Indigenous Media Presence

Climate imagery, land use and Indigenous peoples in Central and South America

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Full research report
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Foreword

This substantial research report and literature review was commissioned by Climate Visuals, a programme of Climate Outreach, and produced by Nicolas Salazar Sutil with picture research by Jaye Renold. It forms a new evidence base and provides the foundation for a short-form, web-based resource entitled:

> **Indigenous media presence**
>
> ***Recommendations of best visual practice for content producers, editors, distributors, agencies and publishers who wish to work with, for, or are from the Indigenous and forest Communities of Central and South America.***
>
> ***Catalysing positive change and connections towards imagery that is transformative, sustainable and impactful around the issues of land use, conservation and climate solutions.***

This study was commissioned to specifically contribute to a wider project with the aim to better connect global media and communications professionals with the most appropriate, impactful and effective imagery on climate change with relation to the issues of land use, conservation and climate solutions. It draws heavily on conversations held by Nicolas Salazar Sutil and Jaye Renold during spring and summer 2021 with Indigenous leaders and photographers, media stakeholders and NGOs in 10 different countries of Central and South America. The research process was informed by discussions with Leah Rangi as research advisor, and this resulting report has been externally reviewed by Dr Ana Cristina Suzina.

The accompanying online resource includes exemplary work from individual practitioners, direct quotes from interviewees and a guide for those commissioning or being commissioned to produce imagery of this kind.

At its core are **eight principles for Indigenous media presence**, prepared by a wider team of researchers - with inputs from Nicolas Salazar Sutil, Jaye Renold, myself within Climate Visuals, Leah Rangi and If Not Us Then Who (as stakeholder mapping and context consultants):

1. **Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples while recognising Indigenous resistance movements and land struggles**
2. **Foster a sense of real place - avoid just showing a location**
3. **Create in-depth, long-form and truly lasting content**
4. **Promote the work of specific people and communities and avoid stereotypes**
5. **Go beyond diversity to invest in communities**
6. **Facilitate full Indigenous self-representation, visual storytelling and participation**
7. **Focus on stories of urgency and potency with a depth of feeling and vision**
8. **Collaborate, co-create and participate**

This project is being conducted during a turbulent but welcome period of reform in photography. Major issues regarding diversity and inequality are systemic both in the creation of, and representation within, images. Climate Visuals is committed to ensuring that within our resources the entire project life-cycle, from inception to new participatory research through to delivery and legacy, is positively challenged - and that we make all possible efforts to incorporate best practice. We place a specific emphasis on ensuring that research and photography outputs are created where possible in participation or co-authorship with representatives of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring these become appropriate and impactful assets to stakeholders. This has included the fair payment of an honorarium within this project for featuring all original photographic works and illustrations.

We set the original framing of this project in response to the need for a best-practice guide in this specific field. We defined its geographic scope in order to focus our finite research resources on producing a set of broad but pragmatic recommendations - which effectively address the common issues identified by members of the diverse communities that the research team interviewed and consulted as part of this project. These recommendations may also be applicable to parallel issues faced by Indigenous communities of South East Asia or in a global context, but the authors recommend that new primary and participatory research be urgently completed to verify this.

The report that follows was originally conceived as a simple white paper that would assist in the creation of new visual principles for this subject area - a proven engagement and impact tool of the Climate Visuals programme in the Western media space. However, Climate Visuals must pay tribute to the commissioned research team and our numerous interviewees for their endeavours and flexibility in taking this project on a much deeper journey - far beyond our pre-defined impact agenda.

The resulting document is substantial, but incorporates a necessary and detailed foundation regarding the historic, contextual and geographic features pertinent to the issues in hand, before considering both present opportunities and future risks faced by Indigenous communities in media representation.

The report has immeasurably improved the vision, perspective and understanding of the Climate Visuals programme in this area, and as an original piece of academic work we hope it also becomes a valuable touchstone for other scholars, practitioners and researchers in the field.

- **Toby Smith, Visuals and Media Programme Lead, Climate Outreach**

CONTENT WARNING: This report contains graphic images and descriptions that some readers may find triggering, distressing, upsetting or disturbing.

This includes depictions and accounts of genocide, murder, decapitation and mutilation.

Instances in the text are preceded by this warning.
Reader and viewer discretion is advised.

Acknowledgments

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Please note that CLUA does not necessarily share the positions expressed in this publication.

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- **Michael McGarrell**, member of the Patamuna peoples of Guyana, and currently Coordinator of Human Rights & Policies for the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA);
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- **Edgar Kanaykõ,** documentary photographer of the Xakriabá people of the State of Minas Gerais (Brazil);
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- **Paul Redman**, Director of *If Not Us then Who* (US/UK);
- **Jess Crombie**, Senior Lecturer at University of the Arts London;
- **David Kaimowitz,** Senior Consultant, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

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Note on text styling: Quotes from key stakeholders that were interviewed as part of this research are cited in bold and without a date of publication (e.g. **Eliana Champutiz, in research interview)**.

List of acronyms

APIB	Associação de Povos Indígenas do Brasil
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
CONAQ	Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIAY	Indigenous Forum of Abya Yala
FILAC	Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe
INUTW	If Not Us then Who
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SNT	Sistema Nacional de Comunicación (Paraguay)
UN	United Nations
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WRM	World Rainforest Movement

Glossary

Abya Yala	Abya Yala can refer to the Americas as a whole but is most commonly used by Indigenous peoples to refer to Central America and parts of the South American continent. It means ‘land in its full maturity’ or ‘land of vital blood’ in the Guna language
Cultural matrices	A contestable term used to refer to African and European mother cultures out of which Central and South American diasporic and colonial societies emerged
Epistemic	Related to the history of bodies of knowledge
Eschatology	A branch of theology and spirituality concerned with the end of the world
Environmental exnomination	The removal of certain actors from the responsibility for ecological damage by hiding the name of some individual or organisation in order to normalise their actions
Impressionability	A term associated here with the work of Franz Fanon concerning the psychological mindset of colonial societies, where youths are readily influenced and impressed as a result of the impact of Western media culture
Indigenous Media Presence	The effort to give visibility to the people, and the stories of those people, who live within Indigenous Territories, or to media actors who wish to represent Indigenous perspectives in the context of forest governance and climate change, while at the same time facilitating support, funding and agency for forest communities.
Indigenous Territories, or the Territories	Areas where recognised Indigenous communities have legal titles of ownership, and where these communities enjoy autonomy and self-determination as well as the right to use land and protect forest
Protected Territories	Areas that are legally protected for environmental reasons, including Indigenous Territories and Quilombos
Quilombola Territories	Afro-descendant land titles in Brazil, also known as palenques in the Spanish-speaking Americas
Scenification	The cultural practice of making places and situations look beautiful or attractive for commercial gain - the term was coined by Argentinian cultural theorist Néstor García Canclini to refer to the neo-liberal effort to gloss over badly planned, unequal and fast-paced development in Latin America
Strategic essentialism	A political tactic in which minority groups, nationalities or ethnic groups mobilise on the basis of generalised gendered, cultural or political identity in order to represent themselves, despite differences that may exist between members of these groups

Introduction

This research study, literature review and analysis highlights the importance of Indigenous representation in climate and land use imagery. Indigenous representation is a priority not only for the improvement of climate imagery and visualisation, but also for the development of values and principles for good media practice on environmental matters. This study stems from a need to better understand how, given the increased interconnectivity of contemporary society, the stories told about climate change have a profound and widespread effect. It is vital to better understand the representation of Indigenous Peoples in the context of forest and land use because:

- the climate emergency is a land use crisis and not just an energy crisis
- it is in the interest of broader society to support Indigenous Peoples and community rights
- Indigenous Peoples and communities are articulate and effective actors in their own right
- social and environmental justice go hand in hand

This report focuses on processes that can lead to systemic transformation in the media sector. The stories told by those who know the land and the ways in which land can be healed have the potential to generate positive impact at both individual, community and societal levels.

Who are Indigenous forest peoples?

The title of this report alludes to Indigenous forest peoples. It is important to consider that not all forest inhabitants are Indigenous Peoples, in the narrow sense used in political, academic and legal literature. Migration in the Brazilian Amazon during the rubber boom[1] led to the settling of many migrant groups in the region, the descendants of whom are not Indigenous Peoples. Work migrant communities in Amazonia are nonetheless forest inhabitants. There are numerous Afro-descendant forest and agroecological communities spread throughout the Central and South American continents, for instance, in the Chocó province of Colombia, in the Chota River Valley of Ecuador, in the Barlovento region of Venezuela, in the Quilombos of Northeastern Brazil (see Manual de los Afrodescendientes de las Américas y el Caribe, UNICEF, 2006).

[1] The Amazon Rubber Boom occurred between 1879 to 1912, a period during which Brazil and the Amazonian regions of neighbouring countries experienced a frenzy to extract and commercialise rubber extracted from the rubber tree (*hevea brasiliensis*). The boom resulted in a large expansion of European colonisation in the Amazon basin region, attracting immigrant workers and generating economic wealth that led to deep cultural and social transformations, and which wreaked havoc upon Indigenous communities. The abuse, slavery, murder and use of stocks for torture against the local Indigenous populations was documented by Irish traveller Roger Casement between 1910 and 1911 (See Casement, 1913).

Narrowing down the definition of forest peoples to a single category or group conceals the demographic fragmentation of these regions, where many communities have settled and mixed over past centuries. In the region of Madre de Dios, Peruvian Amazonians include *criollo* expeditioners, Japanese refugee communities from WWII and *mestizos*, as well as Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, when referring to Indigenous Peoples throughout this report, it is important to clarify that not all Indigenous Peoples are forest dwellers. Indeed, there are Indigenous Peoples living in non-forested areas, as well as rural, peri-urban or even urban environments (e.g. Parque das Tribos in Manaus).

Definitional issues

Although the term 'Indigenous People' is used throughout this report as a generic term, the peoples who are categorised and defined as such (often in historically or geographically inaccurate ways) often resist the term. In the Americas broadly speaking, Indigenous nations will use their own self-denominations when speaking about themselves. In Spanish-speaking contexts, the terms '*pueblo*' or '*territorio*' are used instead of '*peoples*', and Abya Yala is used in place of America.

The present report will prioritise the use of the term Abya Yala, used by many Indigenous groups to refer to Central and parts of the South American continent. In an effort to emphasise the importance of Indigenous Territories and territorial alliances, the term Abya Yala is used wherever possible. Abya Yala means '"land in its full maturity" or '"land of vital blood" in the Guna language. Abya Yala is a name used by the Native American nation of the Guna people of North West Colombia and South East Panama, to refer to their section of the American subcontinent since Pre-Columbian times (López Hernández, 2004). The Indigenous Forum of Abya Yala (FIAY) serves as a coordinator and articulator of organisations and networks of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to coordinating the participation of Indigenous Peoples in international negotiations on climate change.

This report covers the perspectives of Indigenous forest communities committed to climate change and forest governance, as well as media communication initiatives for the dissemination of Indigenous stories and experiences in this context. Although individuals consulted as part of this report do not represent the views of entire communities or Territories, the research team approached interviewees given their role as community leaders, representatives or coordinators.

Engagement with Indigenous perspectives offers two key opportunities for the media sector, namely:

- improvement of the way Indigenous Peoples are depicted and understood in the media, specifically in the context of climate change and land use (although the findings of this study can be applied to a depiction of Indigenous Peoples in the media more generally)

- incorporating approaches, values and principles in collaboration with Indigenous practitioners, which can enliven media coverage of climate emergencies and solutions, environmental disasters, climate migration and Nature-based solutions in general

In sum, this report promotes appropriate principles for the enhancing of visual practice drawing on, or guided by, forest-dwelling Indigenous Peoples. The research approach applied can also help better understand how climate change is described and conceptualised in public debates and publications, and subsequently, how it is possible to visualise and render the phenomenon in images and visual stories.

This report offers insights into the historical connection between land conflict and climate change. It prioritises in its own methodology and recommendations the need to engage with decolonial perspectives. A contribution to better practice in climate visualisation and imagery rests on a meaningful engagement with socio-environmental movements that advocate for widespread change. Bringing a decolonial perspective to visual media production and circulation can:

- strengthen the ethical and value basis of Indigenous and Nature representation in the media
- deepen the emotional, experiential and spiritual content of media products with a Nature theme
- lead to methodological innovation in media content production and circulation
- enhance and integrate Indigenous aesthetics and symbols within climate and land use imagery

The connection between land use and climate change is addressed in this study through a focus on forest ecosystems. Although the representation of forests and Indigenous Peoples are two different themes, this report argues that it is necessary to understand land and forest governance by Indigenous Peoples as an integrated solution to climate change (FAO and FILAC, 2021). The campaign for Indigenous rights and the environmental campaign for forest protection become part of an integrated process. In sum, forests provide an integrated solution to global climate instability and loss of cultural belonging.

What is the link between forests and climate change?

Forests are vital for climate stability. Limiting the rise of average global temperatures to less than 2C above pre-industrial levels is inconceivable without forest restoration (Houghton *et al.,* 2017). As recent reports published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) show, practically all scenarios for achieving climate stability include some combination of reducing deforestation and forest degradation, reforestation and natural forest regeneration (IPCC, 2018; FAO and FILAC, 2021).

Fires in Wawi Indigenous Territory that was no longer recognised as Indigenous Land.
Photo credit: Kamikia Kisedje

While the well-known scientific discourse on climate change is largely foreign to Indigenous forest dwellers, Indigenous knowledge is embodied by people who live within the forest. Local knowledge is key to valuing the forest as a home of spiritual, cultural and affective power, and as a place of belonging. This report does not seek to make a contribution to the available literature on climate change science. Rather the intention is to better understand how imagery and visual storytelling give presence to the Indigenous forest dweller, and to traditional, ecological and local sciences. The link between Indigenous communities, land governance and forests is articulated powerfully by **Michael McGarrell**, member of the Patamuna peoples of Guyana:

> *Land connects us to everything, to climate change even. For us land is very important, and we want to see these lands titled and recognised … This for us is the challenge and priority. For many generations we have managed these lands ... the forests and the biodiversity. This is where we co-exist; where Indigenous People and the land become inseparable and where the solution to climate change is to be found. We hold the key to that solution and we need to be given recognition. Because we are mitigating climate change we want to be part of the decision-making process. We want to be recognised, we want our stories to be heard.*
> (**McGarrell, in research interview**)

Aims of the study

The aim of this study is to underpin a more accessible short form web-based resource that, together with this evidence base, can strengthen Indigenous presence in print and electronic media. *Indigenous Media Presence* will hopefully raise awareness among the international visual media sector of risks, challenges and opportunities when depicting local forest communities within the context of land use and climate change. Our objective is to question the historical biases surrounding imagery of land use and climate change, particularly in terms of identifying colonial attitudes still prevalent within global media communication.

By 'Indigenous media presence' we mean: the effort to give visibility to the people, and the stories of those people, who live within Indigenous Territories, or to media actors who wish to represent Indigenous perspectives in the context of forest governance and climate change, while at the same time facilitating support, funding and agency for forest guardian communities.

To better understand how Indigenous Peoples are contributing to global media communication in the area of land use and climate change, and to Nature-related media more generally, it is important to:

- draw attention to some of the historical conditions that have led to the invisibility, misrepresentation and negative bias towards Indigenous lands, forests and peoples in a global media context
- address economic, social and technological divisions and inequalities that have prevented or continue to prevent Indigenous Peoples from telling their stories in their own terms, using their own media resources, languages and platforms
- showcase and foreground the rich, diverse and growing amount of media content, products and methodologies created by Indigenous creative practitioners, as well as Indigenous media professionals and communicators working from within the Territories, while highlighting the opportunities that Indigenous Media Presence offers as a value-based approach to global climate media and outreach

Scope of the research

This study focuses on Indigenous Media Presence in the context of global print and electronic media. This includes newspapers and articles, magazines and catalogues, books (academic and general readership) as well as electronic media outlets (websites, social media and blogs). Although some reference will be made to other forms of media (e.g. ground media, mass media, legacy media or group media), the term 'media' is used within the bounds of this report to refer to the dissemination of visuals, images and visual storytelling in print and electronic format.

The scope of this work is limited to the way in which print and electronic media represent forests, forested lands and forest-dwelling peoples, particularly through the visual medium of

photography. The scope of the problem concerns the ways in which photographic images of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the land and forests within Indigenous Territories, are depicted in photo-visual media related to climate change and land use. The risks of misrepresentation of Indigenous women and forest guardian communities led by Indigenous women groups is an area of investigation that demands more detailed attention, which is beyond the scope of this study.

This report focuses on three specific bioregional contexts: the Central American Rainforest, the Amazon Rainforest and the Atlantic Forest. These iconic forests stretch over several countries, which justifies the multinational scope of this study. The Central American Rainforest extends across Southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. The Amazon River Basin and rainforest encompasses nine South American countries: namely, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Suriname, Guyana and French Guiana. The Atlantic Forest spreads across Brazil, Paraguay and Northern Argentina.

The role of Territory and resistance in Indigenous communities

Territory plays a vital role in the political, spiritual and economic grounding of forest guardian communities. Although the main purpose of Indigenous Territories is to secure the tenure of ancestral lands of Indigenous peoples, Territory is also a vital means of safeguarding nature-based cultures. Conservation of biodiversity in the Territories is fundamental for cultural continuity and it is strongly tied to Indigenous livelihoods and to ensuring access to the natural resources communities depend on.

Territory is at the heart of Indigenous resistance movements. Often referred to as *lucha indígena (*or *luta indigena* in Portuguese),[2] territorial resistance is a political, cultural and civilisational struggle against colonial and invasive powers, often grounded on self-determination and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples. To begin to understand why land use and climate change are inextricably related to Indigenous land claims, it is important to emphasise the hugely significant role that Protected Territories[3] play in this debate. This applies both to Indigenous and Quilombo Territories (Afro-descendant land titles). In sum, it

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[2] *Luta* or *lucha* is a generic term used by Indigenous Peoples to refer to their process of self-determination, and their fight to preserve nature-based ways of life against state oppression, as well as the historical struggle against various forms of Western colonisation, brutalisation and violence.

[3] The term ‘protected area’ covers a number of different categories ranging from strict conservation to areas that allow for the sustainable use of resources. According to WWF, “Protected areas maintain representative samples of habitats and ecosystems, preserve the natural and cultural heritage in a dynamic and evolutionary state, and offer opportunities for research, environmental education, recreation and tourism. (See World Wildlife Fund, Protected Areas and Indigenous Territories). Protected Areas cover 80 million hectares in the Amazon biome and over 3,000 Indigenous Territories have been identified in the Amazon biome alone, 60 of which remain in voluntary isolation. WWF adds: “There is increasing evidence of the important role that Indigenous territories play in the conservation of biodiversity and protection of critical spaces for the maintenance of ecological processes and provision of ecosystem services”.

is important to emphasise that the campaign for climate solutions is inextricably tied with at least three key factors, which are interrelated:

- territory, or a sense of entitlement to forested land by Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples
- cultural belonging, and a sense of place grounded on ancestral traditions that are Nature-based
- an acquired sense of responsibility for the guardianship of forests in order to achieve cultural, spiritual, economic and political continuity

Environmental media must communicate stories of climate change and solution by foregrounding environmental and territorial justice. Even though Indigenous Territories are often protected by law, climate action also requires the monitoring of Protected Areas so that the legal rights and titles of forest defenders are upheld. In other words, in addition to land claims, the struggle for climate and land justice also relies on policing, protecting and ensuring law enforcement within Indigenous Territories, Quilombos and other Protected Areas.

In August 2019, Indigenous women throughout Brazil staged the Marcha das Mulheres, or Women's March, under the banner: "Territory: our Body, our Spirit". The march campaigned for Territorial rights, citing a motto that is commonly held within the context of Indigenous feminism, concerning the concept of territory as body, or 'body-territory' (corpo- território). Motherland, or Mother Earth, and a woman's body are inextricably and inalienably linked in this demand for gendered justice, which is at once social and environmental (Haesbaert, 2020). Rosalva Gomes, a representative of the Quilombola community of Babacu Coconut Breakers in Maranhao, encapsulates the idea thus:

> *One of the most powerful ways to resist all of that invasive capital is to live in the territory, to see oneself as the territory, as part of the territory. The place where we live is also us.* (Anon. 2019, 0:39-1:00)

A similar connection between person and place, body and territory, is articulated by Xakriabá photographer and photojournalist **Edgar Kanaykõ**. He states:

> *For us the Peruaçu Caves National Park is also Xakriabá Territory … Today we are fighting to expand our Territory (retomada) ... we are trying to find a way of jointly managing the Park and the Indigenous Land, precisely because for us the Park and the Peruaçu Cave itself is home to the spirits (encantados). It is part of the Xakriabá cosmology and very rich in rock paintings … which we call a gift from our ancestors … Many of our body paintings are based on designs from these caves … When we paint ourselves, we also paint ourselves with Territory. That's why everything is connected. This is a place of reverence and reference for the Xakriabá people.* (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**)

Peruaçu Caves, Xakriabá Territory, Minas Gerais. (top)
Rock paintings in the Peruaçu caves. (left and centre)
Xakriabá body painting based on designs from the cave paintings. (right)
Photo credit: Edgar Kanaykõ

What are the risks and challenges of producing climate imagery within Indigenous Territories?

Lack of media infrastructure for communication of climate action within and across the Territories, or in the form of co-operation between Territories and non-Indigenous media groups, is a major challenge in the international development field.

Working within the Territories, or in alliance with territorial campaigns, also poses a number of concrete risks for media practitioners and local communities, which will be addressed over the course of this report.

The rationale for this investigation is underpinned by the need to understand the way(s) in which print and electronic media can give presence to forests and Indigenous Forest Peoples, by addressing the challenges of working within Indigenous Territories.

The following six main risks are highlighted:

- Climate imagery can perpetuate colonial attitudes to Indigenous Peoples, especially through denigration, criminalisation, undignified portrayals, epistemic racism and invisibility; while at the same time, media products can ignore or fail to recognise historical pasts and present struggles for land and climate justice.
- Climate imagery is both simplifying and occasionally sensationalising complex narratives by focusing on dramatic or negative events rather than everyday and familiar aspects of life in Indigenous Territories.
- Climate imagery can sometimes present the image of local communities as isolated or as 'lone rangers', thus burdening local communities with a responsibility to be the sole defenders of primary forests.
- Climate imagery fixates on iconic lands (e.g. the Amazon), thus perpetuating the invisibility of other ecologically significant biomes.
- Climate imagery is liable to serious media bias and misrepresentation, especially through romanticism, labelling, othering, negative stereotypes, and the prejudices of essentialism[4]. Forest-dwelling peoples have been portrayed in folkloristic, touristic or aesthetically-pleasing ways without deeper engagement with Indigenous cultural values, symbolism, spirituality or aesthetics.
- Media agendas surrounding diversity can sometimes serve a liberal and nominal diversity and inclusivity agenda that does not necessarily engage deeply with human and environmental justice.

To these main risks, further concerns stem from the representation of Indigenous forest communities in the context of climate change and land use, which will also be touched upon in this report. These are the risks of cultural appropriation, visual extractivism, financial exploitation and media double standards, particularly around the way in which humanitarianism can appeal to liberal values within large corporations while inadvertently perpetuating competition, privilege and bias.

In addition to current travel restrictions posed by Covid-19, there are several challenges to working within Indigenous Territories and connecting these with global media platforms that can energise Indigenous Media Presence. These challenges include:

[4] Essentialism is a view that assumes that certain categories (e.g. women, men, Black Peoples, Indigenous peoples, Muslims, Jews, etc) have a fundamental or true essence, which is more or less fixed. To argue that all Indigenous peoples are noble protectors of nature or victims is an essentialist view, which can have major detrimental effects on the representation of Indigenous life, or else place undue responsibility on Indigenous peoples to be sole guardians of the forest. This essentialist view fails to account for the changing and dynamic nature of Indigenous ways of living, as well as the ever-changing natures and diversity of Indigenous culture.

- Geographic isolation
- Linguistic and cultural barriers
- Lack of technological provision and internet coverage in the Territories
- Lack of resources and economic support for investment in communication technologies, training and capacity building within the Territories

There are also systemic challenges to conducting media work within the Territories. These systemic challenges have to do with social inequality, racism, elitism and lack of autonomy among Indigenous media groups, to mention but a few structural problems. None of these problems should dampen or undermine the efforts of individuals and groups seeking to amplify the message coming from the Territories; namely, that human life can exist in harmony with the rest of the natural world.

Indigenisation: an expanded term

Although the scope of this research does not allow for a fully-fledged engagement with literature on indigeneity, it is worth noting that Indigenous People or IP is a term mobilised by international agencies such as the UN, and that it serves a relatively rigid and top-level legal or political debate. As mentioned earlier, people referred to as IP do not call themselves IP, but use their own denominations (Xakriabá, Kariri-Xocó, Guna, Harakbut, Asháninka, etc.) Indigenisation, on the other hand, can be understood to be a dynamic process common to all peoples seeking a continuity or rediscovery of what may be characterised as an Indigenous sense of belonging and ways of life. For instance, indigenisation may refer to a process involving Indigenous land struggles, land reclaims (*retomadas*) and relocation processes to ancestral lands. Indigenisation also concerns a process of unlearning and relearning, and it is thus closely aligned with decolonial and non-formal approaches to education.

As Zoe Todd argues in her work on the “indigenisation of the Anthropocene”, indigenisation is a means of decolonising climate change, environmental futurism and civilisational crisis by taking an Indigenous perspective (Todd, 2015). Insofar as indigenisation can be understood as a process of learning from Nature directly, or from the lived-in memory of elders and ancestors rooted to Territory, indigenisation can be a process of re-education that is not confined to ethnic or racial categories. As a process of knowledge acquisition and spiritual cultivation, Indigenisation can be understood as a widespread process of identity formation. In the words of cultural and spiritual leader **Tawana Kariri-Xoco** of the Kariri-Xoco Fulkaxo community in Northeastern Brazil, indigenisation is within all of us (**Kariri-Xoco, in research interview**). In other words, indigenisation can be a process involving Euro-descendant or Afro-descendant claims of belonging, as much as it is a process of cultural belonging for politically and legally defined Indigenous Peoples and tribal groups. In short:

- **Indigenisation is not the same as indigenismo**: Indigenismo is a political ideology in several Latin American countries, which foregrounds a tense relationship between the State and Indigenous Nations. State and nation are not the same.

Nations cannot always be subsumed within states. What is more, indigenisation is not limited to a political, ideological or legal definition.

- **Indigenisation is not reducible to folkloric images or colourful dress codes:** The default setting of indigeneity as defined by ethnicity and ethnic dress codes is an essentialist trap. Ethnicity cannot be equated with indigeneity, nor are indigenous peoples reducible to colourful, culture-based beings obsessed by dress and body painting.
- **Indigenisation is not a fixed term, trapped within tradition or authenticity:** It is necessary to avoid the intellectual inertia that associates Indigenous Peoples with 'authenticity', 'tradition' and 'real Indians'. Indigenisation is a process that is not fixed to traditional lifestyles. Traditionalism can easily lend itself to a narrative where Indigenous peoples are "stuck in the past, rather than the future" (**David Kaimowitz**). Indigenisation is a futurist perspective focused on, amongst other things, improved human-animal correlation, future forest governance and planetary healing.
- **Indigenisation is not reducible to race or ethnicity:** It is important to recognise that Indigenous identity is not fixed within racial types. Through marriage, kinship, friendship or shared struggle, an individual of a certain race or ethnicity can be adopted by other ethnic groups as fellow members of a community or tribe, as is the case of Hayra Kuntanawa, née Margaret Halle, the American wife of Kuntanawa leader Haru Kuntanawa.

Indigenous scholars such as Gregory Cajete speak of Indigenous wisdoms as "a body of traditional environmental and cultural knowledge unique to a group of people which has served to sustain that people through generations of living within a distinct bioregion" (Cajete 2020: 2). The definition is not reducible to race or ethnicity, but rather, characterises indigeneity in terms of the continuity of cultural belonging. Borshay Lee reinforces this point when he writes: "What indigenous people appear to have is what migrants and the children of migrants (i.e. most of the rest of us) feel they lack: a sense of rootedness in place" (2009). Graham Harvey takes the argument a step further and maintains that: "In relation to what *might* be called our indigeneity, those of us who are 'of European ancestry' might recognize that we too have never ceased to be intimately associated with places" (2016, p. 302).

There is, however, a serious risk associated with the expansion of the terms 'indigeneity' and 'Indigenous' outside strict ethnic denominations. One such risk is inaccuracy. The media often depicts inaccurate or erroneous ethnic portraits, for instance when showing teepees to refer to peoples that do not use these particular dwelling structures, in order to give viewers an image that they may be more familiar with (**Rivas, in research interview)**. Inaccuracy, erroneous information and unfairness are often cited as very common features of Indigenous representation in print and electronic media (Asmi, 2017; Nairn *et al.* 2017), which is why it is vital to work from a context-specific and historically, regionally and culturally accurate perspective when dealing with Indigneous matters and processes of indigenisation in the expanded sense. Indigeneity cannot be expanded as a trope, concept or value through ignorance and inaccuracy, nor indeed through extrapolation or decontextualisation.

The other risk of expanding indigeneity as a concept is that although the term has been reclaimed to offer an understanding that is not static, 'indigeneity' often comes back to a tactic of "strategic essentialism"[5] (Borshay Lee, 2009). There is a danger of appealing to romanticism or worse, biased nationalistic views. White indigeneity can become synonymous with political tropes that seek to justify White entitlement to certain lands (especially in Europe) as well as a sense of White superiority. "Indigenous Britain", for instance, is a concept co-opted in post-Brexit UK to denote White, Leave voters who often endorse right-wing and extremist views as well as an arbitrary sense of historical entitlement to land, wealth and privilege. It is vital to use the term "Indigenous" with utmost care and a sense of context, and to be critical of the politics of appropriation, self-entitlement and power dynamics that misused forms of indigeneity can elicit for the sake of narrow-minded nationalism. Despite the risks, it is important to expand the term nonetheless, so that indigeneity becomes inclusive of different processes of identity formation and reconnection with land and nature-based belonging, without ever losing sight of the personal narratives of those who live within the Territories, and those who have an experience and wisdom of indigeneity based on a unique linguistic, political, cultural and historical context.

Expanding the term 'Indigenous' does not necessarily imply ignorance or naivety. Place and belonging are aspirations that Indigenous Peoples and oppressed White, Black, Asian and other peoples have experienced both in similar and also in very different ways. Struggles can be shared, so that the effort to achieve belonging in Nature can be fortified through alliances between oppressed and marginalised groups that do not result in strategic essentialism but more simply, result in friendships and bonds forged through common love and struggle for forests. As **Paul Redman** from INUTW maintains:

> *I am a South African born English person, and I have struggled to make sense of where I fit in, where I belong … it gives me a great sense of personal development to work with Indigenous Peoples and learn their values and principles … It helps me to understand what it means for me personally to belong, to connect to community and connect to the Earth so as to be guided by nature-based principles.*
> (**Redman, in research interview**)

Iconic forests: why do some forests receive more media attention than others?

Many primary forests have acquired the status of global icon in recent decades. The iconic status of certain forests depends largely on the production and dissemination of visual

[5] Strategic essentialism is a major concept in post-colonial theory, introduced in the 1980s by the Indian literary critic and theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The concept refers to a political tactic in which minority groups, nationalities or ethnic groups mobilise on the basis of shared gendered, cultural or political identity to represent themselves. Despite differences that may exist between members of these groups, it is sometimes advantageous to temporarily 'essentialize' these - despite basic flaws to this general representation - in order to achieve certain goals, such as equal rights or anti-globalisation.

iconography and media fixation. Photography and visual storytelling are vital to how public opinion is informed (or not) of key issues such as forest monitoring, deforestation, land and human rights, and other major issues associated with forest governance and preservation.

