of the *mambe, tobacco, ambil and caguana*.

4. Conclusions

The *contemporary native aesthetics* of the Murui people, based on the maintenance of the *Breath of Life,* provides an illustrative example of current strategies for the defence of cultures, natures and territories based on the maintenance of an aesthetics or a philosophy of life of a native group. The maintenance of a philosophy of life is dependent on the continued use of narratives of origin and metaphors, as well as the incorporation of significant cultural elements. However, the materialisation of this philosophy is contextualised according to the specific circumstances of the places in which it is practised. This is evident in the way that dances, buildings, places of gathering and other social practices are shaped by and reflect the history and experiences of the communities that inhabit those places. The symbolic and physical violence expressed through extractivist economies, internal armed conflict and displacement from the place of origin are the events that are mainly recognised as decisive for the hybridization of social practices. *Contemporary native aesthetics* encourages the acceptance of diversity and heterogeneity as a *broad aesthetic* stance.

This interdisciplinary case study introduces a novel synthesis of ritual, cosmology, aesthetics and indigenous resistance as an integrated system of knowledge, aim of demonstrating their role in the sustainability of life in material and immaterial dimensions. The Amazon is regarded as a prime example of the global richness of culture and the multiple natures that are co-created, managed and ultimately preserved. The multiple cases presented herein serve to elaborate on the concept of sustainability in our world, from a unique *vision*, thereby facilitating conversations between local realities, global contexts and the academic debate.

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Funds

This work received these external funds: Postdoctoral Fellowship of the Colombian Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation – COLCIENCIAS (Call 784/2017)

Competing Interests

The authors hereby state that there are no financial and non-financial competing interests.

Citation

Chaves-Agudelo, J.M. (2025). Natures, territories and the *Breath of Life*. The maintenance of *Jagiyi* or *Jafaiki* among the Murui people in the present, Colombian Amazon. *Visions for Sustainability*, 24, 12799, 1-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.13135/2384-8677/12799