



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR RESPONSIBLE LAND ADMINISTRATION

FIG Commission 7 & 2 Annual Meeting 2023

2-4 October 2023, Deventer

Healing Mother Earth: Arhuaco indigenous women and the defence of their ancestral territory

A case study of the Gunmaku women in Colombia

Sara Garcia-Ortiz

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Colombian context

- Hosts close to 10% of the planet's biodiversity
- Internal conflict and displacement
- Peace Agreement in 2016
- Indigenous collective land rights are recognized by law



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Case study: Gunmaku

- Arhuaco community is located in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
- Collective land rights
- The “mamos” are the head of the social and political structure
- Outside the Indigenous Reserve
- Land-at-scale program (Kadaster International, Tropenbos, ICCO)
- Is a “Talanquera” town



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
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 Indigenous Reserves
 Proposal Expansion

 La Linea Negra (Black Line)

 0 15 30 km

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Land is the physical and productive base of a territory, while the territory refers to the set of relationships and representations that are built from the land (Fajardo, 2002)

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Research question

How do Arhuaco indigenous women of the Gunmaku community engage with the defence of their ancestral territory in the context of an ongoing land registration program?

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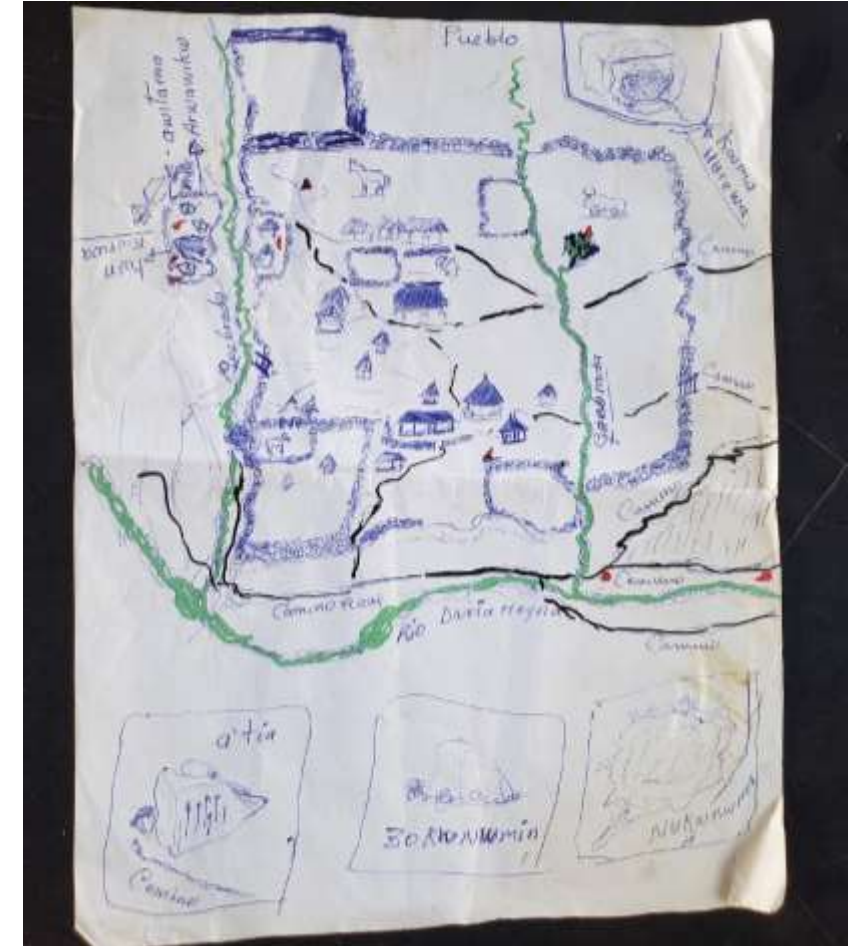
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Sub-research questions

1. What has been the historical process of recovery of the Arhuaco ancestral territory?
2. How do women's concerns about their territory interact with the land registration program?
3. How are women situated in land access and land governance within the community?



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Theoretical Framework

- Property as an analytical category (Benda-Beckmann et al., 2006)
- Theory of access (Ribot and Peluso, 2003)
- Claim-making as practices (Van der Haar et al, 2020; Kronenburg García & Dijk, 2019)

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Theoretical Framework

- Community feminisms (Cabnal, 2010; Cruz, 2020)

Territory-body-land: "I cannot conceive my woman's body, without a space on earth that dignifies my existence, and promotes my life in fullness. Historical and oppressive violence exists both for my first territory the body, as well as for my historical territory, the land."
(Cabnal, 2010, 23).

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Methods

In-depth interviews: 8 women, 3 women teachers, 3 women related to Gunmaku, 10 project members

Participant Observation: I did three visits to Gumaku for a total of 4 weeks



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Findings

- The Arhuaco ancestral territory in dispute: different actors and land meanings
- Women's interest in identifying the sacred places
- The defence of the territory starts from inside the community

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Discussions

- Who are able to benefit?
- Conservation as a claim-making practice
- Women's participation in land registration programs



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Thank you!



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