Iconic imagery can lead to a fixation of public narratives on some forests over others. This can result in relative disengagement of public opinion from lesser-known forests or endangered vegetations such as the Central American Rainforest, the Atlantic Forest, the Catinga or savannah treescapes of Northeastern Brazil, the tropical forests of Guyana, the temperate forests of South America (Valdivian Forest and sub-antarctic forest), the *paramo* vegetation in the mountainous regions of Ecuador and Colombia, the sclerophyllous forests of Central Chile and Southern Peru, the Chilean Sea Forest, and so on.

Arguably, no forest in the world is more iconic than the Amazon. Despite its status as a global icon, the Amazon Forest is not as endangered as the Atlantic Forest of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), of the 1,000,000 km^2 (386,000 square miles) of original Atlantic Forest that once blanketed the coast of Brazil, just 7% now remains, while only 13% of the original rainforest remains in Paraguay (World Wildlife Fund, 2020).The attention that the Amazon Forest garners among the general public can sometimes lead to a lack of coverage of Atlantic Forest peoples in the Brazilian media. Half of Brazil's Indigenous Peoples do not live in the Amazon Rainforest, yet the elevated media status of this forest biome often translates to an iconic status attributed to Amazonian peoples, not to mention the glamourisation or romanticism attached to so-called ‘Amazonian tribes’.

Guarani Yvyrupá community in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil. Every morning a group of children guided by a young leader go deep inside the forest to check their traps.
Photo credit: Pablo Albarenga

According to Global Forest Watch, forest cover in Central America has declined significantly in the period 2002-2019, with loss of humid primary forest ranging from 6.5% of total tree cover in Mexico, through to 17% in Honduras and a staggering 23% in Nicaragua, which would suggest that the latter has lost almost a quarter of its primary forest in this 17-year period (Global Forest Watch, no date). Loss of tree cover in the context of the Amazon Forest also varies according to country, with deforestation rates ranging from 1.2% of total tree cover loss in Venezuela, through to 7.2% in Brazil, amounting to 24.5 mega-hectares in Brazil alone.

Urgency is a catchword that can be used to characterise forest action in most primary forests in the South American context, which is why stories of forest protection and governance should not compete between iconic biomes and lesser known ones; rather, the media has an important role to play in terms of covering stories concerning iconic forests such as the Amazon, to ensure that this forest remains at the centre of public attention, while at the same time raising awareness about the Atlantic Forest, the Catinga, the Paramo and many other tropical and temperate forests across the Americas.

Paramo forest, Ecuador
Photo credit: Nicolás Goyes

Research methodology

The strategy for research was based on a triangulation of desk-based literature and review of critical photographic practices, critical theory of Indigenous media and stakeholder interviews.

Stakeholder mapping and interviews

Our work is grounded on a stakeholder mapping that included 194 individuals and organisations, 30 of which were contacted and 21 of whom were interviewed. The interviewees have been quoted in bold and without a date of publication (e.g. **Eliana Champutiz**) to denote that the quoted sources stem from interviews conducted as part of this research. The effort to draw on the first-hand perspectives of Indigenous media makers drives the need for this empirical and testimonial approach.The choice of participants stemmed from a collective decision based on two main criteria:

- This project draws on existing contacts that the research team have mobilised given our experience in the field, which ensured participant trust and fidelity of the materials presented here.
- The individuals and groups interviewed were invited to take part based on the fact that they are influential voices in the present debate, either because these individuals are leaders or influencers in their communities, or else because their organisations are publicly recognised as having an impact and transformational effect in the context of Indigenous Media Presence.

Twenty-four stakeholders from across twelve Latin American countries were interviewed, including Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile. All interviewees are named in the acknowledgments section of this report.

Literature review

Climate imagery and science communication research

The present report sits within the field of visual communication, where the exploration of climate visuals has gained considerable traction in recent decades (O'Neill, 2008; Smith and Joffe, 2012; Rebich-Hespanha et al., 2015). The field has expanded to include numerous explorations of climate-related discourse and their dissemination via disparate visual media, including maps, three-dimensional visualisations, cartoons, infographics, graphs and videos (O'Neill and Smith, 2014). Some of the key attributes of climate visual impact, according to scholars, are high quality, aesthetic appeal, authenticity and endurance, which denotes the way in which certain emblematic images persist in time.

A growing body of research using qualitative methodologies has probed the manner in which the general public responds to graphic depictions of climate change. Prevalent within the literature has been the study of efficacy. The development of evidence-based approaches that evaluate effective and affective responses to climate visuals by the public has been crucial within the field, in order to ascertain ways in which certain images are more likely to generate a motivational effect on viewers than others.

Scholars have focused on key concepts such as ‘visual salience’, that is: the property of certain images whose depiction of climate change stand out; or ‘dramatic effect’, used to denote images that capture the human and ecological drama of climate change in narrative form. Although a substantial amount of research in the field has raised concerns over the manner in which negative imagery can dissuade viewers to act, some scholars have suggested that dramatic and salient imagery can prompt strong negative feelings even though this does not necessarily undermine public willingness to respond (Levine and Kline, 2017).

Also prominent within the field has been the argument that climate solution visuals tend to make people feel more empowered and thus more likely to respond. Whilst such imagery may be considered efficacious, climate solution visuals can minimise the importance of particular climate problems (O’Neill and Nicholson-Cole, 2009; O’Neill et al., 2013). What is more, climate solution imagery tends to simplify the complexity of natural solutions to climate change, without paying sufficient attention to cross-cutting issues arising from climate change, such as narco-trafficking within endangered forests, gender-related violence, environmentally displaced peoples, state-sponsored violence against conversation groups and Indigenous guardians, and so on.

There have been similar disagreements among experts around the depiction of local versus remote contexts. It has been noted that images of polar bears are often used as visual cues for the depiction of climate change, particularly in the news media. Scholars are quick to point out that this visual association is misleading inasmuch as it reinforces notions that climate change is a distant issue (Doyle, 2007; Manzo, 2010). A recent review of the field by McDonald *et al*. (2015) suggests that reducing the perceived distance of climate change may actually have unanticipated negative effects on public engagement. Research also suggests that people find it easier to engage with images that depict human stories (Nicholson-Cole, 2005; Braasch, 2013). Accordingly, climate-related images elicit more favourable reactions when they can be seen to be personable, or when the people depicted in these images show events and situations that the viewer can identify with and personalise.

Also nascent within the field has been the topic of stakeholder mapping, which is part of a broader effort within the research community to survey relevant actors and their relations. Along the same line of inquiry, researchers have prompted the need to assess image repositories, for instance, through an examination of image libraries, collections and archives that contain high impact and high efficacy materials, while also evaluating publicly accessible databases for groups or individuals interested in climate change communication.

An area that has received surprisingly scant attention in the scholarly community is the issue of values and ethical good practice. There is a pressing need to advance diversity and equality in the way climate visuals are produced and consumed, for instance, by broadening the profile of image-makers and producers of climate visuals and imagery (i.e. photojournalists, photographers, animators and graphic designers) in an effort to be more inclusive of race, gender, sexual and ethnic diversity. Further understanding of representation is needed to advance the way in which real-life people and stories depicted in climate visuals can be properly credited, recognised and remunerated, and likewise, how sensitivities and priorities among local communities depicted in climate visuals can be placed at the epicentre of climate research, for instance, through more participatory, co-creative and bottom-up approaches.

Indigenous media studies and academic research

Indigenous media studies is an interdisciplinary field at the intersection of globalisation studies, cultural studies, media and communication, Indigenous studies, as well as performance and dance studies. The academic field of Indigenous media has also prompted calls for disruption of colonial forms of knowledge production, not least through the promotion of Indigenous worldviews, as well as a deep transformation of research methodologies, approaches, ethics and values among university scholars.

Among the first scholarly works on Indigenous media are Terence Turner's 1990 essay 'Visual Media, Cultural Politics, and Anthropological Practice: Some Implications of Recent Uses of Film and Video Among the Kayapo of Brazil', and Faye Ginsburg's 1991 essay 'Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village'. Ginsburg sets the tone for an enduring critical debate on whether Indigenous media, as a global and interconnected phenomenon, threatens Indigenous identity in some traditional sense due to the encroachment of Western technology, or whether the appropriation of Western media by Indigenous media makers is, on the contrary, a means of enlivening Indigenous worldviews by connecting Indigenous groups locally and also to a global audience. In their book, *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, and Politics*, Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stuart (2015) offer the following definition:

> *Indigenous media may be defined as forms of media expression conceptualized, produced, and circulated by Indigenous peoples around the globe as vehicles for communication, including cultural preservation, cultural and artistic expression, political self-determination, and cultural sovereignty.* (Wilson and Stuart, p.19)

Indigenous media studies is therefore conceivable as an academic area of research and teaching that seeks to better understand minority-produced media, often in terms of the many philosophical, political and spiritual motivations of Indigenous media makers.

While the subject matter of Indigenous media research is extremely diverse, Indigenous experience lies at the epicentre of the study area. In addition, Indigenous media studies seeks to critically interrogate the use of media as a decolonising tool used by minority groups that have experienced “subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion, or discrimination” (Kingsbury, 2012).

According to Laura R. Graham, the use of audio-visual media among Indigenous media-makers must strive to achieve what this scholar calls “representational sovereignty” (Graham, 2016). Likewise, in their book *Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World* (2000), Claire Smith and Graeme Ward state that Indigenous media makers and activists “are attempting to reverse processes through which aspects of their societies have been objectified, commodified, and appropriated by the dominant society”; and they add: “indigenous media productions are efforts to recuperate histories, land rights, and knowledge bases as cultural property.”

As Chilean media anthropologist **Juán Francisco Salazar** (in research interview) points out, Indigenous media is not a monolith; there are many different types of Indigenous media research areas according to regional, linguistic and cultural contexts. Nor have the many fields evolved consistently over the past decades, but are instead continuously growing in different directions of travel. Within a Latin American context, Indigenous media has been extensively discussed by numerous academic scholars, many of whom are referenced in this report, including Claudia Magallanes-Blanco (Mexico), Gabriela Zamorano Villareal, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (Bolivia) and Ana Mariella Bacigalupo (Chile).

Grey literature: guidelines and reports

Researchers working in the field of climate outreach and public engagement have steered principle-based approaches resulting in well-informed considerations and signposts for improved practice and policy around production, dissemination and consumption of climate visuals and images. The starting point for the present report is the publication of the Seven Climate Visuals Principles (CVPs), co-produced by a team of experts at Climate Outreach (NGO). The first Climate Visuals report, titled 'Climate Visuals: Seven principles for visual climate change communication' (Climate Outreach, 2020) draws on extensive social science research conducted in Germany, UK and the US. As part of a survey of 3,014 people across these countries, the Climate Outreach team conducted in-depth image testing in order to collate and analyse the response of members of the public to a substantive collection of climate images.

Parallel efforts for the formulation of recommendations for best practice in the communication of climate change from the perspective of Indigenous communicators have been produced - for instance in the form of the 5 Consejos de los Sabedores de la Cuenca Amazónica para Narrar Historias (Agenda Propia, 2021). These guidelines have been produced by Agenda Propia, an independent media group based in Bogotá that specialises in participatory journalism created with Indigenous communicators as part of a pluralistic

agenda and methodology for intercultural journalistic specials. Recently, Agenda Propia staged the Fotoperiodismo en Territorios Indígenas: Aprendizajes y desafíos, a webinar with **Pablo Albarenga**, Lismari Machado and Alejandro Saldivar, aimed at discussing the main insights, opportunities and challenges of conducting media work within Indigenous territories (Rainforest Journalism Fund, 2020). The findings of this report are aligned with many of the ideas put forward by this collective, and expand on these priorities in order to accelerate Indigenous media presence within English-speaking and Latin American media contexts.

The role played by Indigenous Peoples in the preservation of forests is the subject of extensive and detailed reports produced in recent years, for instance, the aforementioned IPCC report (2018), and an in-depth report prepared by **David Kaimowitz** entitled Forest Governance by Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: an opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO and FILAC, 2021). According to this report, Indigenous peoples physically occupy 404 million hectares in Latin America; they are involved in the communal governance of between 320 and 380 million hectares of forest, which store about 34,000 million metric tons of carbon. This is why Indigenous territories are key to the protection of biodiversity. The report concludes that governments must continue to recognise land and forest rights, arguing that as a result of titled Indigenous territories in the Bolivian, Brazilian and Colombian Amazon, between 42.8 and 59.7 million metric tons (MtC) of CO2 emissions were avoided in the period 2000-2012; the equivalent of taking between 9 and 12.6 million vehicles out of circulation for one year (FAO and FILAC, 2021).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the intersection of climate crisis and planetary health crisis issues has prompted concerns in the context of ethnically and socially discriminatory public health policies in times of Covid-19. The challenges and risks faced by Indigenous Peoples in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic are covered in the FILAC and Foro Indígena Abya Yala report (2020).

More recently, the 2021 Compendium of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge: Towards Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge in Global Reports on Climate Change (Mustonen *et al.*, 2021) represents a further step towards the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and local knowledge (LK) within international environmental and climate assessments. This compendium documents ways in which IK and LK observe, project and respond to anthropogenic climate change. In doing so, the compendium provides an invaluable resource for indigenous led solutions to climate change that sits alongside existing FAO reports, the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) and beyond.

Towards a value-based approach

This report is an effort to place value-based approaches and deep ethics[6] at the heart of cross-sector efforts to represent climate change and land use in an Indigenous territorial context. The need for guiding principles and a value-based approach is important not only to

[6] For explanation of this term, see section below, 'What are deep ethics?'

individuals and organisations in the media sector, but also to actors in the charity and third sector, policy stakeholders and decision-makers, and multinational bodies, as well as members of the public who wish to deepen their understanding of climate emergencies and solutions.

The approach applied here champions a critical understanding that challenges misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples predominantly within the context of print and electronic media, while addressing a serious gap, absence and invisibility of minority ethnic groups within mainstream and independent media platforms. Ultimately, what the public knows about climate change is defined by mediated knowledge steeped in Western notions that are typically not inclusive of Indigenous histories, memories and imaginaries.

Indigenous climate stories are a serious gap not only in the literature, but more profoundly, in the public's capacity to know what climate change is from the perspective of the Territories. This is not only a question of finding new stories to feed media consumers' appetites for environmental narratives; it is an opportunity to learn ways of understanding climate change from a Nature-based cultural horizon, where such phenomena as global warming and deforestation are not reducible to the narratives of carbon sequestration, net zero and the energy crisis (Kaimowitz, 2015).

Indigenous thinkers have raised concerns of a civilisational crisis (Krenak, 2020b); hence the refrain used among Indigenous peoples that the current predicament is not to be understood as a climate crisis necessarily but as 'planetary disease'. In the Mapuche tradition of Southern Chile, climate change is understood as *quisukütran*, a disease of the human soul and *mapukütran*, a disease of the Earth, as the Earth is being abandoned by the human race (Meliñir, 2020). Indigenous understanding of climate change as disease is vital to the creation of holistic solutions based on healing processes that are at once spiritual, cultural and environmental.Contrary to Western solutions that tend to focus on science and technology, Indigenous perspectives on climate change tend to focus on Indigenous science (Cajete, 2020) in conjunction with spiritual, intellectual and emotional knowledge related to environmental loss, mourning and healing. Climate change is often characterised within Indigenous perspectives as disease of the spirit, the body and the land. As Davi Kopenawa, a shaman from the Yanomami peoples in Brazil, argues in *The Falling Sky* (co-written with French anthropologist Bruce Albert):

> *When they think their land is getting spoiled, the white people speak of "pollution." In our language, when sickness spreads relentlessly through the forest, we say that xawara [epidemic fumes] have seized it and that it becomes a ghost.*
> (Kopenawa Yanomami and Albert, 2013)

Paying serious attention to Indigenous climate science and Indigenous approaches to climate communication is long overdue within the media sector at large. Even if terms used by Indigenous leaders like Kopenawa are not commonplace in the media sector, it is important to begin to expand the vocabulary used by mainstream media, so that media

actors are familiarised with Indigenous voices and perspectives, and so that print and electronic media can begin to change the language and tone of the climate debate, for instance by foregrounding spiritual and affective understandings of nature and disease. For instance, the term ‘planetary healing’, can be a more positive and empowering term when compared to ‘climate change’ or ‘climate solutions’.

Dignity and solidarity should also be placed at the heart of any climate visualisation agenda or any meaningful Indigenous media presence advanced by independent and mainstream media actors. In sum, rather than advocating the need for inclusivity and diversity, the methodological approach followed here emphasises the need to critically interrogate ways in which media in the broadest sense can steer change at the economic, social and political level. More Indigenous voices need to be heard. More media content needs to be produced by Indigenous content producers. More Indigenous vision needs to underpin the production of standard climate visuals in the global print and electronic media contexts.

What are deep ethics?

Institutional and corporate ethics are not the same as life ethics. Whereas institutionalised ethics are internal to the procedures and practices of organisations, good practice among Indigenous peoples do not emerge from managerial or corporate frameworks, but from an understanding of life within the Territories. “If we are going to talk about [deep] ethics,” Bolivian documentary photographer **Sara Aliaga** maintains, “we must start with community; with Territory” (in research interview). Media production should not only be ethical at the institutional level, according to protocols and procedures defined by institutional interests that do not have a deeply rooted connection with land or territory. Deep ethics must question the institutionalisation of ethics, and the use of technical language to refer to ethical practices. Terms such as ‘subject’, ‘expert’, ‘beneficiary’, ‘stakeholder’ and ‘professional’ are questionable according to **Jess Crombie**, not least because they show a sense of disconnection, a lack of bonding and relation between people. She adds:

> *Certain mindsets are maintained through all kinds of processes including education and the media, via the stories that people tell, which deliberately or not perpetuate a language that makes people who live off the land seem like passive objects, say ‘recipients’ or ‘beneficiaries’, and so immediately you set up a condition where certain people are not dynamic, or else have no agency, as part of this abstracting process. They are passive, they are recipients.* (**Crombie, in research interview**)

Deep ethics cannot be generalised, according to **Juan Francisco Salazar** (in research interview), insofar as humanitarian ethics, media ethics and participatory communication ethics all propose different visions of good practice. However, what many ethical frameworks in an institutional context have in common is a lack of rootedness and sense of belonging. To work from within the Territories without reproducing an extractivist style of knowledge production is a basic tenet of deep ethics. Salazar adds:

> *There is a trap we all fall into when extracting knowledge so as to make it circulate along circuits which Indigenous communities and individuals do not have access to; the ethical conundrum has to do with breaking those circuits, inventing other circuits, letting others lead the narrative, turning systems of knowledge and media production into vehicles for others to use, opening our institutions to be hacked by Indigenous filmmakers who may take advantage of infrastructure and resources. We [academics] work from a global perspective, from a planetary and global perspective, which is important, but we do not have an ethics rooted in the territory, in a sense of deep belonging.* (**Salazar, in research interview**)

The point is emphasised by **Paul Redman**, Director of *If Not Us Then Who* - an NGO designed to create structures to allow Indigenous media communicators to take ownership of the NGO system through a three-phase model, starting with a majority Indigenous membership within the board of directors. The process begins, according to **Redman** (in research interview), with an ethical approach that recognises the need to "understand each other's language" through different modes of knowledge transfer. The narrow idea of 'expertise', once confined to scientific, academic and university-educated institutions, is hereby challenged. The very notion of 'expert' is problematised by bottom-up approaches such as participatory journalism, citizen journalism, social media and media production by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Ancestral traditions stemming from both Indigenous and Afro-descendant perspectives are often referred to as 'deep Americas'. In *La América Profunda Habrá de Emerger*, Huichol writer Gabriel Pacheco Salvador writes: "Indigenous peoples have systems of government and ways of imparting justice borne of our own traditions; that is, derived from millenial and deep experience" (1997). **Marielle Ramires**, founder of *Mídia Ninja*, explains that her independent media organisation emerged in the small city of Cuiabá, in "deep Brazil" (*Brasil profundo*, in research interview). Ramires speaks of a "dialogic ethics" where the values, principles and processes of media production and circulation are conducted in dialogue with communities, or as a dialogue between social and Indigenous movements (see also Magallanes-Blanco, 2008). This sense of belonging to deep territory defines the ethical direction of travel and mission of many Indigenous movements and media practices, not only in Mexico and Brazil.

In sum, deep ethics prioritises values such as common good, fairness and reciprocity in ways that are rooted to a deep country (i.e. a land that preserves deep historical and cultural continuity). Each deep ethic is specific to the land and territory from which it emerges. Deep ethics are not institutional or organisational ethics, rationalised in the form of abstract frameworks. Deep ethics is a nature-based, heart-centred and kincentric value system that has to be lived by, felt, experienced, materialised, in accordance with the way people live within their Territories. Deep ethics comes from the depth of living with, and for, the ancestral land. In the context of climate debates, deep ethics is a cycle that goes back to land, ensuring communication and dissemination of stories returns to the Territories and their peoples. It is a circuit that gives more than it takes away.

Why is it important to acknowledge privilege?

When seeking to generate images of the climate emergency, it is vital to recognise the complex and cross-cutting issues that affect areas of the world susceptible to global warming, climate change and land crisis. Climate-related problems can collide with other issues such as misgovernance, political instability, gender violence, inter-ethnic conflict, narco-trafficking, extractivism, human and nature rights violation, water scarcity, poverty, high levels of pollution and plastic waste, and lack of intercultural education or intercultural health policies. It is necessary to understand the power asymmetries at work by raising awareness of the cross-cutting factors as well as intersectional issues that lead to marginalisation and privilege.

One way in which marginalisation can be confronted is through acknowledgment of privilege. There is great virtue in recognising the economic, class, education and race characteristics that constitute positions of privilege. Mainstream media do not often recognise the privileged position of media professionals, nor is the status and power of the sector openly acknowledged when telling stories about forest peoples.

Based on insights gained over the course of this research, it is important to understand that so-called stakeholders who seek to work in Indigenous Territories are in a position to join and leave forest communities. This includes media groups, faith groups, charities, humanitarians, academics and policy-makers. Indigenous forest dwellers do not have that choice. They are in the frontline of this fight for the survival of forests all day, every day. As Waorani activist Nemonte Nenquimo puts it:

> *What we defend is life and the planet. And I would like the world to also assume its part in this fight. Do not expect that only Indigenous peoples will continue to do so. We need you to fight with us to protect the Amazon. If we all come together, we can change the future of our generations.*
> (Nenquimo and Blasco, 2020, translated by the author)

Legacies of visual colonialism

What is visual colonialism?

The very words used to describe the act of photographing speak of certain power relations between photographer and photographed subject. Teju Cole writes in his photo essay When the Camera Was a Weapon of Imperialism. (And When It Still Is) that 'shooting' with a camera is an acknowledgment of the "kinship of photography and violence" (Cole, 2019). Similarly, when saying that the camera can 'capture' a scene, subject or event, the photographic vernacular conjures up the use of force. Photographers must recognise that the force of photography has a historical complicity with larger forces that have sought to utilise visual technology, as Cole would have it, as a weapon of imperialism.

Lack of engagement with the colonial past poses risks of further perpetuating, through ignorance or oversight, the visual regimes of historical colonialism. With the best intentions, content producers, academics, artists and other actors who wish to tell the story of climate change and land use in the South and Central American contexts may be causing further harm by undermining or overlooking the lessons of the past. Understanding past histories via visual means is a first step towards a deeper engagement with contemporary land struggles and resistance movements. As such, transforming the use of photography and image production is a powerful way of questioning, disrupting and hopefully remedying past forms of oppression.

Climate change and Indigenous Peoples: an old controversy

The South American continent has experienced many environmental changes. For instance, the continent experienced mass extinction of megafauna as early as the Pleistocene, during an event known as the 'Pleistocene overkill'. According to Paul Martin's controversial theory (1966), the appearance of humans in the Americas was principally responsible for major megafaunal collapse. While the combined effect of climate change and human action has been the most widely argued cause of extinctions, many scholars now agree with Martin that humans were the principal drivers of the Quaternary extinctions, and were thus indirectly responsible for prehistoric phases of climate change (Prates and Pérez, 2021). The root cause of climate change from this transhistorical point of view is not industrial action but human overconsumption and overpopulation, which lie at the heart of civilisational crises past and present.

The debate as to which path a human civilisation should take with regards to our relation to the natural world is another age-old controversy. Whether Indigenous Peoples should have rights, and consequently, the question as to whether forests should be protected within Indigenous Territories, is a controversy that goes back a long way. In Europe, the debate was first discussed in public in 1550, when the Bishop of Chiapas Bartolomé de las Casas and the theologian Juán Ginés de Sepúlveda led the so-called Valladolid Controversy. The

two leading legal minds of the Spanish Crown met in the Colegio de San Gregorio in the city of Valladolid to ascertain whether or not ‘Indians’ had souls and could be counted as fellow humans.

The Valladolid Controversy, which was the first debate in European history to discuss the treatment of Indigenous Peoples by European colonists, ended with both sides claiming to have won the dispute. Sepúlveda advocated the idea that Indigenous People were cannibals and therefore did not have inalienable human rights. Sepúlveda further argued that it was necessary to wage a “just war” on Indigenous populations based on the argument, taken from Aristotelian philosophy, that "natives are naturally inferior”(Castilla Urbano, 2020). Las Casas maintained that Indigenous Peoples and Spaniards were equals under divine law; furthermore, he condemned the mass extermination of innocent people and the violence committed against local communities under religious pretexts. Las Casas’s chronicles of the destruction of the Indies led to new legislation on the treatment of Indigenous Peoples. Further, Las Casas’ eyewitness account of mass extermination in the Americas has become a testimonial source for the re-conceptualisation of colonial history in terms of what is now often referred to as the Indigenous Holocaust or the ‘Great Dying’.

During the Conquest of the Americas, 56 million Indigenous people were killed. To this day, no apology or acknowledgment has been issued by the Spanish or Portuguese Crowns.

According to recent research conducted by scholars at University College London, the American genocide also led to environmental impact, which caused climate change in the 15th and 16th centuries (Koch et al., 2019). According to scholars, the ‘Great Dying’ was triggered by the irruption of Europeans and the introduction of new pathogens to the subcontinent. Along with warfare and slavery, colonisation led to an epidemic of diseases such as smallpox, measles, influenza and cholera. As populations plummeted, the land was abandoned, which caused natural vegetation to regrow. Changes to land use would have led to a lowering of CO2 levels in the atmosphere, which according to researchers, eventually dropped by 7-10ppm.This coincides with the ‘Little Ice Age’, a period between about 1300 and 1870 during which many parts of the world dipped into cooler temperatures.

Relations between global cooling and land use, on the one hand, and global warming and contemporary land use, reveal the interdependence of climate, forest growth and human activity. Moreover, the old controversy as to whether war between civilisations is justifiable as a means to gain control over the land is a prescient warning of a contemporary controversy. The historical perspective sheds light not only on the interdependence of human, land and climate, but also, on a civilizational crisis. It is known that the collapse of the Mayan civilisation between AD 800 and 1000 was due to a massive drought caused by deforestation and overpopulation, a similar fate befalling the peoples of Easter Island or Rapa Nui, whose civilisation collapsed around AD 1200 due to deforestation, internal warfare and famine (Diamond, 2005). Is the endless feeding and growth frenzy of Western civilisation not a phase of advanced collapse due to a civilisational inability to harmonise relations between land, climate and human activity?

The Amazon tipping point

In the context of forest protection and governance, a substantial focus of the international community's efforts has been the so-called Amazon tipping point, which is one of the most urgent and potent stories when it comes to understanding the level of deforestation and destruction caused by wildfires. The Amazon tipping point will cause the largest biodiversity forest reserve in the world to collapse, at which point it will turn into a savannah. In many parts of the Amazon Forest biome, scholars claim that the tipping point has already happened.

Carlos Nobre, from the University of São Paulo, raised the alarm in 2018 by arguing that the Amazon might be much closer to a tipping point than previously thought. According to his estimates, if just 20–25% of the rainforest were cut down, it could reach a tipping point. At this stage, eastern, southern and central Amazonia would flip to a savannah-like ecosystem. In an article published by *Nature* magazine, Nobre maintains that: "If the tree mortality we see continues for another 10–15 years, then the southern Amazon will turn into a savannah" (quoted in Amigo, 2020). The point made by Indigenous climate change experts, meanwhile, is that Western civilisation has already reached its tipping point (Powys Whyte, 2020). The problem, according to Indigenous futurists, is that Western systems of economic and political governance are unable to accept the end of a supposedly endless linear growth.

Although the 'Amazon Tipping Point' is an iconic statement of the urgent and fragile state of the world's largest biome, the tipping point argument is applicable to most vulnerable forests in the world and not only to tropical forests. The transformation of temperate forest into shrubland and the gradual change of other tropical forests like the Atlantic and Central American forests all add up to create a global forest tipping point and global collapse of primary forestry. The media play a key role in flagging up the urgency of forest collapse and the various tipping points, which is why it is vital for media groups and Indigenous peoples to work together in finding best ways to tell this narrative in order to achieve utmost impact among the public and decision-makers alike.

The Amazon tipping point is not a problem that can be resolved with Western science and technology alone. The root of the problem is not often identified within Western scientific frameworks. As Kyle Powys Whyte (2020) has maintained within the area of Indigenous climate change studies, the Indigenous perspective does not reduce climate change to a scientific issue or political priority. Climate change is not only about carbon reduction, temperature rise or green energy: the problem goes deeper. Indeed, the problem has to do with the collapse of a civilisation model based on the myth of endless consumption. Contemporary climate change is, according to many Indigenous scholars, a colonial construct (Todd, 2015; Powys Whyte, 2017). It is a story told from the perspective of linear economic growth. Climate change stories tend to focus on narratives where the emphasis is placed on net zero, carbon sequestration, carbon trade and energy crisis, all of which are components of the linear narrative of Western progress, sustainability and economic

development. That linear sense of time that characterises Western history is not indigenous to Abya Yala, nor is the narrative of climate change.

What is a civilisational crisis?

Human overconsumption and collapse have characterised many civilisations in Central and South America, before and after Western invasion in the 15th century. In the last decades, Indigenous peoples in Abya Yala have proposed solutions to systemic collapse such as *Buen Vivir* and *Planes de Vida*, calling special attention to the 'crisis of civilisation' (*crisis civilizatoria*). As early as the 2009 World Social Forum, a call was made by Indigenous organisations from the Andean region, endorsed by dozens of other organisations from across the Americas, as well as India and Africa. Civilisation crisis was defined in this particular forum as the conjunction of economic, environmental and democratic crises (Aguiton, 2009).

What the contemporary Indigenous perspective often highlights is the cyclical nature of civilisational crisis. According to the Andean notion of *Pachakutik* (from the Quechua *Pacha*, meaning 'space-time' and *Kutik*, meaning 'to turn or transform'), time unfolds in the form of a spiral. As such, the end of civilisations happens more or less every 500 years, according to Pachakutik theory. This is why many Indigenous prophecies have forecast the collapse of Western culture and the turning of a new era characterised by ecological harmony. As Ecuadorian anthropologist Patricio Guerrero Arias points out:

> *We are living in times of return and fulfillment of the prophecies, as announced by the wisdoms of the Abya Yala peoples, times of Pachakutik for the Andean world, which bring deep cosmic and civilizational transformations, which open space for spiritual and cultural consciousness that will give humanity possibilities to heal its social and individual wounds, so that we can wake up and feel from the heart that what is now at stake is the preservation of life.* (Guerrero Arias, 2018 p.32)

Indigenous traditions have grown out of historical forms of climate crisis and environmental devastation. An example of this is the story of *Anamei* and the burning of the Amazon Forest in the Harakbut tradition in Madre de Dios, Peru. The story of *Anamei* tells of a Mother Tree that saved the Harakbut Peoples from a fire that destroyed the forests in the primordial past. The tree will come back again to save the Harakbut Peoples when the world ends in a new conflagration (Patiachi and Paredes, 2021).

Within Indigenous eschatological traditions,[7] the destruction of the world has occurred many times before. The end of time occurred five hundred years ago, when Europeans arrived in the Americas, and also five hundred or so years before the arrival of European colonists, in the form of the Mayan and Rapa Nui collapse. The regeneration of the planet after

[7] Eschatology is a branch of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity. Eschathological is therefore used here to refer to traditional knowledge concerning tthe end of the world' or 'end times'.

civilisation collapse is a topic many Indigenous traditions have been addressing in their storytelling canons long before Western debates surrounding climate change first emerged in Western public spheres a few decades ago.

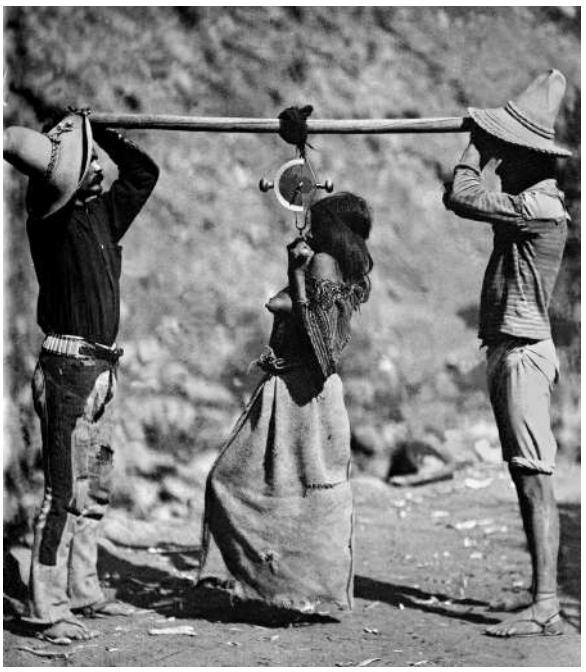
Colonialism in two shots

Colonialism starts when one or more nations violently invade and take control of another, claiming the land as their own. It is possible to depict the way in which colonialism translates into a visual regime in the context of land use and climate governance by considering two types of images: the image of the settler, who utilises the land and existing populations to build his colony; and the exterminator, who clears and cleanses the land completely to create a blank canvas or *terra nullius* for the construction of a new world order.

Both settler colonialism and colonialism by extermination are accompanied by their own visual regimes. Colonialism, in the present understanding, is a collective imaginary that relies upon the dissemination of images that appeal to the impressionability and sensibility of colonised populations[8]. By appealing to popular impressionability, visual colonialism can perpetuate a system of control of land and people, who must remain oppressed to reinforce the economic and political systems that sustain neo-colonial wealth.

Settler colonialism engenders a particular set of visual tropes based on negative stereotypes that promote the exploitation of land and forced labour (Veracini, 2011). This type of colonial imaginary predominates in the early colonial period of the 16th century, particularly in the Andes and Central America. Settler colonialism is defined by the settler's inability to change structural oppression using the system's own structures and systems (Rodriguez, 2020). Colonialism cannot use colonial tools to decolonise. In subsequent historical phases of colonial expansion, for instance during the 19th and early 20th centuries, settler colonialism was prevalent in frontier territories such as the American West or the Chilean Frontera. Settler colonialism is still operative in the form of a visual culture that represents Indigenous Peoples in a servile or infantile manner, for instance, as silent or unvoiced servants of White masters; as exotic or mysterious outsiders; or worse, as outlaws and outlanders who act against the interests of the State and White nations.

[8] Fanon argues that Western culture has had an effect on the impressionable minds of young African and African descendents in so-called "under-developed countries" (2004), where Western culture can be said to be an assault on youth's "impressionability and sensibility". He cites detective novels, penny-in-the slot machines, sexy photographs, pornographic literature, films banned to those under-16, and above all alcohol, as cultural and media items that destabilise youth in "under-developed" countries. The destabilisation of Indigenous youth due to the impact of consumer and commercial culture, and the assault of Western media on Indigenous youth's impressionability is discussed at length in Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen's (2012) *Indigenous Youth in Brazilian Amazonia: Changing Lived Worlds.*



Tarahumara Woman Being Weighed, Barranca de San Carlos (Sinforosa), Chihuahua (Mexico), 1892. Measuring of Indigenous Peoples was used as evidence to support race theories and uphold White superiority.
Photo credit: Among Unknown Tribes: Rediscovering the Photographs of Explorer Carl Lumholtz.

'Botocudo Indian' by Marc Ferrez (1876), Southern Bahía, Brazil.
Photo credit: Collection Instituto Moreira Salles

One example of how settler colonialism remains an entrenched ideological perspective, often circulated within mainstream media, concerns the recent campaign to criminalise Indigenous protest, particularly in Brazil. The vilification of Indigenous forest protectors and environmental campaigners in the mainstream media is still a major concern, as a 2019

Global Witness Report shows. Entitled Spotlight on Criminalisation of Land and Environmental Defenders, the report states that terrorism laws and aggressive legal attacks are being enforced on environmental and Indigenous campaigns worldwide, and that the way in which the public is misinformed of environmental defenders is part of a systemic problem. The investigation found that 164 land and environmental defenders were reported killed in 2018. Half of the countries in the list with the highest overall number of recorded deaths are in Latin America, with Colombia recording 24 deaths, and Brazil, 20. The sharpest increase in murders occurred in Guatemala, with a fivefold rise in killings during the year 2018. According to **Michael McGarrell**, an Indigenous campaigner from Guyana:

> *Indigenous People are being criminalized because we are standing up for our forest communities. Governments and the media are complicit in this criminalization. Those who do not like what we are fighting for - land - make us assassins and murderers even though it is us who are being killed, us who are rightful owners of these lands. Many groups are trying to silence us ... narco-traffickers want to kill our leaders. Once you decide to stand up, you immediately become a target ... politicians, governments, the big industries like mining and logging - they all start to look at you. Intimidation comes first. They try to scare you, and soon enough, they violate your rights.* (**McGarrell, in research interview**)

Colonialism is perpetuated not only through a language of criminalisation used against minority groups, for instance through the common use in Brazilian state media of terms such as *bandido* (criminal) to refer to Black youths caught by the police; the maligning of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour is a common visual strategy going back to oil painting and other pre-cinematic visual media representations of Indigenous peoples (see *The Return of the Indian Raid* by Argentinian artist Ángel Della Valle on page 77 of this report).

The visual symbolism of settler colonialism appears also in the form of propaganda. In other words, in addition to denigrating Indigenous Peoples or depriving Indigenous Peoples of dignity and self-respect through vilification, settler colonialism tends to glorify the White-dominated wealth system and economic structures that Indigenous Peoples supposedly threaten. Thus, since historical colonial times, visual regimes operating within the ideology of settler society have glorified colonial progress and industry. In recent decades, this is evident in media propaganda exalting progress in the form of mining, logging, industrial agriculture or hydropower at the expense of Indigenous Territories.

An example of a visual regime that glorifies settler colonialism can be found in the visual history of the American West, under the aegis of the Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny is an Eastern American set of principles as well as the mission of the United States to redeem and remake the West in the image of the Agrarian East. It is worth going back to the historical foundation of American imperialist ideology in order to better understand where the neo-colonial oppression mentioned by McGarrell finds its historical justification.

American Progress (1872)
Image credit: John Gast

The Manifest Destiny is also significant in the context of this discussion, not least because it is partly through the artistic and photographic visualisation of the West as a land of opportunities for the colonist, and as a land to be claimed by God-given right, that the Wild West could be cleared of its forests in order to recreate it in the image of the Agrarian East. The Manifest Destiny was operationalised in visual enterprises that supported both colonisation and clearance. In other words, the North American colonial enterprise placed oil painting, photography and film at the heart of its expansion (Maxwell, 1999).

The utilisation of visual media for colonial growth continues well into the 21st century, for instance, in the form of propaganda films like *The Mighty Columbia River Dams Picture Film* (1947), or more broadly, the Western genre popularised in Hollywood between the 1950s and 1970s, where the portrayal of 'Indians' and deforested lands was characterised from a distinctly settler colonial perspective (Limbrick, 2010; Lahti and Hightower, 2020). McGarrell's quote above shows that the criminalisation of Indigenous peoples is a cultural phenomenon in which the media is complicit, for instance through the use of incendiary language (*bandidos*) or biased omission. The Manifest Destiny is an ongoing colonial enterprise enshrined in big business and corporate culture, where American Progress is still held as a religious principle, and where the agenda of progress is still in conflict with the interests of Indigenous Peoples in the Territories. There are countless examples of how the oil and gas, hydroelectric, mining and timber industry champion progress at the expense of environmental and Indigenous social justice (for a cross-cultural example across North and

South America, see The Condor and the Eagle, a multi-award winning documentary film directed by Sophie and Clément Guerra, 2019).

Finally, settler colonial regimes operate visually not only through images that glorify colonial industry, but also through the visual representation of labourers whose physical work becomes the foundation of a settler economy. Thus, visual colonialism also advances the idea that White settlers are entitled to privileges as part of a hierarchical economic system based on domination and exploitation of a colonised underclass. Representation of Indigenous and Black Peoples as submissive, passive, infantile or indeed as subservient or dependent on Western masters, perpetuates an internalised settler colonialism that according to **Marielle Ramires** (in research interview), founder of Mídia Ninja, has moulded contemporary media landscapes in Brazilian society. The depiction of Indigenous or Black servants, maids, dumbwits and Uncle Tom stereotypes is still a vernacular convention in Latin American soap operas, film, television and print media.

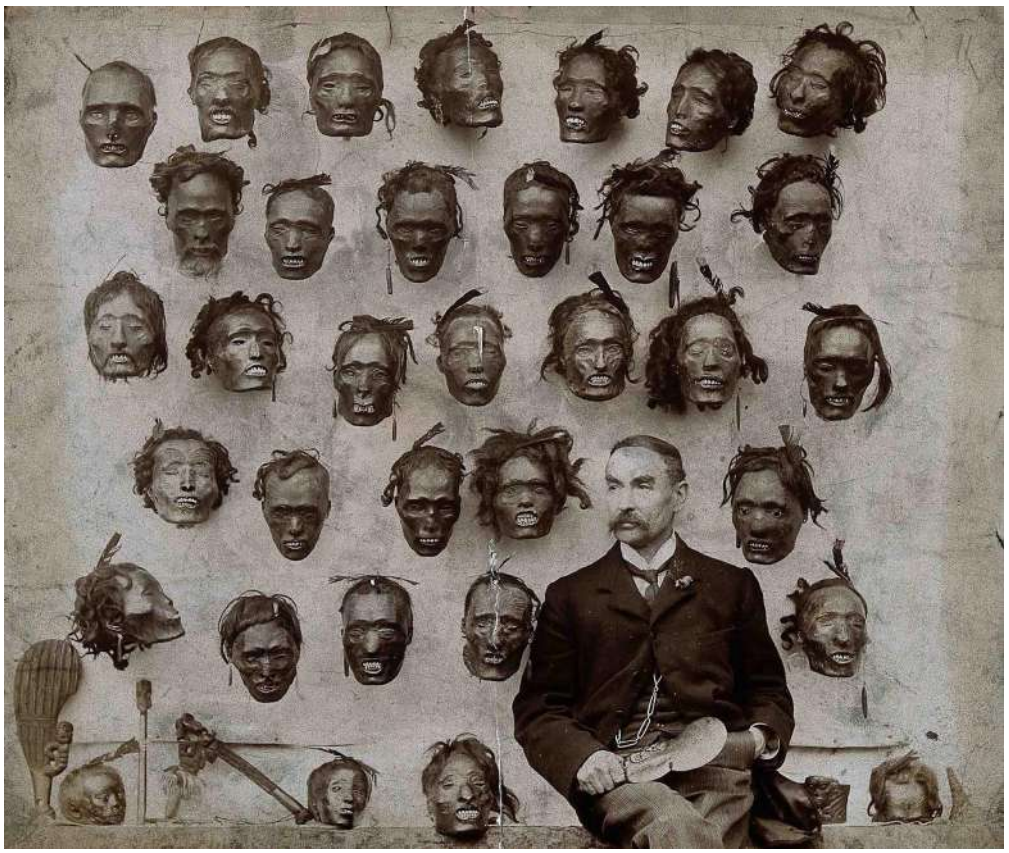
The second image that encapsulates colonialism in Latin America is that of the exterminator. Colonialism by extermination is accompanied by visual regimes based not so much on misrepresentation and negative stereotyping, as in the case of settler colonialism, but on amnesia. As opposed to settler colonialism, where existing populations are held by the colonial powers to serve as underclass, colonialism by extermination is reliant upon the complete annihilation of existing ethnic groups through genocide, forced sterilisation, forced starvation, displacement and other strategies of eradication. Colonialism by extermination is not only applicable to human rights abuse, but also to the abuse of Nature. In this particular form of colonial regime, oppression implies an act of double erasure. Racial cleansing and land clearing - the two violences go hand in hand. The media becomes complicit when stories of past extermination are allowed to vanish, or when the violent history of forested lands in the Americas is de-contextualised or ignored.

CONTENT WARNING

The following six pages contain graphic images and descriptions that some readers may find triggering, distressing, upsetting or disturbing.

This includes depictions and accounts of genocide, murder, decapitation and mutilation.

Reader and viewer discretion is advised.



Major-General Horatio Gordon Robley's Collection of Tattooed Heads, Author Unknown

There are numerous examples of how photography has been used to document, promote and support extermination of Indigenous populations. One example is the gruesome 1895 photograph of Horatio Gordon Robley's collection of tattooed heads. Although Robley's collection is not an example of colonial violence perpetuated in the Americas, but rather in Aotearoa (New Zealand), this photograph was referenced by Tuhoe-Māori forest guardian Chaz Doherty in the context of a Maori-Mapuche intercultural dialogue held as part of the Guardians of the Forest MOOC 2021, where Indigenous community leaders from Chile and New Zealand discussed whether Indigenous leaders' headshots should be made available for promotional purposes in the media and in online platforms.

Robley was a visual artist as well as a military man. He completed detailed sketches of Māori defences, wounded soldiers, surrenders and other scenes of the time. Robley's written accounts of military campaigning and his sketches were reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* between 1864 and 1867. It was Robley's obsession with Māori tattoo design that led the English military man to build up his macabre trophy collection, which was made up of 35 individual heads. In 1908, and having already resettled in England, Robley offered his collection to the New Zealand Government for £1,000; his offer, however, was refused. Later, with the exception of the five best examples which Robley retained, the collection of desiccated heads was purchased by the American Museum of Natural History in New York for the equivalent of £1,250.

An example of how photography, museography and the media are complicit in the perpetration of genocide in Latin America can be found in the history of the Selk'nam peoples of Tierra del Fuego. One of the most poignant historical accounts of this particular genocide can be found in Juan Pablo Riveros' 'Exterminio Ona', a historiographic section of his book *De la Tierra Sin Fuegos* (1986). Written during the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, 'Exterminio Ona' raises compelling parallels between the human rights abuse of Selk'nam People in the mid-19th century and similar abuses conducted against Indigenous populations by the Chilean security forces during the dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s.

Riveros produced a scriptural montage that, on the one hand, integrates historical and contemporary voices in order to vindicate the rights of those who have disappeared, while also fighting against amnesia and media invisibility on the other. What is significant about Riveros' account is the role museums and the media played in supporting both the killing of Selk-nam populations and the clearing of subantarctic forests in Tierra del Fuego. The strategic nature of the Magellan region had led to consecutive colonisations, first by Spanish invaders and later by British colonists of the Strait, who sought to dominate the Southern passage while violently imposing ranch colonies that caused direct conflict with Indigenous populations. In 1872, the English newspaper *The Daily News* published the following words with regards to the English colonisation of the Magellan Strait:

> *Undoubtedly the region has presented itself very suitable for cattle breeding; although it offers as its only drawback the manifest need to exterminate the Fuegian Indians.* (quoted in Riveros, 1986: 64)

The Belgian missionary and photographer Martin Gusinde, who was one of the few White people to photograph the Selk'nam before they were exterminated, is reported to have said:

> *The greed and inhumanity of civilized man reached such a low level that the heads of the Indians were very often for him an article of commerce, since the merchant paid the murderer a pound sterling and then sold the skull to the Museum of London for four pounds … splendid earnings in round numbers.* (quoted in Riveros, 1986: 64)

CONTENT WARNING

The following four pages contain graphic images and descriptions that some readers may find triggering, distressing, upsetting or disturbing.

This includes depictions and accounts of genocide, murder, decapitation and mutilation.

Reader and viewer discretion is advised.

Selk'nam genocide - Julius Popper during one of his Indian hunts.
A murdered Selk'nam man lies at Popper's feet (1886)
Photo credit: The Museum of World Culture (Världskulturmuseet)

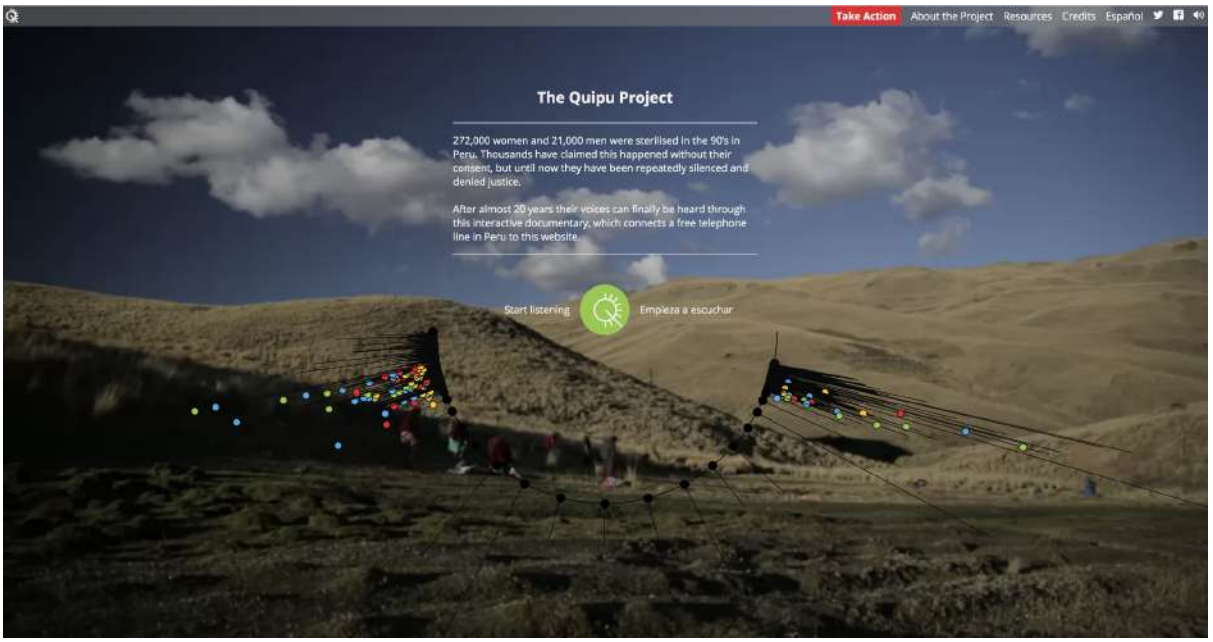
Riveros' account of the Selk'nam genocide, like Robley's collection of tattooed heads, is an example of how print media and museology have been complicit in overlooking, silencing or even supporting the extermination of Indigenous populations. At the Plataforma Constitucional Indígena, set up to give political and media visibility to Indigenous peoples leading the process of drafting the Chilean Constitution of 2021-2, Selk'nam representative José Luis Vásquez Chogue, the last grandson of one of 25 Selk'nam individuals to have survived the genocide, said:

> *We keep hearing in the schools that we are all dead. It is painful because our children now leave this land thinking that we are all dead. It is difficult to say who I am because the State does not recognise us. I cannot tell you who I am.*
> (Vásquez Chogue, 2021)

The state - and the same applies to state-sponsored and corporate media - have, according to Vásquez, "truncated the process of [Selk'nam] recognition", which further represents an obliteration of Indigenous survival and disregard for the role Selk'nam played historically as guardians of land and forests in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia. Devine Guzmán cites provocations to violence against Indigenous populations promoted by *O Globo* also in Brazil as late as the 1940s, echoing what in the 17th century the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio Viera

called “red gold” - that is, the spilling of Indigenous blood to serve the economic interests of colonists (Guzmán, 2013).

Colonialism by extermination is still practised by state powers against Indigenous populations throughout the Americas today - for instance, through forced sterilisation. Compulsory sterilisation was implemented on Indigenous women under the Fujimori regime in Peru in the 1990s. Forced sterilisation campaigns were ignored by state and independent media in Latin America. In the face of media silence and the invisibility of the men and women that were mass sterilised, initiatives such as the Quipu Project, an interactive testimonial sound-documentary of the victims, have sought to combat media inertia and amnesia. What initiatives such as the *Quipu Project* highlight is the recurrence of historical extermination and the repetition of violence and silence, which mass media is complicit in perpetuating.



“Quipus are knotted cords that were used by the Incas and ancient Andean civilisations, to convey complex messages. This interactive documentary project is a contemporary interpretation of this system. Through a specially established phone line connected to this website, the testimonies of around 150 sterilised people have already been collected. We expect that the number of voices will continue to grow and connect, building a community around this common issue.”
https://interactive.quipu-project.com/#/en/quipu/intro

Claims of “indigenous genocide” have been widely reported by Indigenous groups in the Amazon due to the spread of Western diseases through trans-Amazonian highways built to expedite extractivist industries. The building of highways in the Amazon is a state-sponsored act that has decimated Indigenous populations in the region (see Claudia Andujar’s visual installation Genocide of the Yanomami: Death of Brazil (Andujar, 1988). Indigenous genocides have also been widely claimed in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because many ethnic groups across the Amazon rainforest are relatively small (sometimes numbering less than 100 members for an entire ethnic denomination), the risk posed by Covid-19 raises concerns of potential extermination of entire communities, tribes and oral

traditions. Although the story of Indigenous genocides in the context of unjust health policies across the Amazon region has been widely disseminated among community platforms - for instance the Foro Social Panamazónico (no date) - generally speaking, state media in Latin America have remained silent about the way in which Indigenous populations have been affected by the global pandemic.

In July 2020, a judge of the Supreme Federal Court of Brazil warned President Jair Bolsonaro that his discriminatory response to Covid-19 could make his government guilty of "genocide against Indigenous peoples" (Mendes, 2021). Former Brazilian President Inácio Lula da Silva commented in March 2021 that the 300,000 deaths caused by Covid-19 constituted the "greatest genocide in Brazilian history" (Lula da Silva, 2021). The number has passed the half million mark at the time of writing. Even though early warnings among Indigenous leaders that discrimination against rural populations would lead to the extermination of entire communities, the word 'genocide' was not used in mainstream media until political figures began using the term. The most prominent political figures to claim genocide in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil were Lula and Supreme Justice Gilmar Mendes (Mendes, 2021), who also made allegations against the Brazilian Army, arguing that members of the armed forces were complicit in deliberate mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indigenous Territories. .

The controversy around Bolsonaro's alleged crimes against humanity continues at the time of writing this report. Claims of genocide illustrate entrenched colonial attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples. Neo-colonialism by extermination is happening today in ways that are perhaps not as gruesome or graphic as the history of extermination of the Selk'nam or Māori in the 19th century. Still, the threat of Indigenous extermination and media complicity remain urgent, given unequal health policies in times of Covid-19, coupled with state and corporate ownership of mainstream media platforms in the subcontinent (see the section 'Latin American media: a neo-colonial panorama' below) .

When the pandemic reached isolated or so-called 'recently contacted tribes', the news made headlines across the globe, for instance, in Survival International (2020), National Geographic (Wallace, 2020), NBC (Marx, 2020) and The Guardian (Collyns, 2020). This response once again raises concerns over the fixation of the international media on the Amazon Forest and Amazonian 'uncontacted tribes' at the expense of forest-dwelling communities more broadly. State and regional media in the pan-Amazonian countries have, on the whole, remained silent about a number of Covid-related issues that intersect with social and environmental justice such as lack of intercultural health policies, forest quarantine, discriminatory vaccination policies, traditional medicine as a solution to the coronavirus infection and public health attention for elderly populations in Indigenous communities (i.e. prioritisation of elders who are vital knowledge keepers, and whose death would constitute a fundamental loss of oral cultural heritage). None of these items have been covered extensively in the news; however, uncontacted tribes continue to make the headlines instead.

According to Indigenous philosopher Ailton Krenak, author of the book *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World,* the global pandemic is one of many genocides that Indigenous Peoples have survived in Abya Yala, and he adds:

> *The pandemic can be understood as a global alert sent by the living organism that is the Earth, as a reaction to the exploitation that human beings carry out of everything that makes up the ecosystem: oceans, forests and rivers. It is as if a circuit had been closed, and the answer to that was a virus. Everywhere on the planet, people should have the honesty to acknowledge themselves as co-perpetrators of this pandemic, instead of continuing to search for a culprit. Science is still reluctant to admit that the pandemic is part of climate events. People imagined that the planet's response to global warming would be extreme temperatures, and that people would roast to death. But what arrived was a virus.* (Krenak, 2020a)

Colonialism by extermination requires attention in the international media, particularly in the context of climate change, extractivist land use (road building) and Covid-19. As Graham Harvey points out: “Colonisation and genocide require attention, contestation and redress” (Harvey, 2016). It is clear from contemporary claims of genocide in the context of pan-Amazonian highway construction and Covid-19 that in order to redress genocide, it is first necessary to acknowledge that genocide is occurring in the present day, and that there is a serious omission in the mainstream media given the lack of coverage of the extermination of Indigenous forest dwellers. The fact that popular print media tend not to contextualise current issues such as climate change and Indigenous rights with regards to historical injustices and grievances raises further questions surrounding the politics of silencing and omission, which is symptomatic of colonialism by extermination. Nor does the media sector often acknowledge past complicity with extermination programmes, as the examples of *The Daily News*, *The London Illustrated* and, more recently, *O Globo*, reveal.

What role do images play in colonial histories of land use?

One of the premises of colonialism is that new lands and peoples can be seized upon by mere sight of them, regardless of whether or not lands are inhabited by other people or animals. This justifies the construction of colonial systems as visual-technological regimes (Smith, 2013; Foliard, 2021). ‘Right by sight’ is a concept that I have devised to explore the relation between optical technologies and political control. What I call Right by Sight (i.e. the idea that lands can be claimed for Crown, Church or Nation by merely sighting them) is also deeply tied to visual regimes in the context of a new world utopianism and the re-visualisation of the Americas as a new Europe or *Terra Nova* (Monteiro and Ming Kong, 2017). Colonialism continues to function as a “scopic regime”[9], to borrow the term from

[9] Drawing on Martin Jay’s famous 1988 article *Scopic Regimes of Modernity,* the term ‘scopic regime’ typically refers to an ensemble of practices and discourses that establish truth claims, typicality and credibility of visual acts and objects and politically correct modes of seeing. Raising critical awareness of the scopic regimes of modernity serves as a reminder that all seeing is mediated, and that there are deep-set politics of control in the way seeing is orchestrated by political regimes using visual media.

Martin Jay, not least because visual media can be used politically to re-imagine primary forests as new agrarian or mining utopias, thus establishing visual acts that justify deforestation for the development of the modern nation (Jay, 1988).

In July 2019 at a conference with the international press, newly elected Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro told journalists that “he was fulfilling a mission from God”. After announcing he would open Indigenous reserves for mining operations, he called into question his own government’s satellite data showing an alarming rise in deforestation, which he referred to as “lies”. Bolsonaro added: “You want the Indigenous people to carry on like prehistoric men with no access to technology, science, information, and the wonders of modernity, but Indigenous people want to work, they want to produce and they can’t. They live isolated in their areas like cavemen. What most of the foreign press do to Brazil and against these human beings is a crime” (quoted in Phillips, 2019).

Bolsonaro claimed that the Amazon Forest belongs to the Brazilian state, and that the mission to transform parts of the rainforest into a niobium mining site would enliven the Brazilian economy. Bolsonaro’s vision for the Amazon was said to be justified as a moral imperative. According to Bolsonaro, European peoples have no moral right over the protection of rainforests. He told the foreign press: “No country in the world has the moral right to talk about the Amazon. You destroyed your own ecosystems” (*ibid.*).

Bolsonaro’s view of Indigenous peoples as “cavemen” perpetuates colonial labels justifying progress and nation-state intervention based on the supposedly uncivilised nature of Indigenous populations. The argument is worryingly reminiscent of Gines de Sepulveda’s “just war” on Indigenous Populations, advanced during the Valladolid Controversy of 1550 (Castilla Urbano, 2020).

Bolsonaro’s reference to satellite imagery as a justification to opening mining operations in the Amazon, and his dismissal of deforestation data, represent an act of double erasure. On the one hand, denial of rising deforestation rates conceals environmental and land struggles mobilised to protect primary forest from large scale mining and agribusiness. On the other hand, Bolsonaro’s God-given mandate undermines Indigenous rights to forests, and denies the image of the forest that Indigenous peoples have in their own terms.

‘Right by Sight’ is an oppressive way of cancelling out ‘Right by Memory’. In other words, whereas the coloniser utilises optical technologies from cartography to satellite data to help re-imagine the forest as New World, the colonised peoples of the forest retain a bond to ancestral land through internal imagery - that is, through memory.

As the Bolsonaro example illustrates, colonisers tend not to have access to ancestral memory. It is clear why Bolsonaro refers to Indigenous peoples as “cavemen”. Having no ancestral connection with the forest, the neo-colonial regime presided by Jair Bolsonaro re-visualises the forest through a denigration and ultimate negation of Indigenous oral perspectives. Ancestral visions of the forest are simply overlooked by colonial visual

regimes. Bolsonaro labels Indigenous peoples as “prehistoric”. The irony is that Bolsonaro’s strategy to erase ancestrality, or ridicule it, is a vestige of colonial ideologies from the 16th century. Indigenous Peoples struggling for Nature is not prehistoric, it is the future (Noam Chomsky, quoted in Salazar Sutil, 2018). It is thus vital to contextualise contemporary photography of land, especially aerial and satellite photography, against oppressive visual histories that suppress internalised ways of seeing forests through memory and ancestrality.

Indigenous Peoples have their own image of the land outside the scopes of Western technological media. The image of the land borne of those who live in the Territories is rooted to ancestral memory, vision and dream. Indigenous Media Presence offers not only a way of rendering the land visible through the photographic works of Indigenous photographers; moreover, it offers an ‘image’ of the land, which is mediated by memory.

The colonial gaze (or how the forest becomes invisible)

The colonial gaze has been defined as a mechanism for the distribution of knowledge and power to the subject who looks, while denying or minimising access to power for its object, the one looked at (Rieder, 2012: 7). The colonial gaze can be further unpacked as a mechanism for colonial empowerment through optical forces that are at once internal and external: on the one hand, the colonial gaze refers to external and material conditions - it is mobilised through the actual instruments and technologies used to map, survey and depict the colony in graphic or optical media, from photographic cameras to long-distance lens technology, to satellite and drone equipment. On the other hand, and more fundamentally still, the colonial gaze is internalised (Spears, 2005; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018). Visual colonialism can be a mind’s eye that informs how we see, why we see, what we prefer to see and what we prefer not to, or fail to, see (Rivera Cusicanqui et al., 2016). Colonialism is a historical phenomenon that has become normalised through the behaviour of people living in a society affected psychologically by past and present oppression. The need to combat internalised colonial attitudes within climate photography not only requires handing over the camera to Indigenous image-makers, but a deeper intervention at the psychological level, to help decolonise mindsets.

Those who were once oppressed may mimic Western attitudes and perpetuate internalised colonial mindsets, akin to what Frantz Fanon, Martiniquais psychiatrist and political philosopher, famously called “black skins, white masks” (1986). Fanon himself declared in *The Wretched of the Earth* that photography can have damaging effects when it is internalised within postcolonial societies. In postcolonial contexts, Western media is consumed within uneven and disjointed psychological conditions defined by the violent collision of two worlds, and Fanon adds:

> *This collision has considerably shaken old traditions and thrown the universe of the perceptions out of focus, which is why impressionability and sensibility are at the mercy of the various assaults made upon locals by the very nature of Western [media] culture.* (Fanon, 2004: 195-6)

The recognition of impressionability and sensibility in postcolonial Americas is not often taken seriously by the media. In Fanon's critique, this lack of sensibility is what has caused a perception out of focus within postcolonial society. In other words, because the way of seeing through colonial eyes is internalised, the world out of focus that the colonial gaze perpetuates is embedded deep within structural and systemic conditions found in the media industry. These structural and systematic power asymmetries, expressed in the form of implicit or explicit racism, class division, stigma and marginalisation, are not always exposed or critically reflected upon by the media itself. The internalisation of colonial attitudes is thus left unchecked, or else, it is allowed to proliferate given the lack of self-reflexive mechanisms that would allow media organisations to look into their own systemic and structural power dynamics.

The colonial gaze is not only applicable to the way colonial regimes see people, but also, to the way in which land and forests are seen (or failed to be seen). Thus, the internalisation of this 'out of focus' colonial perspective, akin to what Mapuche writer Elicura Chihuailaf calls the "obnubilated gaze" of Chilean media society (2015), not only affects media distortions of Indigenous peoples, but also it skews ways of seeing and representing Indigenous lands and the forest itself. As Adeniyi Asiyanbi writes in his blog Decolonising the Environment:

> *The colonial gaze lives on not only in the pervasive and persistent racist representations of peoples but also of landscapes, animals and efforts to conserve them. Such representations continue to be etched into public subconscious through media and popular culture – whether in the pervasive microaggression in Disney animations or in the normalisation of white saviour mentality by celebrity conservationists projecting images of unpeopled idyllic landscapes and the heroic white conservationists 'saving' these landscapes.* (Asiyanbi, 2019)

Zara Choudhary points out in her photo essay Photography as a Tool of Power and Subjugation that colonial history is characterised by an "imaginative geography created for the audience of colonies, which existed only in the Western consciousness, expressed through the binary construction of our land and their land" (Choudhary, 2019). In other words, the colonies became an object for an audience or viewer to consume from a distance. This notion of "imaginative geography" is important in the present debate. In order to produce images of climate change and forest governance for publics consuming imagery in the global north, a new binary is required: climate emergency versus climate audience.

The colonial gaze remains an imaginative geography that has no need for integration of imaginary and real geographic context. Instead, climate images can be extracted from real world places in order to generate impact among remote and far-away audiences regardless of any real-world geographic context. This is perhaps why images of polar bears can be extrapolated to global viewers as signifiers of global warming in general. Climate audiences do not exist in any given physical theatre. The production and consumption of climate

images and visuals for global audiences thus creates a new imaginary geography that recasts the colonial gaze within a contemporary media context.

The colonial gaze is not only characterised by its globalising agenda and its imaginary sense of geography. The colonial gaze is also an ordering system; a means of control. The historical foundations of a contemporary society of control are worth highlighting, given the references to historical demands and grievances often made by Indigenous campaigners. Within this historical context, it is worth mentioning the legacy of High Modernism: an ideology that equipped European travelers with a universal ordering system that could conquer and bring under technological and scientific control all the flora, fauna and land of the world 'out there'. The international media is a recipient of this colonial tradition of world ordering according to a Eurocentric system of techno-scientific control. This legacy is particularly noticeable in the stories of climate change that abound in the international print and electronic media, which often emphasise science and technology as the main discourse for understanding the phenomenon of climate change at a global level, thus undermining Indigenous climate science. Robert L. Nelson writes in his essay *Emptiness in the Colonial Gaze*:

> *Imperial eyes have a tendency to order (and thus make controllable) the chaos of the periphery, to become the "monarch of all I survey." This controlling, modernizing technique is a crucial aspect of the colonial gaze, and it is also closely connected to the bourgeois gaze at home that sees chaos when apartment dwellers hang their laundry on the balcony*. (Nelson, 2011: 163)

Demands for images of climate change 'out there' perpetuate an imaginary geography invented by the global media for image consumers. Global audiences can witness climate chaos from the safety of their homes, seemingly far from the effects of mass deforestation. The danger of this colonial approach to climate imagery is that the consumer of climate images and visuals can be lulled into a sense of false comfort, given the problematic assumption that imaginative geographies perpetuate.

Climate change is not happening out there. It is happening everywhere. Print and electronic media risk creating new binaries between real and imaginary geographies, or between the world 'out there', where climate chaos is happening, and the world 'over here', where everything seemingly goes on as normal and where business continues as usual. This binary, which the media is often complicit in fabricating, sustains an economy of image production and consumption that perpetuates consumer comfort and detachment. The consumption of climate imagery, when conditioned by the production of visual stories so as to be consumed in a comfortable lifestyle, preserves vestiges of past colonial visual regimes. Instead of showing images 'out there'; - for instance, images of polar bears in melting ice - climate imagery should make the problem familiar and local to viewers, while bringing home a sense of collective responsibility applicable to all consumers. Consumers have a responsibility for what we as consumers eat, for the clothes we wear, for the images we view. What is consumed in the global north has a direct bearing on Central and South

American land use, as most consumption chains - whether it is the consumption of clothing, food or climate images - usually lead down to the global south.

Re-learning history

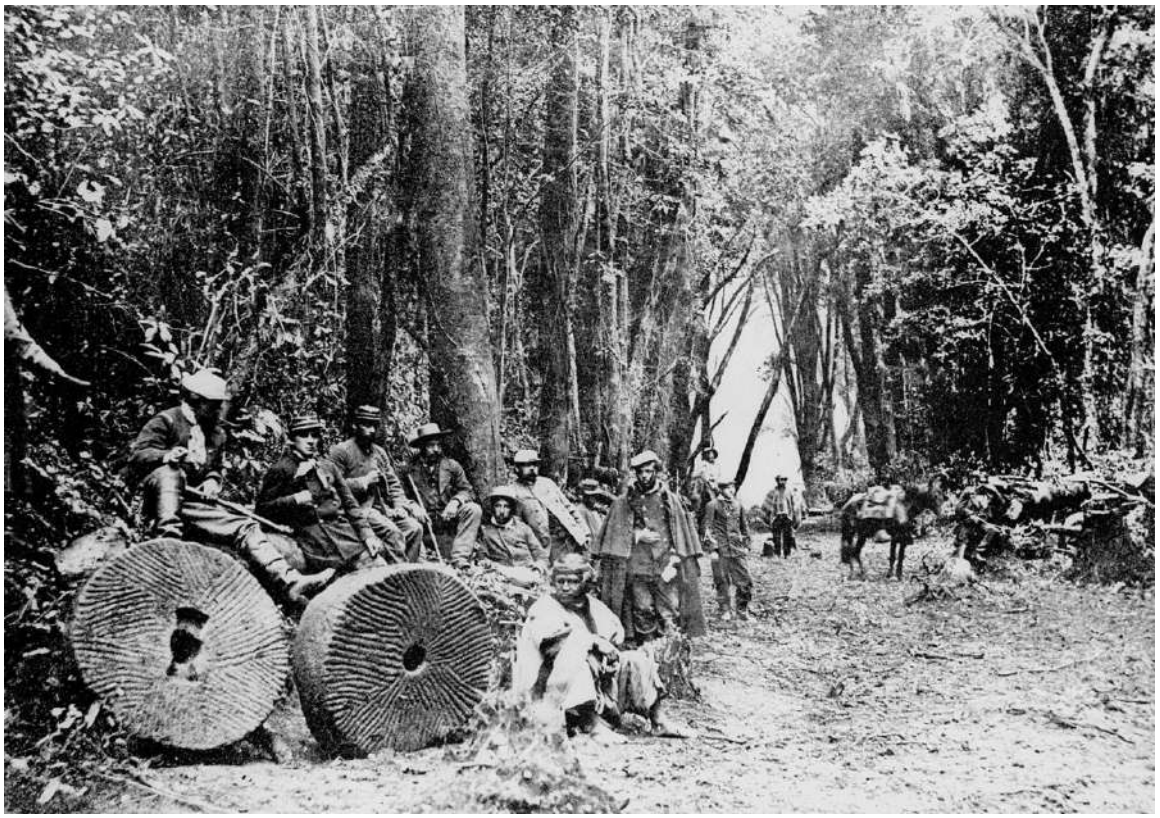
It is important to raise awareness of how the media depict or engage with past histories of environmental and social justice to generate in-depth, long-form and enduring content. The historical perspective is vital as it shows deeper engagement with historical grievances and demands that resurface in present campaigns for land and climate justice. Engagement with the past, as well as acknowledgment and redressing of historical grievances, is vital to present-day and future forest governance. Print and electronic media play a vital role in this respect, especially in terms of helping relearn history. The following is an example of how a visual approach can help uncover hidden narratives of social and environmental abuse that resonate strongly in the present day (Niezen, 2016). Understanding historical events such as the one detailed in the following pages is an example of how media storytelling can show a more long-term understanding and a deeper engagement with the context of a particular forest or forest-dwelling people.

The genesis of the colonial gaze in Latin America can be traced back to historical precedents such as the “Agent of Colonisation”. Agent of Colonisation was the name given in the mid-1850s by the authoritarian Chilean statesman Manuel Montt to his Minister of Immigration, Vicente Pérez Rosales. Pérez Rosales was given the task of clearing the primary forests south of the Bío-Bío river, traditionally known as the frontier of the former Spanish Empire (*La Frontera*). Pérez Rosales completed this mission on behalf of the Chilean government by burning tens of thousands of hectares of primary forest during a mega-fire known as *Incendio de Chan Chan*, which lasted for more than three months and which was accompanied by the displacement of Indigenous populations. These populations were subsequently replaced by German immigrants.

The land clearance and ethnic cleansing of the Southern Valdivian forests in the 1850s exemplifies the twofold violence of the modern nation-building enterprise in Chile. Unsurprisingly or not, the history of environmental and human rights abuse in the region has not been taught within curricular education in Chile. It is therefore vital to consider ways in which limited or non-existent photographic records can be mobilised again within the media to help relearn, or indeed, unlearn, the colonial oppression experienced by forest-dwelling Indigenous Peoples in the past.

The story of the Chan Chan Fire was not recorded in the history books. Nor was the event depicted by artists or photographers at the time. How can visual records, and how might contemporary visual approaches to re-enactment and reconstruction, help raise consciousness of these historical violations? What role does visual storytelling play in retelling new generations of Latin Americans their own hidden histories? Images play a fundamental part. The function of visual media, whether in the context of archiving or

re-enactment, can provide materials for the relearning and unlearning of colonial stories that have settled in the public consciousness.



Chilean troops in the final phase of the campaign during the occupation and reconstruction of Villarrica in 1883,
Photo credit: Author unknown

Despite the harrowing acts committed by Pérez Rosales, shamelessly glorified in his 1886 autobiography *Recuerdos del Pasado*, a simple Google search of the name throws up not a single image of this past violence. No images of the mega fire are generated on a straightforward Google search of “Vicente Pérez Rosales”. No visual cue whatsoever of the killing of thousands of Indigenous People, nor the displacement of tens of thousands more. Instead, Google throws up images of idyllic natural settings several hundred miles south of where the Chan Chan incident took place. Is it not an irony that “Vicente Pérez Rosales” should be the name given to one of the first Chilean National Parks in the mountainous regions near Puerto Montt, even though most of the lowlands between the cities of La Unión and Osorno were cleared and cleansed by the man named Vicente Pérez Rosales?

Google Search results associated with Pérez Rosales now evoke tourist spots featuring idyllic lakes and forests on the foothills of the southern Andes. Where are the past stories of forest destruction? Where are the stories of Indigenous killings that paved the way for German immigration? Epistemic erasures[10] like these are not innocent; they justify political

[10] Epistemic erasure refers to the ways in which entire bodies of knowledge, canons and oral or written literatures are suppressed or destroyed through misleading or contentious translation, through censorship, burning or simple omission.

and territorial amnesia. The forgetting of the Chan Chan forest and its peoples is a nation-building enterprise founded on wide-scale land clearance and ethnic cleansing in Southern Chile. Pérez Rosales referenced God as moral justification for what, in contemporary parlance, might be referred to as ecocide and genocide. Pérez Rosales himself declared:

> *What was required for the proposal of colonisation was a high gaze, that could stretch vision above the narrow horizon and over religious concerns that wanted to drown the patriotic effort, and so the Agent defeated all manner of resistances in those lands, by those who called themselves the landless, but who had never actually occupied the land, and this is how we planted the new populations.* (Pérez Rosales, 1886, p.12)

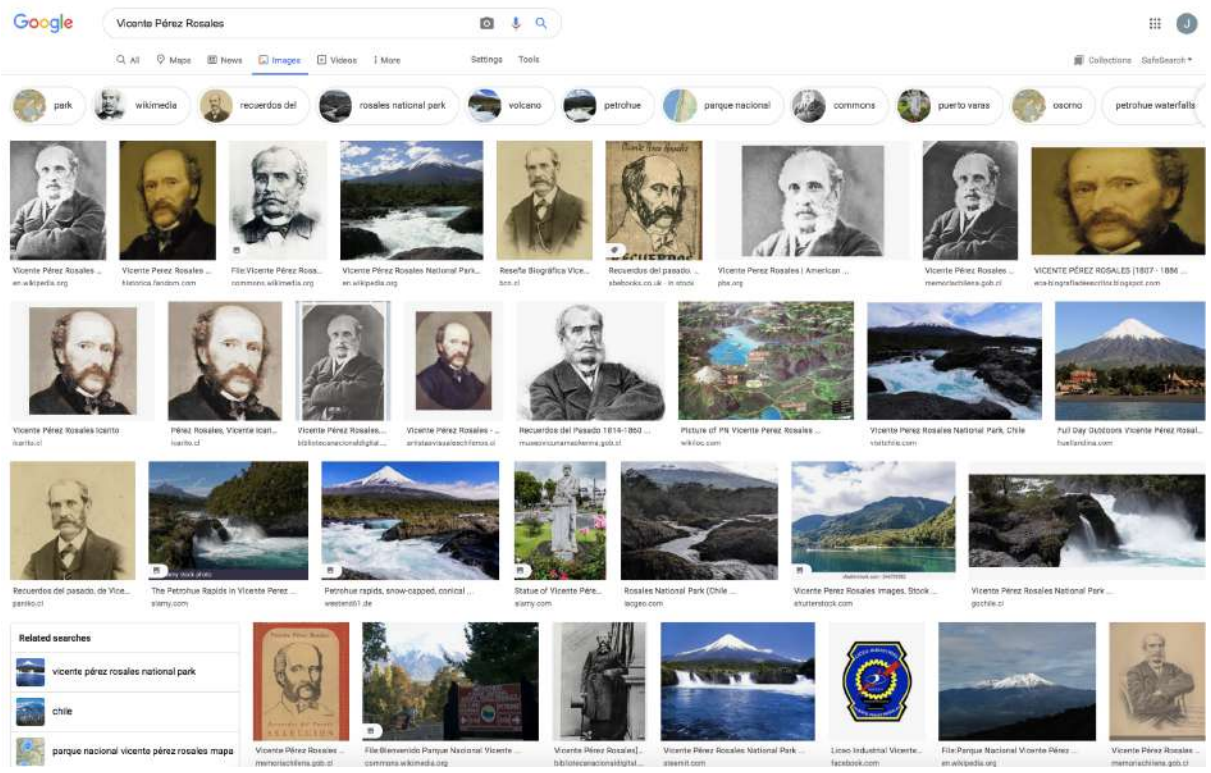


Image results for a Google search of "Vicente Perez Rosales"

In the above quote, Pérez Rosales is evoking a theme that is central to both colonialism and capitalism, which can be subsumed under a High modernist ideology. High modernism was intent on technical progress, the expansion of production, the gratification of human needs, the mastery of nature (human nature included), and the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws. James C. Scott invokes this ideology in his book *Seeing Like a State* and calls it the "high modern gaze" (1998). Wherever the Western state system looked, according to Scott, from the colonial situation in the nascent Chilean state to the forests of Prussian Germany, a high modern or colonial gaze imposed its rationalist lens over forests and its people.

Writing in the context of the scientific management of Prussian forests in the late 19th century, Scott argues that the colonial enterprise and governance of peoples and forests in Bismarck's *realpolitik*[11] led to the imposition of high modernist gazes not only in Germany. The model of a high modernist gaze or "high gaze" as Pérez Rosales calls it, was exported as a programme for nation-building to Latin America. The colonial gaze in South American history is not only exemplified by the destruction of the Chan Chan and other primary forests across the subcontinent. The replacement of Indigenous populations with European migrants was also practised extensively across the subcontinent during the nation-building decades following the Wars of Independence. Thus, similar repopulation programmes were conducted during the German colonisation of the southern Brazilian forests led by Georg Anton Schäffer in the 1820s; in Peru, during the presidency of Ramón Castilla in the mid 1850s; and in Argentina during the Volga German migration of 1877. Across the southern cone of Latin America, state-sponsored programmes for German migration, land settlement and forest clearance resulted in forced displacement of local Indigenous populations.

To this day, the colonial gaze is found in the ongoing patriotic ideology that justifies contemporary narratives of forest management as part of a nationalist agenda, as in the case of Jair Bolsonaro's regime in Brazil. After French President Emanuelle Macron cited Greta Thunberg's *Our House is Burning* and posted images of the burning Amazon forest in August 2019, Brazilian Minister of Environment Ricardo Salles made the following statement:

> *The Amazon is not the lungs of the world. The Amazon Forest is finite. And it's Brazilian patrimony. The idea that it belongs to humanity isstupid. We have sovereignty over the Amazon* (quoted in Fucs, 2019).

In May 2021, Brazil's Federal Police launched an investigation against Ricardo Salles, suspected of having facilitated the sale of millions of dollars of illegal Amazonian timber to the United States and Europe. Salles resigned from his post a month later.

Echoing a long history of colonialism by extermination, successive Brazilian governments have encouraged exploration of primary forests in order to make use of Amazonian resources such as timber, minerals and hydropower. The Amazonian Rainforest has been a quick route to solving the nation's economic problems (Kummels and Koch, 2016: 172). Meanwhile, the myth of Amazonia as empty space generates intrinsic demands for biased visuals. This demand has normalised the visualisation of Amazonian land as empty or barely populated. By presenting land as a blank canvas, the justification can be made for agribusiness, large-scale farming and other forms of capitalist land use (Brenner, 1998). This representation of the vastness and emptiness of Amazonian lands is highly problematic. Both the archaeological and contemporary demographic evidence shows extensive human population in these rainforests.

[11] Realpolitik is a common term used to refer to a system of politics, diplomacy or governance principles based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations.

In sum, the tendency for print and electronic media to focus on ‘latest news’ as opposed to ‘old news’ is worth probing. It is vital to emphasise the importance of history in the context of land use and forest protection, and the lack of historical context given by international print and electronic media covering stories of deforestation, climate change and Indigenous Peoples. What this study proposes is a deeper engagement with past histories of environmental and human rights abuse, so that present-day land struggles and resistance movements can be contextualised. Media representation of the environment can deepen not only its engagement with social issues, but with the root of these issues in long-standing colonial land conflicts.

Ways to decolonise land use photography

Land use photography: an ethical storm

In his online essay Land Use and Photography Ethics: A Discussion About Public Lands and Outdoor Photography Stanley Harper argues that easy access to digital photography and social media, coupled with an interest in public lands and forests, have come together to form an “ethical storm”. This applies to the ethics of land use photography. According to Harper:

> *We, as photographers, should respect lands, public and private. It does not matter if we are professional or amateur. Our images reflect who we are. If we are to retain the use of public locations, then we have to be respectful and ethical. But how do we go about photographing lands ethically?* (Harper, 2019)

Ethical media practice has to do with an acknowledgment of land and forests as living entities in their own right. Lands and territories are not mere locations or localities. Forests are not points on a map upon which media scouts descend in order to take snapshots and photographic records so as to show proof of having ‘been out there’. This “ethical storm” cannot be resolved unless the sector works effectively towards decolonising climate media production and consumption. The ethical aspects of land photography concern the values that a photograph carries with it; values such as respect, care, attention and love. How often do photographic images convey such values, or is land more commonly treated as a backdrop, a scenery, an inert thing? The effort to decolonise climate lenses is not only contingent on addressing historical challenges, but also on how the sector responds to opportunities for positive future change with regards to respect and consciousness for the land.

Drawing on the work of Bolivian social anthropologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, photography can become a decolonial and ethical practice so long as the medium sets out to "free visualization from the ties of language and updates itself with regards to memory of the experience as an indissoluble whole: that is the decolonization of the gaze” (2018: 45). In sum, climate photography can reinforce memory, past, history and the future of land governance by transmitting that ethical sense of respect and care for land in the collaborative way images are produced, and in the sensitivity through which land itself is depicted and narrated. In what follows, we propose four strategies for the decolonising of land use imagery:

- focusing on stories of urgency and potency
- avoiding scenification
- countering extractivism
- guaranteeing fair remuneration for Indigenous and local content producers within the Territories

Stories of urgency and potency

According to **Marielle Ramires**, co-founder of *Mídia Ninja*, the challenge of decolonial media is to allow for grassroots and local communities to be able to document and give voice to land struggles while still appealing to aesthetic and technical expectations posed by commercial media platforms (in research interview). According to Ramires, decolonising media involves two distinct processes: firstly, communication of stories that are urgent - such as campaigning of Indigenous forest guardians against loggers in many parts of the Amazon and Atlantic Forests, or protest movements against state policy on deforestation and criminalisation of Indigenous and environmental campaigners. Secondly, stories that are potent: that is, narratives that are underpinned by a strength of emotional and artistic transmission and which convey a sense of “memory, ancestrality, history, spirituality” (Ramires). The combination of these two factors, according to Ramires, is what gives resonance to decolonial media approaches to climate storytelling and image-making.

Report by Casa NINJA Amazonia from the Village of Cajueiro TI Tembé Tenetehara Alto Rio Guamá, Brazil. A self-formed Indigenous forest guard - who examine and monitor invasions, illegal logging and fires - work with almost no structure or adequate equipment and without food to fight a fire that has been raging for weeks. Photo Photo credit: João Paulo Guimarães / Casa NINJA Amazônia

Decolonising media also requires dismantling certain power structures within media and cultural sectors that have perpetuated the silence and invisibility of past injustice (Moyo, 2020). To decolonise climate imagery would entail a deep questioning of how images of climate action are produced and consumed, and what the urgency and potency of these

images may be from the perspective of marginalised communities, their histories and memorial pasts. More fundamentally, decolonising climate photography also involves understanding climate change in a way that is not dominated by top-down narratives (i.e., political, scientific, economic) but which embrace stories coming from Indigenous Territories, in accordance with Indigenous science and myth. Decolonising climate communication would benefit from an understanding of intersectional dynamics of marginalisation and privilege. Enhancing the ways in which climate photography is produced, mobilised and consumed must take into consideration how Indigenous media promote world-building according to Indigenous People's own world-making systems, languages and imaginaries (Zamorano Villareal, 2017).

This focus on potency and urgency is also shared by **Laura Beltrán Villamizar**, photographic editor of *Atmos Magazine*. According to Beltrán Villamizar (in research interview), *Atmos* promotes photographs that are powerful in the way they prompt different questions from the audience instead of giving pre-established answers, and she adds:

> *Instead of showing someone in a difficult situation, we ask questions through a visual language. We're using design to make a point and start the conversation instead of just showing something violent or graphic for the sake of shock [which can] jeopardise someone's humanity or identity.*
> (**Beltrán Villamizar, in research interview**)

In sum, stories of potency and urgency do not imply a shock factor, a sensational treatment, a graphic depiction of violence, nudity or human and environmental tragedy. The appeal to shock is the very opposite of potency, which carries with it a set of open questions and ethical enquiries into the humanity and kinship that photography can elicit between viewer and those who are being viewed.

Avoiding 'scenification'

The Americas were visualised historically as a land of riches and abundance for new European discoverers and settlers (Bauer and Mazzotti, 2009). For instance, forests were idealised through the stories of legendary jungle cities made of gold such as Paititi or El Dorado. The visualisation of the Americas as scenic or as photogenic is questionable given the imposition of a historical way of seeing or scoping the land and its value, which is distinctly Western. The dominance of invasive visual approaches to the depiction of primary forests is underpinned by commercial interests and aesthetics.

1656 Map of Guyana and Venezuela showing 'Manoa o El Dorado' in one supposed location to the west of the mythical Parime Lake.
Image credit: Mariette, P. and Sanson, N, Cartes Generales De La Geographie Ancienne et Nouvelle Ou Les Empires, Monarchies, Royaums, 2 vols, c. 1660.

Jan Janvier's 1762 decorative map of South America identifies El Dorado on the shores of the mythical Laguna de Xarayes at the northern terminus of the Paraguay River.
Image credit: Jan Janvier

One of the main cultural industries that has shown interest in Abya Yala's forests is tourism. The media's portrayal of primary forests borrows heavily from the tourist industry, and its economic power. Tourism becomes the aesthetic lens through which a colonial gaze can be said to be perpetuated. Forests may no longer be imagined as a city of gold; however, images of beautiful eco-resorts, fetishised Indigenous women, handsome and athletic Indigenous men, pristine riverways and wide-angle panoramas of untouched forests and traditional 'tribes' all serve as visual shorthands for tourism's modern-day El Dorado. The embellishment of forests and its peoples in the media is thus deeply tied to commercialisation of land for tourism and visual consumption more broadly.

"Scenification" is a term coined by Argentine cultural theorist Néstor García Canclini (1995). The term refers to the tendency in Latin American society to create makeshift frameworks for ill-planned economic, political and infrastructural transformation, particularly within a neo-liberal context. According to Canclini, Latin American societies construct "the order of their own scenification, the scenification of their own provisional and simulated stability." (García Canclini, 1995: 82). Canclini's concept of scenification can be usefully applied in the context of this study to refer to cultural and media practices that turn land into an object of scenographic consumption for tourism, arts and culture, property development, and other cultural practices that rely on visual promotion. Forest scenification is an extractivist visual practice that seeks to produce images out of forested land in order to raise value in a financial and economic sense, for short-term and high-impact gain. Commercial depictions of forests as consumable sites for leisure and tourism predispose the viewer to relate to land in terms of commercial value. Scenification of land tends to reinforce the idea that land is a thing, a resource that can be rendered two-dimensional and flat for aesthetic visual consumption. Scenified land is a resource, a backdrop, as opposed to a subject possessing rights or life cycles. In other words, when depicting land as scenic, an underlying vision of land as the setting for human occupation is actualised, perhaps inadvertently.

The scenic symbolism is appropriate to the visual language of tourist consumption of places and sites (Urry, 1990). By representing land as a scenographic space, photography can implicitly advance the colonial message that land is there for humans to consume, either as developers or in this case as tourists, visitors or visual consumers.

Within many Indigenous worldviews in Abya Yala, the land is personified as kin (Mother). Hence the refrain: "Indigenous people do not own land but are owned by lands" (Harvey 2016, p. 303). Although Indigenous ecotourism is an important form of livelihood for many communities within the Territories, the cultural understanding of Indigenous-led tourism is often predicated on relations to land that are not commercialised or commoditised. "We belong to the Land" is a motto that also translates into unique aesthetic perspectives enthused with values of care for, and kinship with, the land. Unlike commercial mass-scale tourism, where land is a thing to be consumed for its beauty or some other tourist value, Indigenous-led ecotourism offers an experience of land as a transformational force in human life.

Anna Browne Ribeiro *et al.* (2016) argue that Amazonia has never lost its scenographic qualities, and that to this day it has been visualised and dramatised as a sparsely populated virgin land of a bygone era. In spite of archaeological evidence that counters this narrative, the visual language of colonialism has informed, and continues to inform, how the Amazon and Amazonian peoples are depicted, conceptualised and, most importantly, managed by state actors. Aesthetics cannot overlook, according to Zara Choudhary (2019), ethics and social responsibility. Thus, against a historical backdrop where forests have been turned into objects of aesthetic appreciation, it has become necessary to take into consideration the risks of using filters, glosses and recolouring in order to scenify the land. Forests are not unspoilt wildernesses reducible to Western conservation fantasies and tourist aesthetic biases.

Terra Preta (Black Earth – left) is unusually fertile soil found especially in the central and western Amazon basin, enriched by humans to have 2-3 times the nutrient content of the surrounding, poor-quality soil (such as oxisol – right). It is considered evidence of long term human habitation; the deeper Terra Preta is, the longer people have inhabited that space, with most sites in the Amazon created 2500 to 500 years ago.
As described by Browne Ribeiro (2016). Citation: Glaser, B., Haumaier, L., Guggenberger, G. et al. The 'Terra Preta' phenomenon: a model for sustainable agriculture in the humid tropics. Naturwissenschaften 88, 37–41 (2001).
Photo credit: Prof. Dr. Bruno Glaser

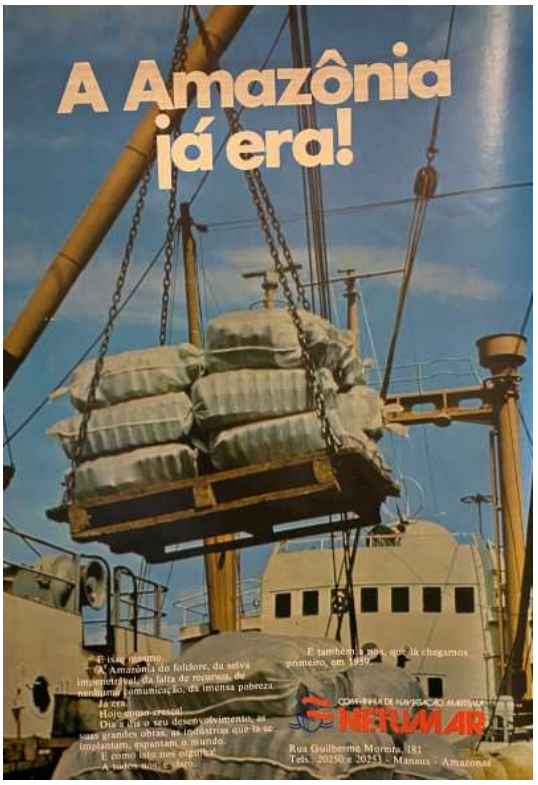
In her book *Entangled Edens: Visions of the Amazon*, Candace Slater (2002) maintains that the Amazon has been portrayed as virgin or virago, a paradise of luxurious greenery and richness or else a Green Hell, depending on the politics of land use at a given time and

place. Indeed, visual colonialism is still perpetuated in the images of forests beautified and vilified to support alternating conservation and nationalist paradigms (Cronon, 1996). It is not only tourism that benefits from scenification after all, but also third sector and charity organisations. Thus, the propaganda of the Green Hell also relies on a scenographic representation of land as a menace or threat to progress, infrastructure and transport connectivity. Green Hell propaganda is often part of a nationalist ideology premised on high modernism and the exploitation of natural resources for short-term economic development.

A SUDAM (Superintendence for the Development of the Amazon) magazine cover (left) from 1971, during the Brazilian military dictatorship. It shows "Amazon yesterday" at the top – a forested place; then "today" with machinery operating, and below "tomorrow" with factories and buildings. In November 1972, SUDAM published the magazine "This is Amazonia" (right), presenting the region as a "pot of gold" waiting for the lucky ones.

While state actors intent on modernisation capitalise on the myth of the Green Hell, charity and NGO organisations often fixate on the beauty of pristine and virgin lands. This effort to depict land as beautiful and pious can ignore the entanglement of social and environmental injustices (Hodgdon et al., 2015). Both tourist and conservationist aesthetics can perpetuate a colonial attitude to Nature as something that needs to be kept untouched for Westerners to enjoy, either as leisure or as heritage. **Pablo Albarenga** points out that these stereotypical narratives are “egotistic” (in research interview). If the tourist and the conservationist only wish to preserve the forest, not the forest peoples, the logic of conservation needs to be critically questioned given a lack of social justice and responsibility. The interests of conservationists and tourists may need to be probed to the extent that, as William Cronon famously put it, conservationism may be “getting back to the wrong nature” - that is, a nature constructed through class-driven, elitist and purist values (Cronon, 1996).

This SUDAM advertisement, published in the Special Amazonian Issue of Realidade Magazine, 1972, has the headline "Enough of the legends, let's cash in". It states "There is a treasure waiting for you. Take advantage of it. Profit. Enrich yourself along with Brazil". (left)
The military dictatorship proposed to end the "famous legend of the 'Green Hell' (right)



Advertisement for Netumar, a Brazilian shipping company,
warning that the Amazon of the "impenetrable jungle" is already gone: "And how proud we are".

The naive representation of land as virgin poses a number of subsidiary risks that climate imagery professionals should foreground in their work. Land is not virginal. The depiction of virgin forests not only undermines the historical pillaging and utilisation of lands in Abya Yala; it simplifies land to a stereotypical visual trope that makes the deeper political forces acting on the land invisible. Lands are liable to privatisation, financialisation, mismanagement, manipulation of land crises, lease, demarcation and enclosure, development, industrial extractivism and other commercial forces that capitalise on the image of the virgin land. There is a gendered lens behind the image of the virgin forest. In some cases, depiction of the land as virgin supports a patriarchal vision of the land as a resource to be taken by force. Depiction of land as virgin can indirectly underpin the violent practice of "terricide", often at the intersection of land use and women rights violations (Millán, 2019). Without a deeper and more critical understanding of the forces that threaten lands and land rights, the media can, willy nilly, play into the hands of large economic and political forces that drive the exploitation and predation of primary forests, and the violation of groups who stay behind to protect the land. In numerous cases throughout the Americas, this involves women groups and campaigners.

The problem of aestheticisation does not only concern so-called 'virgin lands'. Scenification also refers to the utilisation of people as elements within a scenic representation of the land; for instance through the depiction of uncontacted or traditional 'tribes'. As Fran Sanders states: "Indigenous People and their lands have been romanticised and glamorised and are very much in the forefront in all sorts of media marketing" (quoted in Littrell and Dickson, 1999: 113). The utilisation of promotional images of minority groups seriously risks cultural and personal appropriation of, in this case, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour for artistic merit or as a form of marketing ploy within a social responsibility corporate agenda (Hurst, 2020).

An audio-visual producer from the Colombia-Ecuador Pasto Peoples, **Eliana Champutiz** argues that the problem of audio-visual representation of forests concerns excessive technical attention. Images are often valued in terms of their resolution and photographic technical qualities. However, technical photography tends to create, according to Champutiz, a sense of location, as opposed to an experiential understanding of place. As part of that fixation with technical mastery of photographic imaging, the media tends to generalise forests through wide shots, and Champutiz adds:

> *Media is a general lens that starts from location, not from being. But the forest must be told not from wide shots and general views, not from tourist angles, but from its details.* (**Champutiz, in research interview**)

The wide availability of panoramic shots of forested lands, coupled with a fixation with passing aerial shots (drone photography) appeals to a perspective that removes the viewer from place, thus limiting a sense of experience or intimacy in order to provide viewer comfort and oversight. What is often prioritised in print and electronic media imagery of forests, at

least according to Champutiz, is a surface look, a gloss, a sense of superficial beauty depicted in the unspoilt forests and “sexually attractive Indigenous women”.

The media lens is especially controversial when posing risks of perpetuating deep-set gender inequalities. The risks of misrepresentation of Indigenous women and forest guardian communities led by Indigenous women groups is an area of investigation that demands more attention. Unfortunately, the gender implications of climate and land use photography among Indigenous groups is beyond the scope of this report. Media misrepresentation of Indigenous women in forest communities poses risks across a number of intersectional issues such as lack of political and media representation, sexualisation and objectification, male chauvinism, patriarchy, lack of access for women to economic livelihoods, segregation, sexual abuse, terricide and the phenomenon of the “waiting women” (mujeres-espera).[12] These are but a few gender issues that are not often exposed in Indigneous land and climate communication, and which could be explored in future climate communication research (Millán, 2006; Pacheco Ladrón de Guevara, 2013; Kermoal and Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016; Flores et al., 2016).

Audiovisual extractivism

Still within the general ambit of visual colonialism, and closely tied to the issue of land use, photography has played a pivotal role in perpetuating ideas around the nullity of land. As Indian activist and scholar Vandana Shiva (2019) points out, the colonial approach is based on the idea that land is a “raw material” and “dead matter”. This notion stands in opposition to a sense of vibrant Earth. Vandana Shiva adds: “*Terra Nullius*, or the empty land, ready for occupation regardless of the presence of Indigenous peoples, replaced *Terra Mater* or Mother Earth” (Shiva, 2019). When land is thus denigrated to nullity, to nothingness, it is subsumed within a logic that is calculative and numerical. How much can the land provide? How much crop can be farmed? How much profit can I make? For how long can this land be used? This reduction of land to resource is the basis of its exploitation for agrarian, mining or some other extractivist practice that generates wealth (i.e. capital) out of accumulated land use. Does photography play a role in the nulling of land and its subsequent conversion into a commodity for capitalist accumulation?

The myth of *Terra Nullius* is often communicated through atlases or cartographies of exploitation. Sebastian Munster’s *Map of the Americas* (1561), which is said to have popularised the name ‘America’ in European society, is a good example. Munster’s map labelled inhabitants of Brazil as “cannibals”. The colonial effort to label exotic people was famously satirised in the 18th century by Jonathan Swift, who wrote: “So geographers, in ‘Afric’ maps, With savage pictures fill their gaps”. Mapping is one of the main visual ways in which land becomes nullified, not only through cartographic images, but also surveyor maps

[12] Mujeres-espera, or waiting women is a term coined by Lourdes Pacheco Ladrón de Guevara (2013) in the context of gender justice among Nayarit women in Mexico. The concept encapsulates a widespread phenomenon in Latin America: namely, the presence of widows, mothers of the disappeared and other women groups who gather in public spaces to demand and await justice.

of land and terrain, which can help support exploration and exploitation in the form of mining, agriculture and hydrography.

The colonial effort to visualise null land can be perpetuated in all types of mappings - from historical cartographies through to maps of Indigenous ancestral lands for enclosure and delimitation, through to academic forms of knowledge mapping. These are abundantly reproduced in literatures such as these, via mappings of the field, stakeholder mappings, cognitive mapping, scientific visualisations and other forms of visual territorialisation, all of which can have, arguably, undertones of a high modernist ideology defined by visual regimes of domination and control.

In very general terms, the upshot of this visual form of control is territorial accumulation. In turn, wherever land is taken and accumulated, an act of clearance or dispossession is performed, akin to what critical geographer David Harvey famously called “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2003).

‘Accumulation by dispossession’ defines neo-liberal policies that result in a centralisation of wealth and power in the hands of elites through a historical process of dispossession of public and private entities of their land. Policies characterised as accumulation by dispossession are evident in many Latin American countries where the process of land accumulation is guided, following Harvey’s analysis (2003), by four main practices: privatisation, financialisation, management or manipulation of crises, and state redistributions. These practices typically depend on displacement or eviction of Indigenous groups, local farmers, Black and Afro-descendant communities and other minorities, who are dispossessed of their rights and access to water and land.

The same processes that fuel accumulation by dispossession also support the visual regimes that help normalise this phenomenon - for instance, through visual narratives that help justify land use within the conditions of financialisation and privatisation of a neo-liberal economic system. In other words, accumulation by dispossession is not only a phenomenon that leads to landlessness and territorial dispossession, it also leads to loss of imagery and loss of sovereignty over representation by Indigenous Peoples. According to Sapara Amazonian media maker **Yanda Twaru**, the international media accumulates images of forests and forest peoples in the form of “audio-visual extractivism” (in research interview). Audio-visual extractivism, according to Twaru, occurs when Indigenous forest peoples are photographed by the foreign press and then vetoed from using those very same images.

Audio-visual extractivism confuses the public, according to Twaru, presenting general audiences with news items where the sense of struggle is obscured. Print and electronic media can be complicit with cultural extractivism, particularly in cases where Indigenous People have no rights to their own images or to images taken by the foreign press of them; where Intellectual Property Rights have not been observed; or where data protection policies have been overlooked. What defines audio-visual extractivism, following Twaru’s warning, is that media content produced by non-Indigenous people tend *not* to return to the Territories.

In other words, the direction of travel of media content is away from Indigenous communities. This one-way traffic implies that the media sector is accustomed to *taking* images. The sector is not used to giving those images back in the form of rights, intellectual property, fair remuneration, compensation or returned photographic prints.

In 2020, over the course of a visit organised by the Brazilian Army to the land of the Yanomami, Brazilian photographer Joedson Alves took a long-range photograph of a group of naked Yanomami women, one of whom held a face mask. The photograph became viral, as it circulated widely throughout Brazil and worldwide. The photograph was nominated for the *Vladimir Herzog Journalism Award for Amnesty and Human Rights* but was excluded from the prize when Yanomami leaders denounced the photo as violating their rights. The community argued that they had not been consulted about the trip, nor had the women in the photo consented to being photographed. In a video released in the Pro-Yanomami Network, Indigenous leader Paraná Yanomami states: “I don't want foreign people to come just to take pictures of my children. People from far away took pictures and we don't want that ... We don't want to be government propaganda" (quoted in Machado, 2020).

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FOTO EXCLUÍDA DE PREMIAÇÃO JORNALÍSTICA CAUSA POLÊMICA

Home / Foto excluída de premiação jornalística causa polêmica

04 nov 2020

Numa decisão atípica, o júri do Prêmio Vladimir Herzog de Jornalismo e Direitos Humanos excluiu o trabalho **“Culturas em Conflito”** dos finalistas da categoria fotojornalismo. O motivo: uma reclamação formal da Hutukara Associação Yanomami (HAY), que alegou que a fotografia viola o direito de imagem dos indígenas retratados. Ao final de mais de **uma hora de discussão sobre liberdade de imprensa**, ética jornalística e direitos dos povos indígenas, o júri decidiu por 10 votos a 1 desqualificar o trabalho.

A foto de Joédson Alves, da Agência EFE, mostra uma mulher Yanomami com uma máscara de proteção contra a COVID-19 nas mãos. O material havia sido distribuído por representantes do governo brasileiro. A imagem foi reproduzida em diversas publicações ao redor do mundo e viralizou nas redes sociais.

“A desclassificação me colocou numa posição de violador dos direitos humanos, à qual me recuso a ser designado. Eu era os olhos da sociedade sobre a violação do governo, isso sim, aos povos indígenas”, disse Alves à **LatAm Journalism Review**. “A

Culturas em Conflito: imagem desclassificada do Prêmio Vladimir Herzog. Foto: Joedson Alves

"Photo barred from Journalism Prize causes controversy"
Photo credit: Joedson Alves (blurred by authors)

The example of Alves' photograph evidences not only the extractivist nature of invasive photography, in this case taken from a distance, in hiding, during a lightning-speed military trip to the Territories. The photograph also exposes the dangers of glorifying invasive photography in the international photography award circuit.

As **Yanda Twaru** maintains, what defines an Indigenous image-maker, as opposed to an invasive media professional, is not merely the use of a consensual and trusted approach - what makes a difference is that the land and the community are already present and imagined within an Indigenous person's inner world (in research interview). For instance, the land appears to Indigenous People in dream, vision and mental images before they appear in photographic prints. The effort to make the land visible for the Indigenous media-maker is not an external act. The image is not extracted from the land. That is why, according to Twaru, Indigenous media is not extractivist, violent or invasive. In sum, combatting audiovisual extractivism is not only a question of gaining consent through ethical clearance.

Indigenous photographers become co-participants in the way the community sees itself, and thus, Indigenous photographers become agents that help amplify the ways in which a group experiences and imagines their own Territory. It is a deep ethical process that is not coming from an outsider's perspective or an extractivist logic, and Twaru concludes: "We are constructing ourselves from within through the photographic Image. That is what sets us apart" (**Twaru, in research interview**).

Visual extractivism is especially problematic if we consider that 'image' is synonymous with 'soul' for many Indigenous communities, and that the fear of having one's soul stolen through photographic capture is a dilemma for many photographers, especially when seeking to capture images of elders and knowledge keepers. To extract an image for profit is therefore not only a question of mishandled personal data, but a cultural and spiritual risk.

Echoing Yanda Twaru, documentary photographer **Edgar Kanaykõ** of the Xakriabá peoples of Minas Gerais argues that capturing an image can be synonymous with extracting the spirit of a person, which means that a photographic image could be then mobilised in the form of dream or vision (in research interview). This is why photography is sometimes considered dangerous and why it is occasionally banned in the Territories. Kanaykõ suggests that in addition to producing quality photographs, the Indigenous photographer must produce images that protect people and lands from extractivist practices.

According to many non-Indigenous media experts, audio-visual extractivism happens when the process of content generation is allowed to take a "smash and grab" approach regardless of cultural and spiritual sensitivities, at least according to media specialist **Jess Crombie** (in research interview). Audio-visual extractivism is also a problem that is intensified, or which is harder to disrupt from within, given the nature of media production. Because media production is often 'fast and furious', media organisations often lack the means and spaces for self-reflection and self-questioning, which are vital mechanisms for

transformational change. According to **Laura Beltrán Villamizar,** photographic editor of *Atmos Magazine* (Mexico), media practices are generally designed to feed news-hungry publics. Media practices are not designed for slow, contemplative and reflexive work (**Villamizar, in research interview**).

Guaranteeing fair remuneration for Indigenous Peoples

The tendency within the media sector is for foreign photographers and journalists to be commissioned by organisations located in the global north. Media professionals are then sent to places like the Amazon, Atlantic or Mesoamerican Forests to cover stories of climate change, deforestation and Indigenous land struggles. However, Indigenous Media Presence argues for the need to pay close attention to local content producers, especially local photographers, visual storytellers and communicators working from within the Territories; or if not, professionals who have experience of collaborating with Indigenous Peoples.

Although global north organisations usually place diversity and inclusivity as top strategic priorities given the importance of corporate social responsibility and institutional value frameworks, the issue of fairness is not only limited to nominal and cosmetic expressions of diversity and inclusivity. More fundamentally, fairness relates to a process defined by economic parity between global north and south. In other words, Indigenous Media Presence is not only a tick-box agenda within corporate and institutional diversity strategies, but a process of fair remuneration and economic balancing between the north and south remuneration standards. Fair payment and redistribution of resources is where the diversity and inclusivity agenda are put into practice. As Uruguayan photographer **Pablo Albarenga** points out:

> *There is significant inequality in the way local people are paid when compared to foreign professionals. The big photographic and film industries tend to hire foreign experts, for instance journalists, to cover local stories, but when local people are hired instead, they are paid considerably less. Professional relations are asymmetric in that sense.* (**Albarenga, in research interview**)

In addition to unfair remuneration to Indigenous collaborators and communicators, there is the problem of negativising or sensationalising Indigenous communities in order to generate commercial interest at the expense of what is occurring in the Territories - without paying compensation and, indeed, without remuneration for the people on the ground. **Apawki Castro,** a community leader of the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), points out that the land and its people matter only as merchandise in the media sector. Castro maintains that there is a “folklorizing agenda” in the media, which detracts from Indigenous priorities around territorial sovereignty, to which he adds:

> *From the hegemonic stance, mass media take whatever position they want in order to merchandise the land, so when dealing with Indigenous Peoples and nations, the media emphasize problems that improve the rating, for instance, they focus on*

> *issues involving fights only for show, for spectacularization. Only then does the traditional media take us into account – but when it comes to covering the context and the realities – the daily viewpoints in the Territories, then we are invisible.* (**Castro, in research interview**)

Media coverage of climate change and land use is especially prone to commercial exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, given the intense demand placed by the big media players on high-impact stories. Print and electronic media must be alert so as not to aggravate issues of economic exploitation through commercialisation of sensitive stories or commodification of crisis. Power asymmetries need to be addressed not only through self-serving institutional ethical procedures, but more convincingly, through fair economic practices and a fair sense of co-ownership; for instance, through more transparent data sharing and Intellectual Property Rights protocols.

According to **David Kaimowitz**, a deforestation researcher and head of FAO's Forest and Farm Facility, resource distribution is the hardest ethical issue to address within NGO and humanitarian media contexts (in research interview). International organisations need to raise money for their own work, yet the way they use their support of others to justify that raises questions. For instance, how much financial support must be given to mediators and how much should be given to frontliners? Is it ethical to claim humanitarian or altruistic values when economic engagements between local people and mediators are asymmetric? Kaimowitz claims that "international organisations often end up with a larger share of the resources than one can reasonably justify from an ethical perspective" (**Kaimowitz,** in research interview).

It is vital that the media and humanitarian sectors recognise the role played by the people that are being photographed and represented in their products and platforms, and that this recognition is made through fair financial practices. It is also vital that the contribution of people on the ground is credited (bearing in mind issues of sensitivity and risk around data disclosure). Moreover, to shift away from invasive media approaches, and to pave the way for participatory media, projects should cost participants in their budgetary plans, while allowing ample time for community consultation, needs analysis and trust-building before conducting fieldwork on the ground. Fair remuneration and equal pay is an important step towards the recognition of the enormous contribution made by Indigenous communicators, photographers and content producers in the communication of Nature imagery and visuals.

Lack of representation of Afro-descendants in land use and forest protection

It is vital to consider racial diversity as a fundamental aspect of decolonised climate and land use imagery. As such, it has become necessary to address the staggering lack of representation, at least within print and electronic media coverage of environmental issues, of Black minority groups.

Afro-descendant and Black communities seldom feature in stories of land and environmental protection. The common stereotype is that Indigenous Peoples are the sole protectors of the forest. Black and Afro-descendent communities are often associated with negative stereotypes that do not allow the media lens to focus on specific people, communities or programmes that show a positive relationship between Black culture and the environment. Despite these common stereotypes, many Afro-descendant communities in the Americas are proclaimed guardians of nature - one notable example are the *Guardians of the Atrato River*, a community of Afro-Colombian guardians based in the Chocó region. In 2017, the Atrato Guardians and *Foro Interétnico Solidaridad Chocó* (FISCH) led a legal campaign for the declaration of the subjecthood of the Atrato River. This was the first case in Colombian history whereby a river was declared subject under the Rights of Nature framework.

Racial stereotyping and ignorance has excluded Afro-descendant communities from the environmental agenda, disassociating this particular ethnic group from stories of pioneering environmental campaigning and leadership. What the Atrato Guardians and numerous other Black and Afro-descendent environmental organisations show is that Abya Yala's forests and rivers are as much a home for Black Peoples and People of Colour as they are to Indigenous Peoples. Why has the role of Afro-descendant and Black communities been ignored or undermined in the context of land use and climate change? History once again provides some clues.

The colonial system in the Spanish-speaking Americas was organised into what was known as the Spanish Caste System. This social edifice was rigorously tiered according to racial categories. White Spaniards were placed at the top, with a number of supposedly inferior castes following: the *Criollos* (Latin American-born Spaniards); *Castizos* (3/4 Spanish and 1/4 Amerindian); *mestizos* (1/2 Indian and 1/2 Spanish); *Cholos* (a mixture of Amerindian and *mestizo*); mulattos (a mixture of Black and White); Zambos (a mixture of Black and Amerindian) and Negroes. The Spanish caste system is the basis of class division in Latin America today, which helps explain why, of the various ethnic and racial categorisations that make up the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Americas, Black and Afro-descendants groups are historically considered to be among the least privileged.

As colonial and backward as the caste system may sound today, the fabric of Latin American ethnic and race relations is still defined by the legacies of colonial caste structures, and the appalling stereotypes and racist categorisations that this system caused. In the context of media representation of environmental action and land justice, the remnants of colonial racism are still evident in the lack of representation of Black and Afro-descendant groups in environmental media, policy, public debate, opinion and decision-making more generally. In sum, racist biases and the invisibility of Black histories are an entrenched and systemic problem in the media landscape of Latin America (Magalhães, 2003).

In the Spanish-speaking Americas, the term *saberes ancestrales africanos* is often used to refer to traditions of African or African diasporic lineage that - drawing on environmental cultural heritages coming from Yoruba, Ghana, Bantu and other West African civilisations -

found new roots in American lands. There are many regions in the Spanish-speaking Americas that are home to Black and Afro-descendant communities. These include the Chocó region in Colombia, the Piura region of Peru or the Barlovento region in Venezuela. Within this geopolitical context, the historical tradition of Black Territorial sovereignty is key, for instance in relation to the *palenques*. Palenques were camps of escaped slaves organised according to African systems of social and political organisation. These provided a vital opportunity not only for the emancipation of Black Peoples from tyranny, but also for the preservation of land use traditions that were not based on colonial and hierarchical ideals, but on collective and Nature-centred values. We shall return to the role of Black Territorial sovereignty later on in this section, as we turn our attention to the Afro-Brazilian context.

According to Jesús Chucho García (2001), what is now known as the Afro-American or Afro-descendant culture of the Spanish Americas and the Caribbean is "the result of a long process of conservation, re-creation and transformation according to socio-historical conditions and economic factors" (García, 2001: 49). In a matrix of ruptures and continuities, Afro-American cultures grew in the Spanish Americas as a rich crucible of experiences and memories that were continuously re-articulated in terms of a sense of belonging to physical land, agricultural livelihood and forest culture. Afro-descendant traditional knowledge can be identified across numerous eco-cultural practices in Black Abya Yala including music, rhythm, cuisine, death rites, kinship systems and family organisation, languages, symbols and expressions, but also through traditional ecological knowledge. Of particular importance in this context is the role of Black women: who, in numerous historical roles as surrogate mother, maid, plantation worker, etc, played a vital role in transmitting cultural traditions - not only among Black communities, but also across Mestizo, Indigenous and White groups (Manual de los Afrodescendientes de las Américas y el Caribe, 2006).

The transmission of spiritual and religious practices of African origin in Abya Yala, and Black women knowledges in particular, have several environmental aspects in common; not least, that they involve the cult of *egunguns* (ancestors) and the worship of nature spirits, such as the *Orixá* of the Yoruba culture, the *Inquice* of the Bantu tradition of Congo and the *Vodum* from Daomé in Benin (Lody, 1995). The many spiritual entities that inhabit the spiritual world of African cultural matrices[13] are often described as "guardians" and representatives of the forces of the lifeworld (de la Fuente and Reid Andrews, 2018). Thus the idea of protection, guardianship and ancestral commemoration of Nature is at the heart of many Afro-descendant cultural ecologies. Afro-descendant spirituality and cultural ecology are therefore strongly connected to a matriarchal and spiritualised sense of land and forest.

Even though the environmental values of Afro-descendant and Afro-diasporic cultures and spiritualities are deeply rooted, stereotypical representations of Devil worship sought to

[13] Cultural matrices is a term often used to refer to a cultural ancestry claimed by diasporic communities in the Americas, which comes from separate continents. Thus, the African continent is often cited as a broad region of cultural matrices for Afro-descendents. Meanwhile, German descendents in Southern Brazil will cite Central Europe as their cultural matrix. The term is problematic, as it invites notions of cultural homogeneity, single origin and essentialism, thus overlooking heterocultural and mixed American diasporas.

marginalise and vilify Afro culture. Through ignorance and fear, White colonists made it a habit to excommunicate and criminalise traditional ecological practices found among Afro-descendant communities. These biases and negative stereotypes still pervade in the relatively normalised racism of Latin American media discourse (van Dijk, 2005). It is thus vital to focus on specific Black individuals (community leaders, community organisers, guardians) as well as specific communities which can challenge these simplistic negative stereotypes through example and action. Examples of good practice can gradually change public opinion and soften the sharp racial divides, tensions and polarities that commercial media perpetuate in the Latin American context.

Quilombos and forest protection

The argument concerning lack of representation and misrepresentation of Black communities in the Spanish-speaking Americas is also applicable to the Portuguese-speaking context. One of the most important living traditions to preserve Black Territorial sovereignty and ancestral forms of sociopolitical organisation - one that offers distinctly biocentric relations to land use - is found in the history of the Brazilian *Quilombo*.

Quilombos, or *palenques* as they are known in Spanish-speaking Americas, are a system of land-based active resistance carried out by enslaved or escaped Africans, and in contemporary contexts, by Afro-descendant and Afro-rural communities. In historical times, quilombos regularly served as war camps, where escaped slaves attempted to seize power and conduct armed insurrections against Portuguese, Dutch and English plantations and estates. As a system of land-based resistance, quilombos often created the conditions for sociopolitical organisation that did not subscribe to the colonial caste and land use system. One example is the *Quilombo dos Palmares* in Bahia, a self-sustaining agrarian community that at its height had a population of 30,000 citizens.

Because Quilombos facilitated the escape of more enslaved peoples, these camps were a target for Dutch and Portuguese colonial authorities as well as the Brazilian state in later historical periods. Despite the cooperative and democratic nature of Quilombos, many of these settlements were eventually destroyed. Seven of ten major Quilombos in colonial Brazil were terminated within two years of formation. Their legacy, however, is felt in many communities of Afro-descendants throughout Abya Yala, as is the ancestral connection with forest culture. According to CONAQ's **Selma dos Santos Dealdina**, the Quilombos are a vital space for:

> *Preservation of Nature, preservation of Black culture, ancestral African traditions, traditional Brazilian farming, religion and spirituality and sustainable forms of production and land use.* (**Dealdina, in research interview**)

The *quilombolas* or people of the Quilombos championed practices such as subsistence and traditional farming, which often preserved biocentric and animistic values. These practices prevented exploitation of land or forest resources for capitalist or financial forms of economic

production. As a system of resistance to territorial accumulation and land-based capitalism, quilombos constitute the historical foundations of a Black and Afro-descendant tradition of sustainable land and forest governance that continues to this day (Moura, 1987). The term *território quilombola* is a legal category used by the Brazilian state, enshrined in a Federal Constitution Decree from 1988, which gives definitive land ownership to rural Black communities identified with the historical land struggle of quilombola people.

Territórios quilombolas are considered to be remnants of the quilombo communities according to self-attribution criteria and the unique historical trajectory of these communities. In other words, territorial rights are nowadays endowed to people based on specific histories of resistance to colonial oppression. Thus quilombola communities are still defined by collective identity and common struggle – these being the main parameters for community building and social organisation. While threatened by weak policies, widespread stigmatisation and bad media coverage, *Territórios quilombolas* are frequently related to a collective and respectful relationship with Nature, in a way that can draw many parallels with Indigenous Territories.

Selma dos Santos Dealdina also argues in her book *Mulheres Quilombolas: territórios de existências negras femininas* that the voices of Quilombola Women have denounced male chauvinism and racism in the media. The work of CONAQ, according to Dealdina, is to work from within the Territories, much like Indigenous campaigners do, to give protagonism to Black and quilombola women so that they may find a voice within decision-making spaces, and so as to promote the fight for land titles, land preservation and governance within the Quilombos. It is a fight, according to Dealdina, against a structural system that has caused land division along staunch class and racial lines - a confrontation that often places Quilombo ecological communities against property developers, agribusiness, major infrastructure and transport development projects, and extractivist notions of economic development in general - since the economic model of the Quilombola community is subsistence and traditional farming, not industrial and capitalist land use. The development agenda supports a model of land use, according to dos Santos Dealdina, that excludes minorities: “thus, racism is a declared, structural, institutional force that works through violation and violence, and has been, ever since we were kidnapped from Africa” (Dos Santos Dealdina, 2019).

In sum, the environmental agenda is also a class and race agenda, part of a social struggle to give land rights and titles to minority groups. This is a question the mainstream media in Brazil ignores. To the extent that large media groups are in collusion with large landowners or industrialists, the media representation of Quilombo communities and their demands is biased or negativised, which means that the stories told by the big media, in Brazil and also throughout the subcontinent, are ultimately designed to serve economic interests within a class and racial elite that does not live in or by the land, but which profits from land use and labour according to a model of mass production that is urban, and thus is alienated or ignorant of life in forested lands.

Main risks of photographing Indigenous Peoples and tropical forest-dwellers

In what follows, we explore the main risks involved in the photographic representation of Indigenous Peoples. We address the slippery, contested and often conflicting idea of Indigeneous ethnicity, acknowledging that indigeneity is an ongoing and dynamic process. The media portrayal of tropical forest-dwelling peoples, and their fluid sense of ethnicity as defined in the Introduction, is liable to the following major representational risks.

Risk 1: Negative stereotyping

Misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the media is apparent in the proliferation of Indigenous stereotypes including “the native warrior”, “the Indian Princes" or the “noble savage” (Mohamed, 2019). The problem with stereotypes is that they fix identity to certain reference points and assumptions, often marred by ignorance - or worse, racism and misogyny. In the case of Indigenous peoples, the widespread practice of negative stereotyping is one of the most frequent forms of denigration and devaluation of Indigenous life. In ‘Ethnovision: the Indigenous Gaze that Crosses the Lens’, a Masters Dissertation in Anthropology by **Edgar Kanaykõ** (2019), Kanayko aptly states:

> *This image of the Indian - static and without movement - is almost always impregnated in the conventional wisdom/popular belief and refers to the past, to nudity, the headdress, the bow and arrow. Outside these stereotypes, the person is no longer considered "Indian", or is no longer "pure". On the other hand, we, as indigenous people, make use of images to show from our own point of view who we are.* (Kanaykõ, 2019)

CONTENT WARNING

The following page contains graphic images and descriptions that some readers may find triggering, distressing, upsetting or disturbing.

This includes depictions and accounts of genocide, murder, decapitation and mutilation.

Reader and viewer discretion is advised.

According to media researchers in the Central American context, only a small number of works concerning media representation of Indigenous populations have surfaced in recent decades (Muñiz *et al*., 2014). A study conducted by Lazcano and Muñiz in Mexico focused

on content production by local TV programmes, which were broadcast between June and July of 2009 in the state of Nuevo León. In total, 46 characters were analysed; 31 belonging to ethnic groups. The result of the research showed that Indigenous characters were clearly stereotyped and discriminated against, placing them in inferior positions with regards to other racial types (Lazcano and Muñiz, 2012).

The Return of the Indian Raid by Argentinian artist Ángel Della Valle (1892) depicts Indigenous raiders having looted a church and captured a White woman. Severed heads can be seen hanging from the riders' saddles. As the Fine Art Museum of Buenos Aires describes, "the painting appears as a synthesis of the clichés that circulated as justification for Julio A. Roca's 'Desert Campaign' in 1879," depicting the Indigenous men as enemies of 'civilisation'.
Image credit: Ángel Della Valle

Based on media content analysis of national newspapers conducted by Marta López and Carlos Borge in Costa Rica, researchers in this country have argued that stereotypes found elsewhere in Latin America repeat themselves in the Costarrican context (Borge, 1998). Studies conducted by Carlos Diego Mauricio Cortés have yielded similar outcomes in Colombia, based on representation of Indigenous Peoples in the largest newspapers of national circulation, *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. From content analysis of 238 newspaper articles and news reports generated during the 2015 *Minga de Resistencia* Indigenous movement, Cortés concluded that media representation in this country was shrouded in stereotypical media representations (Cortés, 2016). **Mara Bi**, a photographer from the Emberá peoples of Panama and Colombia, argues that negative stereotyping can even affect the way Indigenous Peoples perceive themselves; and she argues:

> *As a child I used to watch those photographs of Indigenous People in magazines and newspapers, and I became more and more conscious of the great difference*

> *between my community and what I saw in those images, which negatively influenced my perception of my own environment. Even to this day, those images continue to negatively affect the communities, and as a result, the forests. Those images represent us as marginalized, poor, ignorant, vulnerable; or else represent us in idealised ways as mystics, staunch protectors of Mother Earth - and of course, the vast majority of people assumes that this is what being Indigenous is like, including Indigenous People.* (**Bi, in research interview**)

Stereotyping affects Indigenous Peoples in the sense that the news that makes headlines tends to be negative, particularly in the context of climate change and land use. The media, on the whole, fixates on drama and tragedy. The same applies to the humanitarian and academic sectors, where the intense focus on conflict and crisis is often guided by the interventionist economic model that these sectors advance. As Uruguayan photographer and visual storyteller **Pablo Albarenga** points out:

> *The big media is often negative in its approach [to forest and climate change], but they should listen to local media more, to new emergent channels of communication that occupy the space of social networks, and to the people on the ground.* (**Albarenga, in research interview**)

Climate stories told by Indigenous peoples within the Territories do not fixate on problems but instead focus on demands and solutions. Nor is it common in the Territories to use terms such as climate emergency, chaos or crisis. These terms are negative, part of a broad cultural negativisation that the media play a role in perpetuating. Positive stories of healing, caring, kinship or community-building, which are common in the Territories, are often overlooked or undervalued by commercial media - perhaps because positive stories do not generate as much interest among audiences, as a recent study published by the BBC claims (Stafford, 2014). Perhaps positive stories of the Territories are not as popular as dramatic news reports (**Castro, in research interview**). However, exaggeration, excessive dramatisation and sensationalism often reduce the depth of representation of Indigenous peoples to stereotypical, negative and potentially damaging portrayals that help perpetuate simplistic narratives and popular assumptions.

Risk 2: Othering

According to **David Kaimowitz**, there is a strong tendency among NGO and humanitarian media to depict Indigenous peoples as exotic beings unlike average Western and urban people (in research interview). According to Kaimowitz, the fixation of media on colours, feathers and traditional clothing are an advantage, to the extent that these items are salient and help images stand out, which in turn helps catch the viewer's attention. Kaimowitz adds:

> *This also has the advantage of making the viewer realize that these groups have distinctive characteristics, which opens the door to the possibility that they may have collective rights that others do not. On the other hand, it could potentially trivialize*

> *them, making them seem less like the viewer – and hence less deserving of solidarity and more like a curiosity than a fellow human being.*
> (**Kaimowitz, in research interview**)

When depicting Indigenous peoples as exotic, according to Kaimowitz's analysis, the advantages of salience and distinctiveness generate another major risk within media representation of Indigenous forest-dwellers: othering.

In their photo essay Otherness and Continuity: Historical photography and contemporary exhibits of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples and Forests, Juán Carlos La Serna and Valeria Biffi (2016) maintain that it is not only the Indigenous person that is exoticised, denuded or denigrated in representations of Indigenous Peoples by White colonisers. The forest is also othered through depictions that emphasise marked differences between primary forests and civilised urban landscapes. Colonial attitudes are expressed in historical portrayals of Central and South America's forests as inhospitable spaces where Nature poses an existential threat to Christian, civilised life.

Three examples of visual othering can help illustrate the argument. Firstly, historical portraits often show Indigenous Peoples in positions such as sitting or squatting next to standing White settlers, as if to suggest that Indigenous bodies are inferior in the eyes of White publics (Landolt et al., 2003). Secondly, othering is often identified in photographic representations that fixate on customs and traditions, in an effort to emphasise a folkloric distance between Indigenous tradition and modernity. Thirdly, visual othering can be exposed in photographic images of clothed European men portrayed next to nude females (Hirsch, Kivland and Stainova, 2020). The historical and contemporary images of denuded Indigenous women are cited as an example of othering that perpetuates not only racial domination but also the sexual exploitation of Indigenous women by White colonisers (Flores et al., 2016).

According to **Alfredo Rivera**, "Indigenous People are often referred to as denuded" (*los desvestidos*) in order to juxtapose nude bodies with well-dressed Europeans, who symbolise intelligent, well-educated and civilised types (in research interview). An Indigenous media communication expert from El Salvador, Rivera argues that traditional portraits of Indigenous peoples in Central American media promote nudity as a way of depriving individuals of dignity and respect. Showing nudity and denuding people of their dignity is a visual strategy that serves an ulterior purpose in Central America, at least according to Rivera: namely, to advance the idea that someone dressed in a suit and tie or some other conventional Western clothing cannot be Indigenous, and that therefore, given this sartorial prejudice, there are no Indigenous People left south of Guatemala. "That is one of the main fallacies of media othering" (**Rivera, in research interview**).

'Indian Prisoners'. Mapuche-Tehuelche women and children held captive in the Puelmapu. Photographer Antonio Pozzo accompanied Argentinian General Roca in 1879 during his military campaign known as the 'Desert Campaign'. The caption reads "Choele-Choel - Indoctrination of Indians by Reverend Espinosa, later promoted to Archbishop." Standing in the background of the photo are soldiers of the Argentinean army, while Catholic priests evangelise the prisoners to 'pacify' and 'civilise' them. The prisoners are seated, hierarchically below the White colonisers. Photo credit: Antonio Pozzo

The othering of Indigenous People is not only a historical practice, but also a trademark of present-day commercial ethnophotography. The Indigenous Peoples featured in the work of English photographer Jimmy Nelson are a case in point.

Jimmy Nelson's books

Nelson's work fixates on so-called "vanishing Indigenous Peoples" (Washuta, 2013) and exotically attired wildmen, all but reducing the agency of Indigenous Peoples to a few individuals facing extinction, as though such peoples had no autonomous or certain future. Jimmy Nelson is a successful and highly commercial photographer. Indigenous photographers should have equal opportunities to achieve success when seeking to redress photographic othering. Indigeneity is by no means the languishing groan of exotic and attractive wildmen standing in staged and scenified wildernesses. Indigenous voices are a rallying call for growing global transformation. Contrary to Nelson's depiction of exotic tribes about to "pass away", global Indigenous movements are becoming stronger and more influential in global arenas.

Risk 3: Fetishisation

According to **Paul Redman**, Director of *If Not Us then Who* (NGO), one of the main challenges in advancing Indigenous Media Presence within the media and third sector has been the fetishisation of Indigenous Peoples (in research interview). Along with the insidious practice of negative stereotyping, acts of bigotry can be evidenced in biased representations of Indigenous Peoples - as, for instance, when the media fixates on attractive, sexy or desirable faces and bodies in order to advance the interest of corporate image, marketing or sales. Fetishisation can be thought of as the act of making someone an object of desire based on some aspect of their identity. For Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities, fetishisation of race and ethnicity may appear benign at the surface level; however, the objectification of a person as desirable is often underpinned by sexist and male chauvinist attitudes. According to Redman, although attitudes have been changing in the last 20 years in the media and third sector:

> *[Indigenous Peoples have been depicted as] colourful, charismatic, culture-driven beings. People want their faces and customs on the front covers without getting to understand what is in their minds and what wisdom they bring in terms of how we connect with each other and Nature.* (**Redman, in research interview**)

A recent example of how the fetishisation of knowledge can lead to alienation of a number of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour is *Kiss the Ground,* a Netflix documentary film that elicited complaints from this particular community. The film was said to have excluded Black, Indigenous and other Peoples of Colours' voices in the context of the regenerative agriculture movement. What is more, the film was criticised for failing to step beyond its soil health focus and upbeat message about reversing climate change.

In sum, fetishisation is a way of glossing over a particular ethnic group, which in the case of Indigenous Peoples, risks undermining land struggle and resistance movements. If the representation of indigeneity is confined to sexed-up, upbeat and appealing visuals that are driven by audience comfort, audience numbers and other commercial factors, it is unsurprising that media products such as Jimmy Nelson's work or *Kiss the Ground* should provoke complaints among minority groups. Trivialisation of race and ethnicity for the

purpose of creating media sex appeal or upbeat media products raises concerns over racism, on the one hand, and also exploitation of racial types for commercial gain.

Risk 4: Media labelling

Media labelling concerns the stamping or tagging of a name or character on a particular person, place or group. In the case of Indigenous forest peoples more specifically, positive media labels such as 'eco-warrior', 'defenders' or 'knowledge keeper' may be useful in certain contexts. These kinds of media label may help reinforce or stabilise positive action. At the same time, such labels may lead to misconceptions of Indigenous people as being staunch supporters of Nature, when this is not always the case (**Mara Bi, in research interview**).

Media labelling of Indigenous Peoples as 'tribes' can be equally unhelpful, when considering that many Indigenous communities live in urban and peri-urban environments, and do not necessarily organise themselves in tribal systems. In addition, 'tribe' can often be used as a pejorative label associated with primitiveness and a sense of rigidified tradition. Perhaps the most common label used in this context is 'Indigenous People' (IP), which is not only a label but also a formal term. IP can also be a problematic denomination for it often reduces communities living according to ancestral values and principles to a political identity. Indigenous movements are often deemed to be political, or to be concerned with political grievances, which can delegitimise land struggle and resistance. Indigenous movements are often engaged with a protection of a way of life, as opposed to a political party or agenda. This may involve an affirmation of Nature-based spirituality, a safeguarding of language and memory and a reclamation of territory and belonging. **Michael McGarrell** adds:

> *It's about our way of life. We are part of the jungle - the land is connected to us through language. For an English speaker this is just a 'tree', but our words have spiritual connections to everything. We believe everything has a spirit - there is a way we can interact because we maintain a bond, and we are part of Nature.*
> (**McGarrell, in research interview**)

The labelling of forests as 'virgin' or 'untouched' can help perpetuate the romantic idea that wilderness is not for humans, or that humans cannot be rewilded unless we live in uncivilised conditions, thus enforcing a binary between civilisation and wilderness. Rewilding is not only a process that involves reintroducing non-human animals and plants to a so-called wilderness; rewilding is also a process of transformation that affects human life and mind (Thiyagarajan, 2020).

Risk 5: Environmental exnomination

Exnomination refers to the process whereby groups in power hide their name in order to make their actions appear normal or natural. In the present context, environmental exnomination means that the names of certain actors responsible for deforestation or

environmental destruction have their names and actions hidden from the public domain. These actors may include illegal loggers, commercial forestry groups, hydroelectric companies, oil and gas companies, narco-traffickers, farmers, ranchers and agribusiness companies. This failure to name those directly responsible for the felling of the Central American, Atlantic and Amazon Rainforests exonerates those directly responsible for their clearing, and relieves these peoples of the responsibility to account for their actions. To address exnomination, name-and-shame is a strategy sometimes used by independent media groups to ensure companies and individuals are exposed for the damage caused to forest environments. An example of this is Earth.org, which has published an article named 10 Major Companies Responsible for Deforestation, stating the following:

> *Companies that are responsible for deforestation should be named and shamed and made to account for their actions, which threaten every inhabitant of the planet: human, animal, and plant.* (Earth.org, 2020)

The Earth.org list includes the following companies: Cargill (whose corporate partners feature McDonalds, Burger King and Unilever, and which is reported to use inaccurate accounting methods to underestimate its harmful practices): Walmart, IKEA and Starbucks. What is applicable to legal enterprise also applies to criminal businesses such as illegal logging, illegal mining and narco-trafficking; for instance, marijuana plantation, which is a major cause of deforestation in the Paraguayan Atlantic Forest, and which is largely driven by recreational marijuana consumption in Brazil (see **Aldo Benitez**' Maldición del Bosque Atlántico, 2020). Naming the individuals responsible for illegal deforestation is a key objective of documentary climate media. Naming the consumers who drive illegal predation of forests is equally significant.

Those who consume products that cause the clearing or farming of primary forests, that is, a large majority of people in industrialised countries, are also frequently exnominated from media reports on deforestation and climate change. In an attempt to address this gap, *The Guardian* newspaper published an article in March 2021 entitled Average westerner's eating habits lead to loss of four trees every year (Carrington, 2021). By naming the "average western consumer", and by identifying the main products that drive deforestation (i.e. coffee, chocolate, beef and palm oil) articles like these help break the trap of environmental exnomination that makes those responsible for forest destruction invisible. As Jane Shaw points out, deforestation for coffee, soya and palm oil and its impact on climate change is an example of the inappropriate nomination of the climate crisis, and she adds:

> *The root cause of the climate emergency is an over-consumption crisis, but changing our language isn't about semantics or pedantry… changing the language we use makes it easier for people to act upon, and it makes us all accountable for our behaviours and decisions, every single day.* (Shaw, 2021)

In sum, one of the main risks of climate photography and storytelling has to do with responsibility and accountability through the use of language and names. By prioritising the

effort for the conservation of forests, the media sometimes fails to name and expose all the various actors that drive deforestation in the Central American, Atlantic and Amazon Rainforests.

The predation of primary forests to feed overconsumption in the global north is not only a problem that involves extreme ends of the production chain, but every single intermediary in that chain, which are often exempt from media accounts of deforestation. In other words, food distributors, supermarkets, packaging and food marketing companies are also responsible for sustaining the chain of production and consumption that drives deforestation. For instance, exnomination occurs when the name of products whose manufacture results in deforestation are hidden in the small print or in specialist jargon that confuse the consumer. This is especially problematic in the case of palm oil, a product that drives extensive deforestation, and not only in the Central and South American continents. The name “palm oil” is often hidden from the ingredients list of high-demand commodities like shampoo, chocolate and pizza dough, where it is referenced via obscure terms. Regulation on palm oil labelling states that it can be referred to as “vegetable oil”, although the product is sometimes referred to as “cocoa butter substitute”.

Failure to name those responsible for deforestation is an extensive problem that not only pertains to individuals who commit serious actions that cause destruction of primary forests, nor indeed corporations. Exnomination is a widespread problem that also includes lack of naming of intermediaries, product listing, product labelling, ingredients and consumer habits. Climate and land use imagery and storytelling is thus an opportunity to combat the inertia of consumer culture by revealing what Angela Meah (2014) calls “geographies of responsibility”. Although blaming consumers and corporations is not likely to result in behavioural change, the ways in which the media can disrupt these geographies of irresponsibility is vital if the stories of climate change and solutions are going to lead to transformational impact at a societal level.

Indigenous ethnophotography: approaches to climate photography by Indigenous forest peoples

What is Indigenous ethnophotography?

Ethnophotography should not be understood with reference to Western anthropology and ethnography - that is, as the scientific study of people who are non-White by White experts using Western knowledge systems and cameras. Indigenous ethnophotography becomes a means of exploring the ways in which ethnicity - as a dynamic, fluid, flexible yet consistent space for identity formation - can be mobilised within the Territories.

Indigenous ethnophotography can strengthen artistic, cultural and political aspects of land struggle and resistance movements as they become mobilised by Indigenous Peoples in alliance with non-Indigenous environmentalists, campaigners, artists, media professionals and action researchers. According to **Edgar Kanaykõ**:

> *Ethnophotography is the process of 'ethnifying' a group of people through images, as opposed to words, which does not have to be approached from an invasive media perspective, but from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, where the knowledge revealed as image is shared and transmitted to the rest of the world as a process of structural and wide-ranging change.* (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**)

In other words, ethnicity is not fixed or rigified in the photographic capture. Instead, the camera facilitates the transmission and communication of ethnic identity and belonging as a fluid, malleable and contested space. Indigenous ethnophotography thus supports the diversification of forest-dwelling voices and perspectives. Indigenous ethnophotography does not stem from categorisation of peoples according to ethnicity and race in order to reinforce binaries (Indigenous versus non-Indigenous; White versus non-White). On the contrary, Indigenous ethnophotography becomes a dynamic process for the questioning of fixed ethnic constructs, and for the dynamic transformation of communities through transformational processes. Indigenous ethnophotography is a strategy to expand identity and the political claim for self-determination in a manner that is agile and responsive to environmental change.

Célia Xakriabá (2021)
Photo credit: Edgar Kanaykõ, Xakriabá people, Brasil

"This image of the Indian - static and without movement - is almost always impregnated in the conventional wisdom/popular belief and refers to the past, to nudity, the headdress, the bow and arrow. Outside these stereotypes, the person is no longer considered 'Indian, or is no longer 'pure'. On the other hand, we, as indigenous people, who make use of images - in my case, mainly photography - to show from our own point of view what we are, sometimes leads me into a dilemma: which image are we showing to the other, or rather, which image is the other seeing of what we want to show? Certainly, they are different perceptions, because the image and its interpretation always depends on the point of view of the one who sees it ... However, our 'desire for an image' is not to preserve this "Indian image", on the contrary, it is precisely its deconstruction, making this image the very continuity of the transformations that we indigenous peoples are."

Ethnovision: the indigenous gaze that crosses the lens. Masters dissertation in Anthropology. Edgar Kanaykõ Xakriabá, (2019). [quote accompanying instagram post of this photo]

Indigenous self-presentation

Ecuadorian Indigenous audio-visual producer **Eliana Champutiz** argues that mainstream media content does not establish a deep connection between human and forest (in research interview). Champutiz further argues that it is necessary to strive for Indigenous self-presentation in order to avoid the risks posed by invasive media outlooks (as discussed

earlier). Self-presentation (as opposed to misrepresentation) can give sovereignty and autonomy to forest-dwelling peoples so that they can present themselves, their stories and their priorities according to means and aesthetic values relevant to Indigenous forest-dwelling peoples. Champutiz adds:

> *When you present something you do it from the point of view of self-presentation; if you do it from the anthropological vision, however, you do it from the outside. Indigenous peoples show forest life from within.*
> (**Champutiz, in research interview**)

For Champutiz, self-presentation by Indigenous People implies that the Indigenous self can be shown in the way an Indigenous person feels at the time, rather than through ventriloquised versions of that feeling. An act of self-presentation can be ambivalent, equivocal, self-questioning. An Indigenous perspective can change over time. Self-presentation is not fixed. Nor is it external, alienated or cut off from the lived-in experience of forest-dwelling. As such, Indigenous self-presentation can never fall into the trap of becoming invasive or interventionist. In sum, self-presentation is the capacity for an Indigenous feeling to be expressed, and for that expression to emerge from an Indigenous self and no-one other. Some of the key characteristics of Indigenous self-presentation are:

- that it is synonymous with a sense of cultural belonging; images are produced by individuals who belong to the community that is being depicted
- that it offers diverse and inclusive forms of content production; unlike content generation standardised by large corporate media production and consumption, Indigenous perspectives are often multiperspectival, multi-ethnic and multilingual
- that it is a participative process, where cultural, ceremonial, ritual and also spiritual forms of engagement predispose the image-maker to a collective and participative way of producing images

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner. Dir. Zacharias Kunuk, 2001. Igloolik Isuma Productions. A collaborative, majority Inuit production company. It was the first feature film ever to be written, directed and acted entirely in the Inuktitut language.
Image credit: Isuma Distribution International.

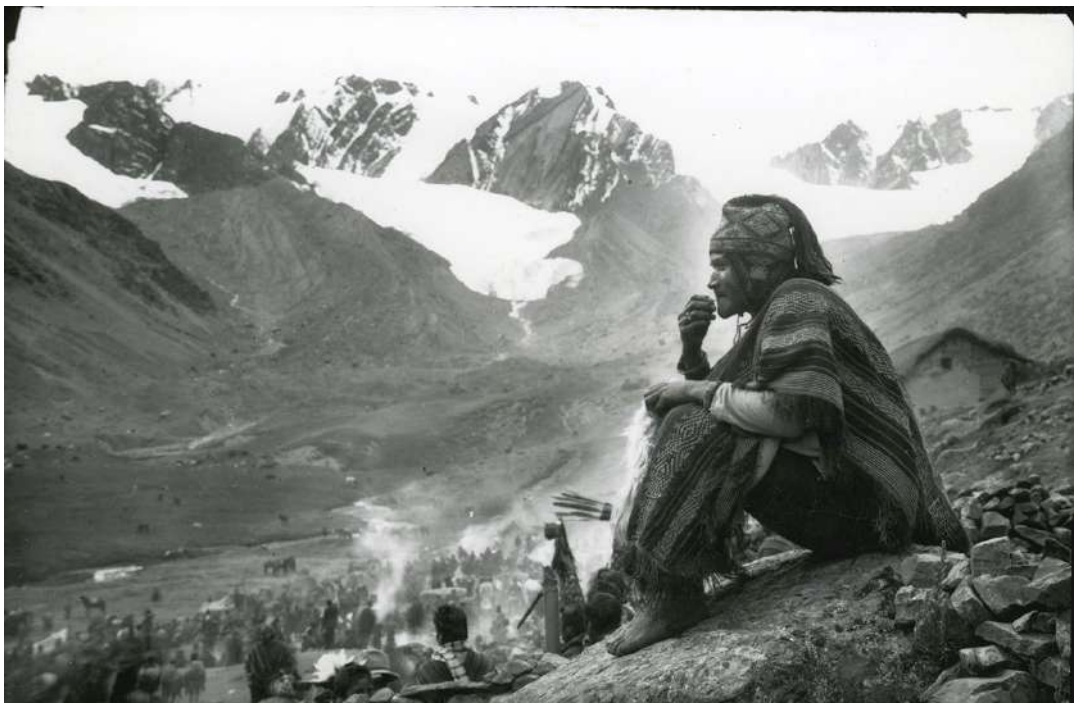
Self-presentation is also closely tied with the issue of representational sovereignty (Raheja, 2007; Peterson, 2014; Dowell, 2013; Kliewer, 2019). Gaining Indigenous presence in the media is a step towards legal, political and territorial sovereignty. The recognition of sovereign rights over territory becomes sometimes inextricable from the right to represent the Territories in the media by Indigenous communicators.

Moreover, representational sovereignty implies that Indigenous media is also an opportunity to address intersectional issues - in the sense that Indigenous media presence, and more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to produce their own media, are also conducive to the dissemination of narratives that address wider discrimination and privileges. In short, representational sovereignty is not only the possibility for Indigenous Peoples to produce their own photographic, film and video production content from within the Territories, but also to develop content that advances claims for land and climate justice, as well as a number of other cross-cutting claims around intercultural education, gender equality, intercultural health, rights to land and water, age discrimination, race and so on.

Forest photography and Indigenous image-makers

The Quechua photographer Martin Chambi (1891-1973) is a fine example of how visual media can be transformed and greatly diversified from an Indigenous perspective. Chambi turned the anthropological and ethnological attitude to photography on its head, which led to a radical shift from *indigenista* photography into photography by the Indigenous (Nates, 2013). With Chambi, photography operates as a historically enlivening process, rather than a mere reproduction and commodification of Indigenous traditions. The shift away from a colonial gaze is not merely an act of photographic appropriation but a diffusion of media within the Territories and a repurposing of photography as a media for new cultural experience and political functionality (i.e. as a weapon of resistance).

Chambi's work is characterised both by technical mastery and a profound feeling of place and people. Coupled with his understanding of context and specificity, Chambi translates Indigenous life into a visual language of stark contrasts and sharp differences, which are integrated within a highly aesthetic work that conveys the dignity, resilience and strength of Indigenous men and women. Chambi's portraits often show people in confident and relaxed postures and poses. Instead of the staged and controlled environments that abound in colonial ethnophotography, Chambi's work conveys the power of belonging.



Resting Qolloritti, 1935.
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington-London 1993
Photo credit: Martin Chambi

Martin Chambi, Ezequiel Arce family with Potato Harvest, 1934.
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington-London 1993
Photo credit: Martin Chambi

Martin Chambi, Campesinos at the fiesta of Santiago, Cuzco 1929.
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington-London 1993
Photo credit: Martin Chambi

Wendy Nanibush argues in her article Notions Of Land: For Indigenous artists, how can photographs provide a space of visual sovereignty? that ethnophotography can be a form of resistance, to the extent that Indigenous photographers can reclaim the camera as an instrument for Indigenous political struggle (Nanibush, 2019). Rosanna Dearchild (2019) makes a similar point in her radio programme Iconic Indigenous imagery: How Photos Shape Movements and Connect Us To History. Dearchild argues that whereas early photographs of Indigenous people in North America were weaponised and used as propaganda, contemporary Indigenous photographers are using the same medium to portray non-stereotypical identities, while recasting the manner in which photography can reconnect to the past. This sense of purpose is especially significant in terms of developing approaches to visual storytelling in the context of Indigenous forest campaigns against major industry actors (oil, gas, hydropower or agribusiness).

Numerous examples could be mentioned here to illustrate the above point. For instance, Indigenous photography and cinematography have been championed by collectives such as HDPeru, led by the brothers Alvaro and Diego Sarmiento. Engaged in the production of films in defence of Indigenous Peoples' rights and environmental conservation in the Andes and Amazon Rainforest of Peru, the Sarmiento brothers are Quechua documentarists who have brought light to women's voices, community elders and everyday life within these Indigenous Territories of the Peruvian Amazon. A sense of kinship and familiarity is fundamental to HDPeru's vision of land, forest and community.

Photos from the film 'Green River' (2017) by Alvaro and Diego Sarmiento
Photo credit: HDPeru

In Colombia, the work of Arwac Indigenous photographer Amado Villafaña Chaparro is also emblematic, particularly in relation to his photo book *Niwi Úmukin': Imagen y Pensamiento de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta*. The work evocatively conveys Indigenous spirituality and its relation to land via the photographic medium. Villafaña Chaparro's work carries a message deep from within the Territories - to promote care for the Sierra Nevada - by sharing perspectives coming from spiritual authorities.

Full moon at Chendukua.
Photo credit: Amado Villafaña

Brazilian Indigenous photographers have also garnered local and international attention for their pioneering work in the promotion of Indigenous values, culture and resistance. **Edgar Kanaykõ** uses the photographic medium as a means of documenting aspects of Indigenous culture. In the process, photography becomes a "tool for struggle" and "healing" (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**). A similar mission is offered by **Kamikia Kisedje**, a documentary photographer and filmmaker from the Indigenous lands of the Wawi, in Mato Grosso (Brazil). Kisedje's work specialises in the recording of inter-ethnic meetings and conferences in order to amplify the message of Indigenous leaderships. According to Kisedje, the main objective of such photographic work is "the promotion of health, environment and the Indigenous cause". He adds:

> *I work in defense of the environment and the Amazon Forest. My lens defends the forest - I take pictures of illegal logging and show deforestation through drone photography or photographic records from boats … Our struggle is hard, which is why it is important to value Indigenous communicators. We accompany those who fight and so we empower and value the leader's struggle. The importance of this kind of work is that we bring information from within the forest – we give visibility to the birds, to the animals, to the whole forest, and we raise awareness of the importance of them. This is why the Indigenous lens makes a difference, we protect those beings, we value and give importance to them; those who live in the big city do not have knowledge of life in the rainforest.* (**Kisedje, in research interview**)

Drone photography of illegal logging.
Photo credit: Kamikia Kisedje.

In the Central American context, numerous Indigenous photographers have emerged in recent decades to further decolonise and diversify the photographic medium. Some examples include Duiren Wagua of the Gunadule nation in Panama, **Norlando Meza** and **Olo Villalaz** (Guna peoples of Panama) and **Josué Rivas** (Otomi) whose work appeals to ideas such as grassroots social movements and Indigenous futurism.

In Bolivia, documentary photographer **Sara Aliaga** has highlighted the role of Indigenous women in particular. In Ecuador, the work of Jessica Matute, an Indigenous woman from the Tsa'chila people, is another fine example of a practice that exemplifies a sense of place, belonging and experiential connection with the land and its people. Matute's work is also, like many of the practices mentioned earlier, a testimonial account of how Indigenous Peoples stand up against large industries in order to protect their homes and habitats. She explains:

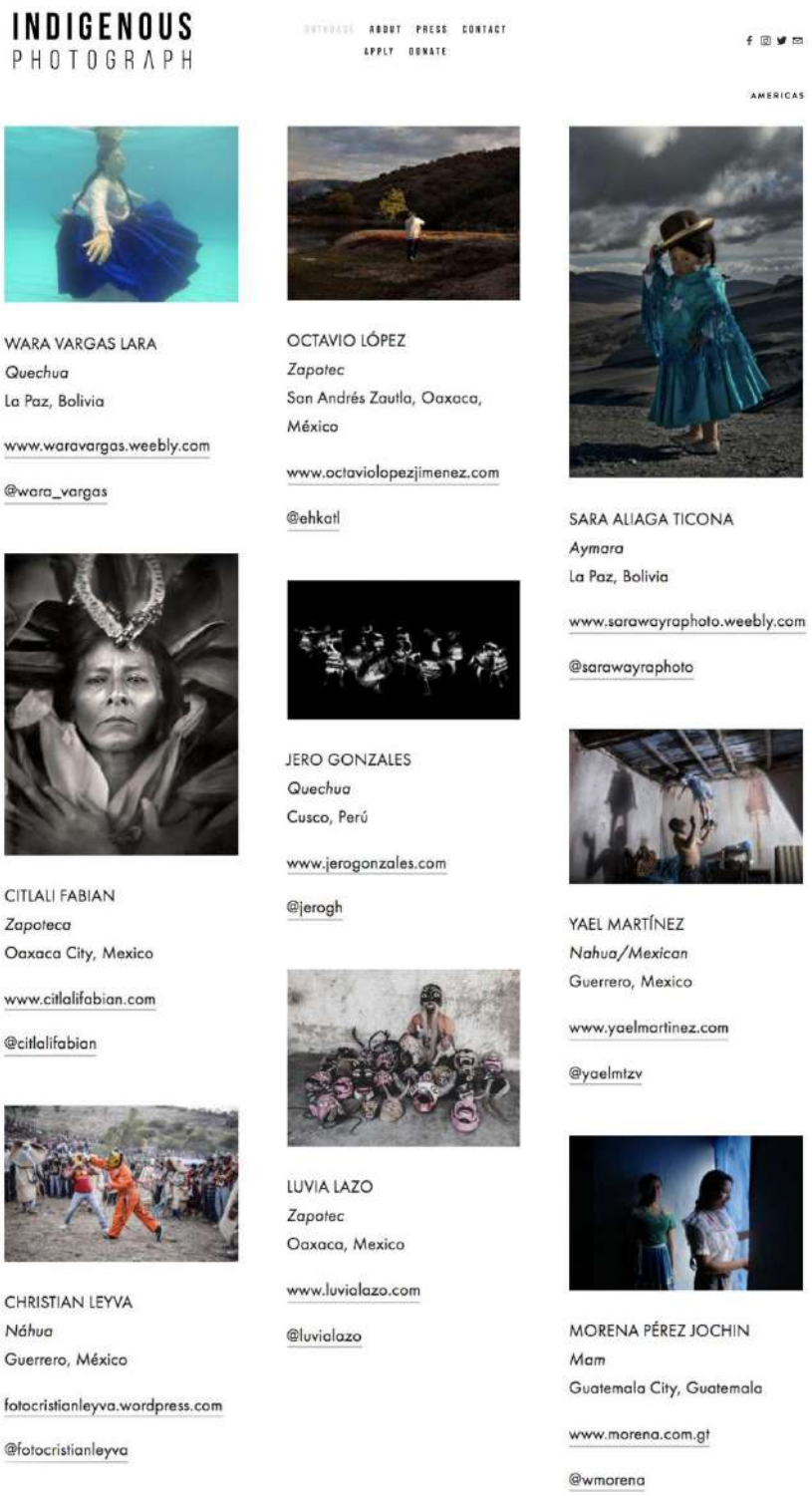
> *It is important that civil society knows what is happening in the Amazon, it is necessary that we raise our voices, empower ourselves and speak out against these violent acts that are slowly killing our peoples because of mining. It is time for unity, it is time to fight. It is important to internationalize the struggle and resistance movements to create alternatives so that the extractive system does not continue to devour and dominate us. The struggle, solidarity and denunciation will help us transcend and create resistance components in the face of these abuses against our peoples.* (Matute, 2017)

Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua is a significant communication project that seeks to contribute to the defence of the collective rights, resistance movements and land struggles of Indigenous Peoples through documentary film-making and radio series. This collective fosters social processes, Indigenous community-building and the general principles of communality, cultural diversity and the dignity of peoples and individuals. *Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua* has been a watershed in media communication led by Indigenous Peoples. Aligning with the deep ethics that guides the writing of this report, this organisation seeks to promote "the value of life and reciprocity". Unlike many mainstream and commercial media groups, *Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua* is based on heart-led principles and kinship approaches that celebrate, promote and defend the value and right to life. The *Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua* team maintain that:

> *Faced with an oppressive reality, we promote numerous processes that, stemming from a cultural perspective and from within the territories, have promoted demands that confront individuals against collective logic. The results of these ideological confrontations are frequently used in the media to support the misinformed and racist vision with which community life forms are frequently attacked.*
> (Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua website, no date)

Another example of transformational media is Indigenous Photograph, a website and database expanding into a global community of photographers, who seek to "bring balance to the way stories are told about Indigenous Peoples" (Indigenous Photograph, 2021). Like *Comunicaciones Ojos de Agua*, *Indigenous Photograph* presents the stories of Indigenous Peoples from the perspective of forest-dwelling groups and forest campaigners. The mission of *Indigenous Photograph* is "to facilitate a space to elevate the work of Indigenous visual journalists and bring balance to the way stories of Indigenous people are told in the media" (Indigenous Photograph, 2021).

Indigenous Photograph also provides a web space where numerous Indigenous voices and aesthetic lenses are gathered, in an effort to build collectivism and amplify Indigenous struggles. The diversity and plurality that *Indigenous Photograph* celebrates is underpinned by the variety of visual approaches, cultural lenses and technical treatments that the Indigenous content producers gathered in this space display.



https://indigenousphotograph.com/

Numerous other grassroots media communication groups merit attention as torchbearers of kin-centred, heart-led and nature-based media, whose methods and ethics can lead to substantial innovation, transformation and regeneration within the media economy at large.

Some examples of good practice within the Indigenous-led visual media space include: Indigenous Media and Communication Caucus, Mídia India, Latin American Coordinator of Film and Communication of Indigenous Peoples, Red Tz'ikin, and Prensa Comunitaria, amongst others. These Indigenous-led media groups could pave the way for deep transformation in the international media ecosystem, as media practices transition from individualist to collective, from top-down to bottom-up and participatory processes. Groups such as these are recasting media actors and striving to change the narrative of climate change and forest governance.

In sum, Indigenous-led media can make several concrete contributions to enhanced practice in the communication of climate and land use stories. As intimated earlier, Indigenous photographers and visual storytellers:

- can provide an internal and experiential understanding of living in forested communities and Territories, which means there is very little risk of othering, stereotyping or misrepresentation
- do not fixate on crises and problems in the same way invasive and interventionist media actors tend to, but instead focus on positive action (healing, eco-restoration, community-building)
- are imbued with ritual, ceremonial and spiritual understandings that deepen connection with the land, forest and kinship between human, animal and plant worlds
- have often earned the trust of elders, community leaders and traditional authorities, which means that their work safely amplifies Indigenous cultural and political claims, while building bridges between Indigenous communities, or between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups

Climate change narratives: from telling stories to telling times

Photography is an art of light and time. Both these notions have distinct connotations within Indigenous spiritual worldviews. As discussed previously, time is often understood to be cyclical in many Indigenous worldviews, for instance in the Andean concept of the Pachakutik. Pachakutik, from the Quechua language, is originally a concept associated with pre-Columbian Andean cultures. Meaning 'a change in the sun', or a movement of the Earth which will bring a new era, Pachakutik is often referenced in relation to contemporary civilisational crisis. Indigenous temporality is not linear. Indigenous times tend to be experienced as cycles, which is why Pachakutik is concerned with the folding of past, present and future. Hence, Indigenous philosophies of time are as much about ancestral pasts as they are about ancestral futures (**Josué Rivas, in research interview**). This sense of recurrence, which is particularly resonant within the ambit of Indigenous futurism, is an important idea in the context of Indigenous approaches to climate and land use imagery.

The temporal dimension of media communication and outreach is a vital aspect of Indigenous media presence. Three temporal aspects of Indigenous media presence will be addressed in what follows. Thus, *Indigenous Media Presence* promotes:

- slowing down the speed of mass media production and circulation
- spending time with and getting to know the People and Lands depicted and documented in media products
- exploring experimental uses of photographic time (time-lapse and long exposure) to convey the subjective passing of time and the changes affecting climate and land

Toré night. “Who doesn't dance the Toré is only Indigenous in form, but not truly Indigenous, no" - Dona Ercina, who was the oldest Xakriabá elder. Toré is a ritual that takes place in secret in the forest. Those who are not allowed can say little and know little about what happens.
Photo credit: Edgar Kanaykõ

Media tends to work at an accelerated pace to keep up with fast-changing events. For **Edgar Kanaykõ**, speed is a characteristic of what this artist calls “invasive media” (in research interview). Media is therefore an encroachment upon Indigenous Territories of a particular way of consuming time - that is, as news. News items are short, current, up-to-date and breaking. However, Indigenous temporalities are not faithfully represented, Kanaykõ suggests, within the parameters of consumerist news media. Time is not something to be spent or consumed, or to be broken into short news items. Kanaykõ argues that in the context of media content production in the territories: “people come and go quickly, but the speed (of foreign media practice) does not allow people to get close to the land” **(Kanaykõ, in research interview)**.

Laura Beltrán Villamizar, Director of Photography of Atmos Magazine (a Mexico City based publication that focuses on climate outreach and climate change stories), describes the process of media content production as “decision-making in seconds”, and she adds:

> *The speed of the news cycle focuses on numbers, but yesterday’s numbers are often old news, which is why the news cycle is so fast, and why editorial decisions are often made in seconds. Decisions are made by two people, two people who very often are visually illiterate, and who make the decision at the last minute.*
> (**Beltrán Villamizar, in research interview**)

Slowing down the pace of content production implies a number of key tasks for content producers seeking to capture Indigenous stories of climate change. Slowing down the pace of content generation also involves investing time in the education, cultivation and sensitisation of decision-makers, content producers and even consumers, with regards to the rhythms and cycles of Nature. The degradation of forests, the drying up of vast swathes of green cover, the bleaching and dying of trees, are all extremely accelerated processes, as is the decline in fauna and plant life around the world; however, the media plays a role in how this process is consumed and reflected upon by the public at large. Thus the lens proposed by some Indigenous photographers offers a slow media approach, precisely to question and resist the acceleration of mass media.

An example of how temporality is explored by a contemporary photographer is Brazilian artist Claudia Andujar. Andujar has been photographing the Yanomami peoples for three decades. Her example shows how good practice rests not on the quantity or quality of the image, but the quantity and quality of the time spent with those whose images are being mobilised in the international media. The time Andujar has spent with the Yanomami translates into a work that is not only more extensive in terms of the quantity of visuals she has produced; what Andujar’s work shows is the vision behind the visuals. Her vision was cultivated through long-term trust, kinship, friendship and shared resistance. In other words, what sets Andujar’s work apart is the depth of knowledge of the people she photographs, based on the time she has spent and the long-term engagement she has pledged to Yanomami environmental campaigns.

> *I decided very early on that I would not photograph if I felt I did not have a connection with the person whose picture I was taking. Developing an intimacy with the individual and community came first. Photography was always secondary to that.*
> (Basciano, 2020)

Immersion in the culture of the Yanomami has led Andujar to question conventional photographic composition, which is why she employs techniques such as double exposure, long exposures, the use of coloured filters or smearing of Vaseline on the lens, to produce a body of work that is stranger and more faithful, she argues, to the experience of the Yanomami people. In the words of Davi Kopenawa Yanomami:

Claudia Andujar came to the Yanomami lands. She wore the clothes of the Yanomami, to make friends. She is not Yanomami, but she is a true friend. She took photographs of childbirth, of women, of children. Then she taught me to fight, to defend our people, land, language, customs, festivals, dances, chants, and shamanism. She explained things to me like my own mother would. I did not know how to fight against politicians, against the non-indigenous people. It was good that she gave me the bow and arrow as a weapon, not for killing whites but for speaking in defense of the Yanomami people. It is very important for all of you to see the work she did. There are many photos of Yanomami who have already died but these photos are important for you to get to know and respect my people. Those who do not know the Yanomami will know them through these images. My people are in them. (Kopenawa Yanomami, 2020)

Jovem grávida da série Sonhos Yanomami
[Pregnant girl – from Yanomami Dream series] 2002
Inkjet printing on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta 315 gr
Photo Credit: Claudia Andujar, courtesy Galeria Vermelho

Desabamento do céu / O fim do mundo - da série Sonhos Yanomami
[Falling Sky / The end of the world – from Yanomami Dream series] 2002
Inkjet printing on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta 315 gr
Photo Credit: Claudia Andujar, courtesy Galeria Vermelho

The experimental sense of photographic time that characterises Andujar's work is also tuned in with the non-human and ancestral time of the spirits – *xapiri.* These spirits are said to descend on the forest leaving trails of brilliant white light in their wake. Andujar seeks to convey this spirit-motion by shaking her camera as she photographs convulsing, gyrating

shamans. Subverting or playing with experimental uses of photographic time have led Andujar to a depiction not only of the realism of Indigenous life, but also its temporal dynamism. In addition, the sense of duration that her images depict, the capture of slow time passing, is also a reflection of the climatic lens felt by the Yanomami, whose life in the forest has been radically transformed by the relatively fast changes in the land and weather caused by climate change.

Performance scholar and ecocritic Una Chaudhuri argues that a ‘climate lens’ is a useful approach to the depiction of major natural phenomena such as climate change, and that durational performance and photography play a vital role in “telling times as well stories” (2020). The use of time-lapse photography, Chaudhuri argues, is one strategy that can help make sense of the slow and sometimes imperceptible changes affecting trees, waters, lands and weather patterns. Telling times, as opposed to stories, requires a perception of change that, although almost imperceptible to the human eye, may be extremely rapid and sudden in geological times.

Tusuy
Photo credit: Jero Gonzales / Instagram

Jero Gonzales, a Quechua photographer from Cusco (Peru), is another example of how temporality and duration can be explored technically through long-exposure photography. Gonzales’ series titled *‘Tusuy’* (dance in Quechua) seeks to connect people through a ritual where light and movement form ephemeral landscapes that become repositories of time. Photography and dance hereby provide an interplay for the exploration of Indigenous temporality as an embodied and felt phenomenon.

Finally, photographic time has been explored by many artists in the subcontinent to convey climate change, through time-lapse - for instance in an effort to document major transformations occurring on landscapes over relatively short periods of time. The recovery

of forests after fire and the degradation of forests due to soil contamination or deforestation are some examples of processes that have been captured using time-lapse photography. Time-lapse visualisations of tree cover loss are particularly useful to show the speed at which deforestation occurs in certain parts of the world. Our Forests, a time-lapse video created by *Google Earth* (2021), shows the extent of forest loss at a global level in the period 1984-2020 using satellite photography. Focusing on five locations around the globe (Nuflo de Chavez and Sara in Bolivia; Mato Grosso in Brazil; Enright in Oregon (US); and Atsimo Andrefana in Madagascar), the video is a sobering reminder that almost half of the planet's forests have been cleared or destroyed by humans, and that the process has accelerated in the last decades due to human overpopulation and overconsumption.

Google Timelapse is a project that also uses satellite photography over a 37-year period to visualise how the Earth has changed. The project allows viewers to see retreating glaciers, the impact of industrial mining, the dramatic drying of water bodies such as the Aral Sea, and the extent of deforestation in Rondônia (Brazil). Both long exposure and time lapse techniques have one thing in common in the case of climate imagery: they offer photographic techniques for the depiction of climate change as a durational phenomenon at once dramatic and dynamic.

Kyle Powys Whyte has argued that some proponents of climate change solutions narrate climate change through linear time. The danger of a linear sense of climate change, for instance as depicted by scientific visualisations such as Google Timelapse, is that a sense of responsibility is largely ignored. Powys Whyte adds:

> *When people relate to climate change through linear time, that is, as a ticking clock, they feel peril, and seek ways to stop the worst impacts of climate change immediately. Yet swift action obscures their responsibilities to others who risk being harmed by the solutions. Linear time is not the only way to narrate climate change. Indigenous persons have articulated climate change through changes in kinship relationships. Kinship time, as opposed to linear time, reveals how today's climate change risks are already caused by peoples' not taking responsibility for one another's safety, well-being, and self-determination. Kinship, as an ethic of shared responsibility, focuses attention on how responsible relationships must first be established or restored.* (Powys Whyte, 2021: 2)

These words reinforce the importance of Indigenous spiritual knowledge and kinship in deepening the media's vision of climate change. Climate change communication is not just a question of telling impactful stories, but telling times. Indigenous temporalities have to do with a recognition of nature's cycles and the ways in which those cyclical patterns affect social, family and personal life. As intimated earlier, the Indigenous spiritual lens is not an alternative belief system; it is not a story to adorn scientific research on climate change; it is, rather, an ethic of kinship and responsibility.

Indigenous spirituality and its impact on climate imagery

Why is Indigenous spirituality important for environmental action?

As a way of life in harmony with Nature, Indigenous and Afro-descendant spiritualities can be a foundation for environmental ethics, action and activism. It is in this context that spirituality becomes actionable as a concrete way of revitalising Western media conventions surrounding the communication of climate stories. As an integrated perspective that includes learning from the head, heart and hand, Indigenous spirituality can be characterised as a holistic vision that reconciles the rational explanation of climate change with emotional, affective and embodied understandings. Thus, Indigenous spirituality not only explains climate change: moreover, spirituality provides mental, physical and affective ways of coping with environmental pain through healing. Grounded in a sense of the future based on the continuity of ancestral life, Indigenous spirituality offers regenerative ecological thinking. Regeneration, in a spiritual sense, is not only a process of healing the land, but also, a process of healing the human spirit, and the broken relationship between land and people.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn told his audience in a speech entitled *A World Split Apart,* delivered in 1978 at Harvard University, that the world was entering a civilisational crisis. The words of the Soviet dissident echo Indigenous philosophers with respect to the power of spirituality to reinvigorate a Western society in crisis. According to Solzhenitsyn, the crisis of civilisation has to do with a “de-spiritualized humanistic consciousness” (1978). The calamity that Solzhenitsyn envisaged in 1978, namely the destruction of the planet due to a materialistic desire for consumption, has accelerated and reached the so-called tipping point. The years 2019 and 2020 saw the burning of millions of hectares of primary forest around the planet, an event Greta Thunberg famously epitomised in *Our House is Burning: Scenes of a Family and a Planet in Crisis* (Thunberg et al., 2020). The year 2019 was the year of the global pandemic; the year of Black Lives Matter and the year of social upheavals that broke out throughout the globe, many of which were directly or indirectly associated with issues of land use, climate justice and water management. According to Solzhenitsyn, the solution to the crisis is the re-spiritualisation of human consciousness.

In the Spanish and Portuguese languages, the words *cosmovisión* or *cosmovisão* are commonly used to refer to Indigenous world-making and sense-making. The words are typically translated into English as ‘worldview’. However, this translation exposes an English language bias. Cosmovision is a term that encompasses relations between human society and cosmological as well as astrological phenomena. Whereas ‘worldview’ bears a more secular connotation, cosmovision is a term that is more closely aligned with a vision of life tied to the natural-spiritual world. Although cosmovision is used extensively in Spanish and Portuguese literature, the terms are nonetheless problematic. Cosmovision is not an Indigenous term. According to **Olo Villalaz**, member of the Guna peoples of Panama,

Director of *TV Indígena* and member of the *Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques* (AMPB):

> *Cosmovision is not a concept or a word that belongs to us (Indigenous People), but a word that foreigners often use to describe how we see the world. What is often called cosmovision in Spanish is associated with the cosmos, that is, an integrity, which is why cosmovision is simply a way of saying that humans partake in the whole and that everything around us affects us profoundly. To speak of water, for instance, is to speak of plants, to speak of medicines, to speak of human bodies. This thing you call cosmovision are all the relations of life. However, to say that water is life is not enough. It is in the relationship that we find the deep meaning between human and water, a meaning that was formed when the human body was an embryo. We are water beings before we become land beings, we are internally related to water. What you call cosmovision is something we express in living relations between our bodies and the bodies of the natural world, for instance our human bodies and bodies of water. The name cosmovision is not enough, you need to live these relationships in a web of life. That is what Indigenous peoples do.*
> (**Villalaz, in research interview)**

The Indigenous spiritual understanding of life as a planetary web of relations is similar to what in Western environmental philosophy has been dubbed the Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock, 1972). However, Indigenous spirituality is neither a cosmovision, nor indeed a hypothesis; it is a web of familiar relations that is lived in practice: a physical, sensory, emotional and intellectual web of relations or kinships harmonised through spiritual values and principles. What many Indigenous spiritualities propose is a sense of familiarity with Nature, a regenerated relationship with the planet as Mother or life-bearing force.

Indigenous spiritual perspectives could be said to be grounded in what Eduardo Salmon (2000) calls a *kincentric ecology* - that is, a sense of ecological relation between humans and the surrounding environment defined by kinship, kindred spirit and kindness. This ethical perspective is not only a counterpoint to impersonal, calculative, institutionalised forms of social relation. Kincentricism is also a paradigm shift that moves away from a patriarchal way of relating to people and nature. Patriarchy can be characterised by a patronising attitude to nature, or an attitude of domination and exploitation that lacks the values of nurturing and care associated with matriarchal or Mother Earth traditions.

What is significant about Indigenous spirituality in the context of environmental media communication is that it can help foster methods of content production and circulation defined by a particular set of values. Indigenous spirituality can transform media culture by establishing a sense of familiarity with the natural world in a way that, as **Olo Villalaz** points out, is not just conceptual or terminological, but “enfleshed” (in research interview). In other words, when media is open to spiritualised perspectives, drawing on Indigenous communicators, a sense of intimacy and grounded connection, a conviviality and familiarity can be nurtured by visual media in order to reveal kinship between human and non-human

worlds. Visual media can help underpin visuals with a vision - at once artistic and spiritual. According to **Olo Villalaz**:

> *We are making a valuable connection whenever we share our culture with people who have no idea of indigenous life, or who have no idea of environmental care. Our messages come from a knowledge that is very deep, which makes many people think: I can start protecting Nature too, I am inspired by this. Our message is not only for the non-indigenous population, however, but also for the Indigenous youth. In Panama more than 70 percent of Indigenous youths live outside their territory. That population is born and grows in a society where there is a lot of violence. How do we get the message across to those children? It is our photography that carries the message. The message goes out not only to non-indigenous people, but also to our own children.* (**Villalaz, in research interview)**

Lucio Kansuet, a Guna artist, depicts the relationship between human and water
'Untitled' (left)
'The Guardian's Rest'; private collection of the artist. (right)
Image credit: Lucio Kansuet

Indigenous youths throughout Central and South America find themselves moving away from their territories and resettling in large towns and cities, where familiarity and intimacy with nature is not readily available. Indigenous spirituality can help preserve nature connections and bonds with the Territory. As Amazonian photographer **Robertho Paredes** points out:

> *The inhabitants of the forest can use this [photographic] tool in order to share their spirituality with their own people and also as part of a larger community. We must remember that photography was used by colonial people only to show an archaic notion of Amazonians designed to make us disappear, as if we did not matter.*

Indigenous photography becomes a medium to rediscover the peoples that inhabit the Amazon Rainforest, and their sense of spiritual belonging.
(**Paredes, in research interview**)


From the photo-book 'Inside the Forest' [Selva Adentro]
Photo credit: Robertho Paredes

Imagination, dream and revealed knowledge

In the Spanish language, the term *revelado* denotes that which is revealed; that is, knowledge of a revelational kind, as well as development of a photographic film. Within the broader ambit of Indigenous cosmovision, revelational modes of knowledge are central to Indigenous visual epistemologies.The significance of revealed wisdoms lies in the power of Nature to produce her own images, her own visual expressions, available to the human mind via the power of psychotropic medicinal plants and dreams.

According to **Edgar Kanaykõ**, an ethno-photographer from the Xakriabá peoples in Minas Gerais, there is a distinction to be made between 'image' and 'photograph' (in research interview). Community elders warn photographers wishing to capture images of Indigenous people that the photograph of a person is only an external representation, but that it can reveal the 'image' of that person. According to Kanaykõ: "image is the soul of the photograph". Producing climate imagery related to forest governance and Indigenous movements is not only a question of authorising photographic capture within the Territories. Rather, it is a question of seeking authorisation from community elders and guidance on how to capture photos of peoples and places in a way that respects tradition while amplifying local priorities and demands. The risk posed by climate and land use photography is that images can be made available elsewhere, through media dissemination, thus exposing the soul of a person or place to non-Indigenous people who do not understand, or even respect, the idea that souls appear in image form. This, at least, is the spiritual perspective upheld within the Territories. The image is mediated not by photographic technology, but by a spiritual medium that is powered by medicinal plants and dreams (Graham, 1995). Thus, when the image is utilised and mobilised in photographic reproduction, technology can pervert the soul contained within the photograph.

> *A photo is one thing and an image is another. A 'photographed being' is cut in a frame; an 'image being' is the soul in the photograph. This is why we say [that a photograph is] "stealing our soul". I once asked a shaman here in the village: What is the spiritual world like? He said, it's as if you were watching TV. When the shaman is in another world ... he is seeing many images. Many shamans say that the spirits are images. So when a ritual is taking place and we photograph this specific moment, we believe that it is an encounter between photographic and spiritual images.* (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**)

A similar distinction between 'photographic being' and 'image being' is made by Sapara communicator **Yanda Twaru** in the Ecuadorian Amazon context. Twaru explains that Indigenous people are 'image-people' - not necessarily photographic people (in research interview). Image does not reside in the apparatus or in the photograph, but in visions that are revealed to those who dream or imagine the land. Photography or film, according to Twaru, are extensions of the natural image that the communicator has of the land in their vision world. Twaru adds:

> *Human beings can control images, but they can also harm and destroy when they seek to control - the function of technology is dependent on apparatuses that seek to control, but it is only through visions revealed by medicinal plants that we can reach the image, an image that we cannot touch but which we can imagine. That image is always in my mind. Dreams speak to us and show us the way - this is borne of dreams, which reveal the image. Images guide us and transmit energy to us; dreams are images. Here, in the territory, we live with images that connect us, that harmonise us, that make us rebellious - because we need to be rebellious and support the struggle through the images we dream.* (**Twaru, in research interview**)

The dominance of Western rationality over dreams is not innocent; it is political. By undermining modes of image mediation grounded in dream, vision and memory, Western systems of knowledge production tend to foreground technological image reproduction and distribution. In other words, there is a danger of perpetuating forms of intellectual and technological colonialism (Cusicanqui *et al*, 2016), whereby certain modes of knowledge are aggressively denied or undermined to support Western rationalism and technocracy. Dream knowledge is closely tied with demands for social and environmental justice, which is why Twaru's point does not only concern cultural tolerance, or acceptance of different 'belief systems'. Dream is not a belief; it is an actuality, a real message conveyed by nature to the dreamer, which in many Indigenous communities represents a power that can inform collective decision-making at the social and political level. Thus, dream must be understood as an image-based form of communication and transmission that has political implications, and which guides Indigenous consciousness in the context of land struggle, resistance movements and legal campaigns conducted against corporations, land owners, hydropower consortiums and even state actors.

Media training may have to incorporate inter-ethnic and Indigenous image-based approaches in order to truly diversify what is understood by visuality and visual media within and across non-Indigenous worldviews. In other words, photographers and media-makers may have to train their photographic eye to Indigenous ways of seeing, as well as Indigenous visual languages, symbolism, visual education and vision making. Such training may have to incorporate approaches such as trance-based visualisation within a spiritual understanding of the forest, for instance through the mediation of sacred plants (tobacco, ayahuasca, yauna, coca, etc), which are vital mediators in the way many Indigenous communities conceive the process of image and sense-making.

Among the Indigenous Mapuche in the southern cone of Latin America, inter-ethnic education is revealed through the *konünpazugu*. The *konünpazugu* is defined as a way of developing socially contextualised knowledge, both in terms of family-based social memory and territorial collectives found in the Wallmapu, or Mapuche Territory (Quilaqueo, 2016; Quilaqueo et al., 2016). Knowledge transmission among the Mapuche is often reliant upon wisdom revealed to fathers and mothers via the medium of dreams (*pewmas).* The Rarámuri people of Northern Mexico offer similar teaching-learning processes in the context of which wisdoms are revealed through *Onorúame*, that is, through dreams, astral observation, participation in rituals and waking periods, among other forms of revelation (Valencia Gaspar, 2017).

Lourdes Pacheco Ladrón de Guevara writes (2018) that women's knowledge in Indigenous villages in the Sierra Madre of Mexico is based on at least three key tropes: the body as a sacred space in harmony with the sacred; dreaming as a way of knowing, such that the prayer-dreamer appeals to an altered state of consciousness and sacred visions; and health as a state of acquired wisdom, as opposed to a medical or clinical state. Aguirre Beltrán also points out, still within a Mexican Indigenous context, that “perceptions achieved in the dreamworld add dream data to the objective experience, drawing on a part of the world - the invisible and intangible - which can only be accessed by mystical experience” (Aguirre Beltrán, 1987: 183).

What is true of dream cultures in the southern and northern tips of Spanish-speaking America also applies to the tropical forest regions. Speaking from an Ecuadorian Amazonian context, **Yanda Twaru** maintains that photography and cinema are vital ways of showing the Indigenous dream world (in research interview), which Beltrán calls the “dream data”. In the words of Twaru:

> *Our Amazonian cultures dream images and visualize images, which photography and cinema can help us transmit, and so audio-visual media is useful to us because we are Image People and we are people who imagine; we continue dreaming the jungle and in that way we want to make a contribution to the audio-visual world. It is through audio-visual media that we want to make that dream visible; that is how we build and fortify ourselves to protect Nature. From our ways of seeing.*
> (**Twaru, in research interview**)

The power of symbol

One way in which spiritual visions of the natural world are given concrete representation is through symbolism. Within many Indigenous cultures across Abya Yala, symbolism is a powerful medium for the communication of spiritual values and wisdoms enshrined within ancestral bodies of knowledge. Thus, an eagle's feather, a pipe, a puff of smoke, a particular spiral pattern, a coca leaf and many other symbolic signifiers can help represent and visualise specific Indigenous forms of sense-making.

Symbols can be characterised, at least in the present context, as ancestral codes that help transmit or give visual form to traditional ecological knowledge concerning land and forest life. Cosmovision is often typified by several layers of symbolism, ranging from purely historical explanations or truisms to foundational signs that have astronomical or cosmological importance. Thus trees often symbolise a sacred or divine force, which is why the effort to visualise forests must pay serious attention to symbolic values and the dangers of misreading Indigenous symbols through representational media.

Land is highly symbolic throughout Abya Yala, particularly in the context of sacred sites (groves, mountains, rivers, trees, springs). Land thus acquires a major spiritual significance through symbolisation. Failure to recognise Indigenous symbols can pose risks of cultural appropriation or insensitivity, or an omission of the actual people behind those symbols, as a recent article by *National Geographic* claims (Trahant, 2018) . In this sense, photographing forests and Indigenous forest peoples requires an Indigenous media presence that not only seeks to raise awareness of local struggles, priorities and sensibilities, but which also recognises the symbolic imagination behind Indigenous imaginaries (Bacigalupo, 2016).

Photographers and image-makers must pay close attention to the symbols that Indigenous communities hold dear as reservoirs of spiritual signification. Photography should not hide symbolism but strengthen it, in order to make Indigenous perspectives visible and graspable in the international public sphere without emptying the content of their symbolic significance.

Indigenous social media influencer **Yanda Twaru** from the Sapara nation of Amazonian Ecuador argues that forests speak to people, revealing meaning in dreams and symbols, according to many different natures (in research interview). Human nature, according to Twaru, is a walking nature, a nature that carries meaning as it goes along; whereas trees are standing natures, which require the mediation of rain, wind and air to carry their meanings. Twaru maintains that the forest is full of symbols that mediate and transmit the many natures of the living beings that inhabit that biome. Sensitivity to that symbolic mediation and close observation of forest transmission shows that human nature has walked too far from the forest. This has led to a severe damage within human nature caused by badly built economies and societies that only communicate the message of capital (**Twaru, in research interview**).

Eliana Champutiz further argues that misreading symbols is a colonial grievance, in the sense that throughout Abya Yala, Indigenous symbols were typically read by Catholic missionaries as evidence of devil worship, which led to a serious misconception of Indigenous worldviews within Catholic histories of evangelisation (in research interview). Many Indigenous symbols, Champutiz argues, have been emptied of meaning through demonisation, such as the Ayahuma spirit and teacher tree in the Andean-Amazonian context. The Ayahuma was dubbed ‘the devil’s tree’ by Catholic missionaries, and it became a symbol of evil within a Catholic symbolic universe. However, the Ayahuma tree is a sacred spirit among many Amazonian communities, having powerful medicinal properties.

Ayahuma flower or cannonball tree.
Couroupita guianensis is a kind of evergreen tree, native to the Guayanese region.
Photo credit: Jorge A. Bohorquez

The characterisation of the Ayahuma tree as the devil is an example of how a symbol of life and regeneration within Amazonian cosmovision was co-opted to deny meaning both to the forest and its peoples. This misreading and perversion of symbols happens frequently in media practices, according to Champutiz, in the sense that Indigenous clothing, hats, body painting, feathered headgear and so on are semiotic codes often referenced in the media as broad locational cultural references (like the tepee, so often utilised as a symbolic generalisation of all North American First Nations). Indigenous symbols are thus taken out of

context or forced to lose their sense of cultural belonging in order to help uninformed audiences get a general sense of location, rather than a nuanced and context-specific understanding.

Indigenous photography as ritual

Indigenous Media Presence argues that one of the basic principles of good practice in the sector involves participatory media approaches that facilitate full Indigenous self-representation. Otomi photographer and Indigenous futurist **Josué Rivas** argues that the aim of photography must be to achieve a purpose higher than self, which is why participatory approaches and collective action are central to his work. According to Rivas:

> *A photographer does not work only to take photographs. He or she works to build bridges and those bridges are made of images.* (**Rivas, in research interview**)

According to Rivas, the generation of media content should not be guided by end-results but by processes, which is why the work of the photographer, within an Indigenous cultural context, can be considered to be part of a collective movement rather than an individualistic, result-driven effort. It is not the outcome that defines the value of photographic work, according to Rivas, but the pathway. That pathway often involves a number of vital participatory actions such as community engagement, trust-building, depth of time spent and relations formed with community members. In 2016 and 2017, Rivas spent seven months covering the Standing Rock protests. Members of over 300 Indigenous peoples joined thousands of other supporters to resist the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which risked endangering the water supply for thousands. This process involved, according to Rivas, a deep understanding of oral transmission and ritual. The process of capturing life within Indigenous communities should not be staged, framed or designed, but it should be allowed to emerge from within the context of life and from the rituals, ceremonies or spontaneous events (including protests) which punctuate everyday life.

The role of the photographer, according to **Rivas**, is not to be a bystander or passive onlooker. Instead, he or she must join in and engage with the community as a fellow member. Rivas speaks of his work as photo-ritualistic, akin to the practices of "photo-activism" and "photo-action" (Bogre, 2012; Soroka *et al*., 2016). In short, Rivas does not consider himself a photographer so much as someone who builds artistic bridges between photographic and ritual practice (**Rivas, in research interview**). Rivas' work exemplifies the effort to use photography as a grassroots instrument to amplify social movements and collective action, by following and playing a part within community mobilisation.

Similarly, Guna photographer **Norlando Meza** argues that Indigenous photographers and image-makers produce an emotionally engaging work that touches the viewer, which Meza describes as "filling photography" (*fotografia llenadora*, in research interview). Photography that fills you up, in the proposed sense, is one that is imbued with the energy and feeling of

the people who are being conveyed by the photographic medium, without relying on a ventriloquising effort to capture someone else's feeling or experience. The Indigenous photographer is not staging the experience, but is instead fully involved in the process as it unfolds. This participatory and committed approach translates into a sensitive way of capturing moments full of urgency and potency.

Indigenous photographers work from a ritualistic understanding of the image, also according to **Edgar Kanaykõ**. For Kanaykõ, capturing the image is a process that involves rendering the spirit of a person in photographic print. This is why, according to Kanaykõ, Indigenous photographers often work with *pajés* and other spiritual leaders to guide their professional practice (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**). The Indigenous photographer is spiritualised in the sense that he or she is a medium for the capture of a spirit-image. To the extent that many Indigenous peoples believe image is synonymous with soul, and that images appearing in dreams are also present in photographs as actualisations of a soul or spirit, photography can play a vital role in transmitting the learnings of the spiritual world, for instance as revealed in shamanistic or psychotropic practices.

Photo taken by Guna photographer Norlando Meza during a reenactment of the historic 1925 Guna Revolution. He says, "If a photographer who has lived in that place for so long and who knows the history takes that photograph it shows a different scene ... When I see that photo, it touches my heart. The dramatisation of everything that our ancestors, our grandparents suffered, everything that happened at that time, I captured in an image, and it really touched me a lot."
Photo credit: Norlando Meza

"Good images are not reducible to technical quality or aesthetic value," according to Kanaykõ. The good image is one that gives back to the community and which is produced in accordance with the guidance and principles of traditional authorities. It is an image that fortifies and vivifies the community, respecting and honouring the life and spirit of the individual or individuals rendered in the photographic capture. Like traditional ritual,

photo-ritual is an ethical and moral guidance for the transmission of values that support life and the common good, kinship, family ties and other core social pillars found in Indigenous communities.

Kanaykõ exemplifies the photo-ritualistic aspects of Indigenous photographic practice in relation to an iconic photograph he took during an unusual rainfall on the Brazilian Congress Building in 2017 during the *Acampamento Terra Livre* (ATM) organised by the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB). Reflecting on the symbolic and ritualistic importance of the event, Kanaykõ says:

> *The Spirit is a photographer, and sends photographers to show what is going on; heaven breaths Earth, and everything is closely connected; photography is a machine, it is mechanical and technical, but it influences other forces; it is ethical and ethnic, it is an entangled relation that starts from within.*
> (**Kanaykõ, in research interview**)

The deep ethics of Indigenous photo-ritual can be a source of inspiration and best practice for non-Indigenous practitioners - not because rituals can be copied or appropriated, but because the values of ritual practice can be shared. The pillars of photo-ritualistic practice could be said to include the core values of altruism, feeling, kinship, collectivism and biocentrism - and can be shareable and transferable to photographers and visual storytellers widely.

Towards a collective sense of purpose

Graham Harvey has argued in his edited volume *Indigenising Movements in Europe* that "Indigenizing" lies at the opposite end of a continuum from "universalizing" (Harvey, 2020). These poles are not dualistically opposed, but function as "matters of stress and tension". As intimated in the Introduction, indigenizing is not limited to ethnic definitions of indigeneity but may also refer to "experimentation propelled by examining European originated movements in which engagements with Indigenous animistic, shamanistic or nature-venerating traditions are employed in self-conceptions and in the discourses of identity formation, maintenance and dissemination" (Harvey, 2020).

The question is: what would indigenised photographic practices look like? Drawing on the definitions of indigeneity offered earlier, it is clear that indigenisation of photography does not entail adopting an ethnic look, a touristic or folkloric gaze, but rather a deeper effort to convey a sense of reciprocity with the natural world.

As Indigenous photographer and film-maker **Josué Rivas** argues, one defining aspiration of Indigenous photography might be to achieve a "purpose larger than self". In other words, indigenisation of photography is achievable when photography becomes a means to achieve healing (**Rivas, in research interview**). Visual media can be a healing practice when it strives to communicate a common goal or sense of the good that is not defined by personal

interest or institutional allegiances. If there is an altruistic motivation that transcends the photographer's ego, then the purpose of photography is no longer defined by personal gain, competition, results, impact, outcomes or gain. Rivas argues that the effort to achieve this purpose larger than self is not a chimera or illusion, but that the work of Indigenous photographers is more often than not guided by that spiritualising and altruistic effort to heal and to cope with environmental and social grief. According to Rivas, if photography can be mobilised for a purpose larger than self, then the medium can prepare for a future society that will become indigenised.

> *The time of Indigenous people is coming. What we are doing here as Indigenous photographers and film-makers is simply to prepare for an ancestral future.*
> (**Rivas, in research interview**)

Photo credit: Josué Rivas

Ancestral futures is a term that emerged in Brazilian anthropological circles in the late 1980s and early 90s, and which drew inspiration from Indigenous cosmovision, eschatology and Jungian psychology (Mourão, 1987). Ancestral futures argues for a paradigm shift away from linear notions of development and progress in order to embrace cyclical ancestral practices for future transformation. According to Rivas, creating images that are heavily influenced by the idea of Indigenous futurism implies that Indigenous Peoples will thrive in the future. To pave the way for such a future, Rivas maintains:

> *We must create visual content and tell stories that are not only intended for now, but are intended for people that we're never going to get to meet. My ancestors, the Mexica people, the Otomi peoples, many different communities that I've been part of, they intended things for us right now. Even through attempted genocide they were trying to tell a story so that we can be the recipients of that story.*
> (**Rivas, in research interview**)

In short, the Indigenous media perspective can help innovate media production not only in the context of communication of climate change and land use stories. More broadly, as a perspective firmly grounded in place and belonging, Indigenous media can provide core pillars of practice that have a sense of integrity and ethical depth, which are significant contributions to the sector at large. Indigenous Media Presence can lead to methodological innovation in the media sector in extensive and structural ways. In other words, ingenuity and creativity of Indigenous content producers is further enriched by a cultural and spiritual perspective that can lead to significant shifts in the way media is produced and consumed more broadly, not least through a move away from individualistic and competitive values relevant to commercial industries, and towards collective values and principle-based media methods and approaches.

Digital communication and the Indigenous public sphere

Rise of the Indigenous public sphere

Over the past decades, the Indigenous public sphere (Hartley and Mackee, 2000) has developed as a critical idea to help explain the rise of Indigenous representation and presence in the media, particularly within English-speaking websites (Niezen, 2005; Dyson 2011). In general terms, Indigenous Peoples have accepted new media technology as a welcome contribution to cultural preservation. At the intersection of environmental and social campaigning, across Indigenous and third sector organisations, digital and web-based communication have given worldwide reach to many tropical forest-dwelling communities. Along with the term Indigenous public sphere, scholars speak of "virtual indigenism" (Niezen, 2009), which largely refers to the public dissemination of Indigenous struggles online. Niezen summarises the presence of Indigenous voices within digital and web platforms as containing the following key expressions:

> *The human rights of Indigenous peoples and communities worldwide; the specific grievances of particular communities, framed in the conceptual apparatus of a global cause; records and documents relating to international meetings of Indigenous Peoples; historical narratives of peoples or regions; links to other indigenous websites; travel narratives by European hobbyists; and even international news from online radio broadcasts that present the concerns and points of view of Indigenous communities.* (Niezen, 2005: 50)

More than a decade since Niezen reviewed the online presence of Indigenous communicators, virtual indigenism continues to advance these key priorities. New expressions of Indigenous knowledge have emerged in recent years, and new modes of presentation and content creation generated by Indigenous Peoples within the Territories have gained momentum in digital and online media. At the forefront of the new Indigenous public sphere are all the aforementioned expressions, as well as new priorities such as the advancement of ways of life and biocentric values, the promotion of Nature Rights, environmental campaigning, Indigenous futurism and ancestral futures, and the re-learning of Indigenous histories and languages - all of which have opened the dynamic process of indigenisation to novel channels and digital methodologies.

Jennifer Wemigwans, Anishnaabekwe scholar from Wikwemikong First Nation and President of Invert Media, has coined the term "digital bundles" (2018) to help frame the use of digital technology as an important tool for Indigenous self-determination and idea sharing, ultimately contributing to Indigenous resurgence and nation-building. The bundling of information and images of both cultural protocol and cultural responsibilities grounds online projects within Indigenous philosophical paradigms, and highlights new possibilities for both

the internet and Indigenous communities that synthesise traditional communication practices (e.g. weaving and textiles) and web-based forms of communication.

The ongoing rise of an Indigenous public sphere largely depends on the ability for groups and organisations within the Territories to work in alliance and partnership with media groups, technology firms, NGOs and other relevant parties, in pushing the agenda of forest protection and social justice beyond a nominal issue concerning diversity. This work can focus on advancing capacity building, knowledge exchange, mobility for Indigenous leaders and communicators, and investment in technology, infrastructure and connectivity within the Territories, in accordance with traditional authorities.

Online indigeneity

The presence of Indigenous information online is a readily available strategy for communication among local Indigenous organisations, alliances and NGOs working on behalf of Indigenous peoples and forests. The majority of online platforms that claim to support Indigenous resistance or causes related to Indigenous demands prioritise cultural expression without necessarily revealing the presence of individual community members or elders. Online platforms do not necessarily reflect the many voices, often contrasting and contested, within the Territories. Most importantly, international organisations working toward Indigenous representation online differ greatly from the actual voices in the Territories - to the extent that the demand for rights, territorial sovereignty and self-representation (what is often referred to as *lucha indigena/luta indigena*), is often watered down and de-politicised to appeal to a wider margin of the public. However, the foremost priority of most Indigenous Peoples working from within the Territories is resistance and justice. The effort to protect primary forests from fires, deforestation, depredation and soil degradation is first and foremost a social and political act of resistance.

As a primarily representational tool, online indigeneity often takes on a political function, which is why websites seeking to advance Indigenous matters tend to focus on wide topics such as Indigenous and human rights, sustainable development, land protection and reclamation, advocacy and activism. The actual voices of Indigenous Peoples, however, are often diluted in humanitarian discourses that depict Indigenous Peoples negatively, in desperate, vulnerable or crisis-prone ways in order to appeal to a donor base and thus sustain a charity or humanitarian economy. What this study highlights is the need to allow for online spaces that show Indigenous ways of life within the Territories in a positive light, affirming the strength, confidence, resolution and firm sense of belonging of forest-dwelling communities.

Representation of Indigenous voices by third sector groups is a sensitive topic, given the dangers of retaining neo-colonial attitudes within a predominantly White sector. The co-option of Indigenous perspectives - for instance, the ethics of the *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay*, an Indigenous world-making system from the Andean and Amazonian region -

is an example of how Indigenous values have been utilised to advance systems of representation in political, legal and academic frameworks (Merino, 2016). *Buen Vivir* is an Indigenous-based ethical perspective that has been extensively critiqued given its co-option as a discursive tool by the Ecuadorian State and the Constitutional framework of 2008 (Kothari *et al*., 2014; Florentin, 2006), not to mention the extensive manipulation of *Buen Vivir* as a conceptual framework within White and northern academic spheres.

The politics of online representation are problematic also within a UN-style system. Official UN subpages on Indigenous Peoples, detailing a short history of Indigenous resistance on the international stage, are often headlined and prioritised in the literature despite very little presence of Indigenous Peoples at the decision-making level. While the UN strives to advance Indigenous priorities, claims and sensibilities within several platforms such as the United Nations for Indigenous People (UNIP), the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN functions, as a whole, as a bureaucratic, political and institutional system of representation that is not Indigenous. UN-style representation imposes on Indigenous Peoples a political culture, a technocratic system of governance, a technical vocabulary and a way of communicating and decision-making, all of which are not endogenous to the communities in the Territories, but which are imposed historically and externally through colonial domination. The intervention of Indigenous leaders within UN forums is often staged and contrived. The political arena is not an affective, heart-centred, kin-based environment, which is why Indigenous Peoples are often expected to speak and act as Western leaders do within UN-style assemblies, thus reducing Indigenous presence to a diplomatic encounter.

A host of global NGOs (mostly based in the US, UK or Western Europe) follow the UN's representational system and SDG agenda, also within a form of political representation that does not always confer direct Indigenous media presence. The transition from representation to presence, and the shift from political to cosmopolitical action at once spiritualised, ritualised and kin-based is a step that many NGOs do not have the audacity or ability to undertake. As we have discussed, Indigenous worldviews tend to function through kincentric forms of social organisation, where the values of kinship and kindness are vital, and where the professionalised and managerial social relations germane to Western institutions and corporations are often unknown. The nature of institutional and corporate organisations, built on impersonal power relations and principles of human resource controls, can generate tensions with Indigenous modes of knowing.

Mission statements or taglines emphasising protection of Indigenous rights, promotion of Indigenous recognition and solidarity with Indigenous resistance, are easy to come by. However, the politics of representation are seldom articulated in terms of the power asymmetries that the global humanitarian system enshrines through its hierarchical structures. How far can Western institutions go in terms of acting on behalf of, or working with, Indigenous groups, if the basic kincentric and biocentric values of Indigenous Peoples are not allowed to change or redefine institutional and corporate structures?

NGOs have been critiqued for a general appropriation of Indigenous resistance and the use of Indigenous campaigns for the purpose of charity and benefit profit-making (Greene, 2004; Muller, 2013). The charity economy often relies on a paternalistic division between the global north, typically seen as the provider, and the global south, the beneficiary. The humanitarian imaginary is often predicated on a vision of Indigenous Peoples as having grievances or weaknesses that require Western support and intervention. Yet the manner in which economic and development assistance is sometimes handed out - that is, through relatively short-term interventions and discrete sums of monetary support - does not necessarily address structural economic problems that would enable communities in the global south to gain autonomy and self-determination in the long term.

The lack of longitudinal and long-form interventions for systemic change reinforce the continued dependency of unrepresented communities.The Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO) was established as a space precisely to address the double standards of a representational political system. UNPO seeks to “empower the voices of unrepresented and marginalized peoples worldwide and to protect their rights of self-determination” (UNPO, 2021).

In the context of Indigenous resistance online, a number of different mission statements can be found, including:

- the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), which is “dedicated to promoting, protecting and defending Indigenous Peoples’ rights” (no date)
- Cultural Survival, which “advances Indigenous People’s rights and cultures worldwide” (no date)
- Survival International, which works “for tribes, for nature, for all humanity” (no date)
- Minority Rights Group International, which “ensures that disadvantaged minorities and Indigenous Peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard” (no date)
- the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP): “working with forest peoples to secure their rights” (no date)
- World Rainforest Movement (WRM), contributing “to struggles, reflections and political actions of forest-dependent peoples, indigenous, peasants and other communities in the Global South” (no date)
- Land Rights Now (LRN), which “promotes and secures the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities” (no date)
- Global Forest Coalition (GFC): “defending social justice and the rights of forest peoples in forest policies” (no date)
- Guardians Worldwide (GWW), whose tagline reads: “taking responsibility for the protection of life on our planet.” (no date)

The taglines used by Indigenous-led organisations, however, read very differently. For example:

- the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) strives to "protect the Sacredness of Earth Mother from contamination and exploitation by Respecting and Adhering to Indigenous Knowledge and Natural Law" (no date)
- the Land Stewardship Circle (LSC) tagline reads: "We are a Circle of Elders, knowledge keepers, community members and leaders who have come together around our shared commitment to healing Indigenous lands and community" (no date)

A distinct gap exists, even from this basic overview of website taglines, between Indigenous-led and representational online platforms. Whereas representational platforms emphasise political matters, sometimes making use of grandiloquent expressions of saviourism and global action, Indigenous-led platforms tend to focus on community, familiarity, sacredness, and a sense of belonging to land and Territory.

Indigenous-led organisations

In the Amazon Basin, perhaps the most significant Indigenous-led group is the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), an umbrella association that covers nine organisations from across Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana, Brazil, Bolivia and Venezuela. A member of the Climate Alliance, COICA has been one of the most important political bodies representing Indigenous Peoples in their fight for legal recognition and protection of their Territories, as well as the preservation of the global climate. As COICA member **Michael McGarrell** explains:

> *Our organisations are vital. Most climate narratives come from outsiders who do not have perspectives of indigenous peoples. We do not need to have them tell our stories on our behalf as though we were not knowledgeable enough or as if we were not able to represent ourselves. That is not true. We are resilient. We have strength. We can represent ourselves, We can tell our stories. We may not have the necessary resources to do it. But we have the ability.* (**McGarrell, in research interview**)

The shift from representation on behalf of Indigenous Peoples to political presence is significant. The process of shifting from representation to presence is not only important within Indigenous-led organisations, but also within pioneering NGOs who are also shifting from a representational style to an Indigenous-led system. A unique and poignant approach to Indigenous Media Presence is offered by If Not Us Then Who (INUTW), a US-registered charity that seeks to protect the planet through participatory films, photography, curatorial content, commissioning of local artists and the hosting of events. The organisation is run by a mixed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous board, and it is designed in different phases so that in future it will be handed over entirely to Indigenous leaders.

INUTW's vision is to contribute to "a world where communities, led by indigenous peoples, can belong to an abundant natural world inspired by resilient storytelling" (INUTW, no date).

According to the NGO's director **Paul Redman,** the focus of the charity on audiovisual media is vital, as media allows for a deep engagement with issues of representation on the ground (in research interview). **David Hernández Palmar,** an INUTW member from the Wayuu peoples of Venezuela, adds:

> *INUTW is giving Indigenous People the spotlight; through constant reflection on what representation is and why that matters, we are raising questions on privilege while giving Indigenous People the space to produce media contents on their own by their own means.* (**Hernández Palmar, in research interview**)

Paul Redman also acknowledges that the charity was developed as a result of a certain frustration, because not enough people were seeing Indigenous-led content. Redman explains:

> *We wanted to create forms of distribution making that could get decision makers to watch and engage [with Indigenous media]; we wanted to inspire and motivate and bring collectiveness to that audience, and so the charity is also about how we bring change to decision makers through heart-centered and data-driven films.*
> (**Redman, in research interview**)

A large ecosystem of communication groups can be thus galvanised by organisations such as INUTW. After almost a decade of working with Indigenous photography, film and video, INUTW has amassed an extraordinary repository and archive of forest stories, as well as a network, web of relationships and bridges, which on the whole form a canvas of different skills and abilities that amplify the Indigenous leadership and give presence to forest-dwelling voices in the public and decision-making spheres.

Indigenous influencers on social media

Local and personalised expression of Indigenous media presence is often found not on websites and webpages but on social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and, recently, Snapchat or TikTok. These platforms offer flexibility and ease of content production to those posting on them. Locally run platforms reaching out to global audiences, these amplify Indigenous resistance, spirituality, traditional knowledge and cultural preservation. One example of Indigenous influence in social media is RunAnimation, the brainchild of Kichwa artist, animator, and filmmaker Segundo Fuérez, who uses a YouTube-hosted platform to share his own and others' videos. The channel has more than 25,000 subscribers, and nearly 5 million views.

Another good example of the use of social media by Indigenous communicators is Tawna: Cine desde territorio, led by Sapara Indigenous communicator **Yanda Twaru,** with a strong presence on Instagram (nearly 4,000 followers). Twaru argues that although Indigenous media are often underestimated, given low quality and budget issues, and while it is not a profitable profession for Indigenous practitioners, the barriers posed by the industry have not

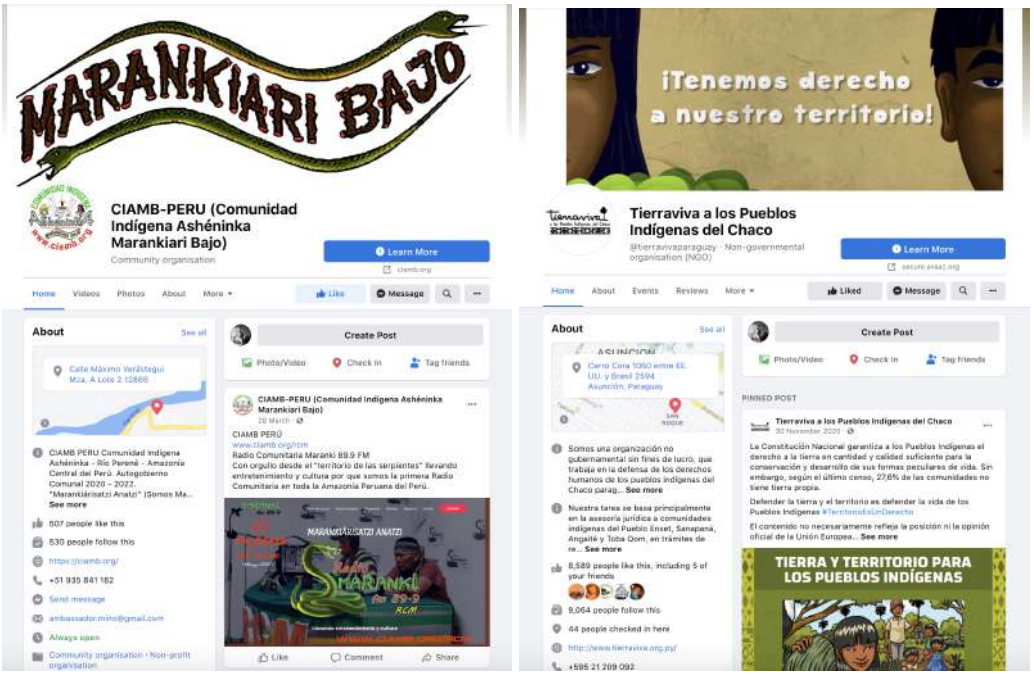
prevented Indigenous image-makers from documenting and sharing work; indeed, low-definition and low-budget is a signature of the raw, direct and uncompromising feeling behind Indigenous communication (in research interview).

Yanda Twaru teaches film in communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon.
Photo credit: Tawna

A significant presence of Indigenous influencers within social media can be called upon as evidence of how Indigenous voices are having a direct impact on climate agendas, as well as climate and land related demands. One space where social media influence has developed greatly in recent years concerns the role of Indigenous guardians (Pacheco Ladrón de Guevara, 2010), and the manner in which this particular label has generated social media traction and appeal among young audiences on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok.

Earth guardians, also referred to as ‘earth stewards’, ‘custodians’ or ‘tutelars’ (Martinez, 2017), have shaped a coherent identity for many global change-makers in the Indigenous public sphere, particularly within the ambit of social media communication. Xiuhtezcatl, Autumn Peltier and Antony Tamez-Pochel are but a few examples of young Indigenous public speakers who, supported by mass followings on social media, have sought to transform public opinion on pressing environmental and land justice matters, drawing on the label of ‘earth guardians’.

In the last decade, a vast number of Indigenous groups have taken to Facebook to create advocacy or communication platforms for Indigenous causes and land struggles. Similarly, in the pan-Amazonian region, Facebook has also proven to be popular among Indigenous media communicators, particularly in terms of providing outreach platforms to web-connected Indigenous communities. Some examples of active Facebook accounts designed and managed by Indigenous People include: *Comunidad Indígena Asháninka Marankiari Bajo*; *Aidesep Pueblos Indigenas* (Peru); *Terra Viva: Pueblos Indígenas del Chaco* (Paraguay); and *Yanomami Tribe* (Brazil).



Active Facebook accounts designed and managed by Indigenous peoples

Climate photography and the Latin American media landscape

Latin American media: a neo-colonial panorama?

The final section of this study will seek to make sense of the representation of Indigenous forest peoples within commercial media in Latin America. The importance of this debate lies in the fact that the control over the media in Latin America remains highly concentrated in a relatively small economic sector. This leads to a serious lack of representation of environmental and social issues within state and commercial media groups, particularly given the vested economic and land interests of large corporations associated with mainstream media groups. This concentration of mass media within relatively small social and economic elites in Latin America has a direct impact on the way images of the climate crisis are mobilised, as the commercial interests of media groups often collude with those of large industries (agribusiness, industrial farming, mining) as well as mainstream party politics. As **Michael McGarrell**, from the Patamuna peoples of Guyana, points out:

> *Indigenous Media Presence challenges the failure of large media companies to carry our stories. Large media companies in Latin America are connected with large industries – mining, agribusiness, etc – and it is easy for them to carry their stories and not ours – they do not see the importance of climate change and our involvement; the audience we reach is very sparse compared to theirs.*
> (**McGarrell, in research interview**)

Evidence of corporate media's collusion with party politics can be found in many countries in the subcontinent. It is worth noting the tense relationship that Hugo Chávez and Nicolas Maduro had, and still have, with corporate media in Venezuela, a tension that peaked during the so-called 'Venezuelan media wars' and the media-staged coup of 2002. Many other examples could be cited here across left and right wing political spectrums – for instance, the media-backed presidency of Fernado Color de Melo in Brazil, and the fraudulent entanglements of private TV stations and neo-populist administrations in Argentina (Becerra and Wagner, 2018). As Carolina Matos points out:

> *A pressing concern [in the Latin American media context] is the unequal power relations between Latin American countries with the advanced democracies, the impact of neo-colonialism on the region and the ways in which the social, political, economic as well as the cultural development of Latin American countries is both tied to tackling the nation's social and inequality problems as well as its subordinated position and relative weakness still within global political and economic fields.* (Matos, 2008: 12)

If the economic and political fabric of large media groups remains neo-colonial at a structural level, as Matos suggests, the plight of environmentalists, Indigenous campaigners and other groups associated with climate justice remains an inconvenient truth (Gore, 2006).

Environmental debates can highlight deep, entrenched and far-ranging divisions in Latin American society that expose cross-cutting and intersectional power asymmetries. Environmental and social debates cannot be extricated from a wider set of socio-economic issues that have polarised Latin American society for decades, if not centuries, and which often lead to violent collision between social movements on the one hand, and neo-liberal or neo-progressive political elites on the other. The tension between social movements and state or corporate actors with regards to the value and governance of natural resources has been an important topic and demand within the many social uprisings that flared in the subcontinent in 2020 - for instance, in Colombia, Chile and Venezuela.

Since colonialism is arguably internalised within the systems, structures and mentalities of commercial media in Latin America, lack of mainstream representation of environmental and social issues in the subcontinent cannot be said to be an individual problem. In other words, this is not a question of blaming or faulting individual journalists, editors or even particular media groups for failing to involve Indigenous perspectives, or failing to cover environmental stories. Rather, the problem has to do with a systemic condition within the Latin American media sector that is dictated by global economic and political forces, as well as historical divisions and elitism.

O Globo is an example of a major force, ever-present within Brazilian media, whose influence on public opinion and decision-making is immense, at least in a Brazilian context. The way *O Globo* has portrayed Indigenous peoples from “anthropophagous and cannibals” (30 June, 1948) through to sexy, denuded bodies paraded on TV for ratings (Guzman, 2013) is symptomatic of the problems underpinning corporate media’s portrayal of Indigenous and environmental matters from a global, corporate and commercial perspective.

As **Kamikia Kisedje**, Indigenous photographer from Mato Grosso points out:

> *O Globo can reach every corner of the country, every household. The Indigenous struggle is hard by comparison, that is why it is important to valorise Indigenous Media Presence, because the commercial media do not show the reality of our villages, they have their own interests. When I produced a video about Belo Monte [a major hydroelectric dam in the Xingu River] my video reached public TV. That is how one manages to reach the homes of those who do not like Indigenous people, that is how we carve a space for Indigenous presence.* (**Kisedje, in research interview**)

SÃO ANTROPÓFAGOS OS "BOCA-NEGRA"!

O GLOBO

FUNDAÇÃO DE IRINEU MARINHO

LIMITE PARA OS PASSAGEIROS EM PÉ NOS ÔNIBUS

Novo criterio para o estabelecimento da tolerancia máxima — Divididos os coletivos em três categorias

EDIÇÃO das 11 Hs.

O índio José Cutivo, da tribo dos Parintins, quando falava a O GLOBO

O QUE NOS DISSE HOJE UM INDIO DA TRIBO DOS "PARINTINS" — QUER IR NA EXPEDIÇÃO À PROCURA DO TENENTE FERNANDO DE OLIVEIRA — E VEIO OFERECER-SE ATRAVÉS D'"O GLOBO"

TOTALMENTE DESTRUIDO PELO FOGO O INSTITUTO DE PESCA DE SANTOS

As chamas originaram-se em consequencia da explosão de uma bomba junina — Na ocasião do sinistro, realizava-se uma festa no edificio do Ministerio da Agri-

ROLOU COM O BA

MORTE ESPETACUL NO AN

Em Niterói, tambem re menino caiu do

Clipping from O Globo (30 June, 1948) with the headline: "The 'Boca Negra' are cannibals!"

The phenomenon of near monopoly in a Latin American media context does not only apply to *O Globo* in Brazil. A range of media groups across television, radio and print media have grown in recent decades into Pan-American networks with huge coverage across multiple countries. Examples of TV media domination include the US-based *CNN en Español*, *Univision* and *MundoVision*, as well as Spain's *Canal 24 Horas*.

Mexican media mogul Remigio Ángel González, owner of *Albavision*, boasts a conglomerate that encompasses 26 TV stations and 82 radio stations, including *La Red* (Chile), *ATV* (Peru) and *SNT* (Paraguay), as well as *Canal 9* (Argentina). González is a particularly powerful force in the media of Guatemala, with a virtual monopoly of commercial television broadcasting. According to **Alfredo Rivera**, an Indigenous communicator from El Salvador, the question of how to give media presence to Indigenous peoples in Central America has to do with a process of influencing powerful national and regional media to help dispel the damaging idea that there are no Indigenous Peoples left in many Central American countries, or that it is not worth learning Indigenous languages given the ubiquity of English (**Rivera, in research interview**). The problem, according to Rivera, is the almost normalised idea held among the general public that Indigenous people do not exist, simply because they do not appear on TV, newspapers, radio or magazines.

According to **Aldo Benitez,** environmental journalist from *La Nación* (Paraguay) and Mongabay Latin America, the level of representation of environmental issues and Indigenous presence in Latin American TV, radio and print media differs widely across countries in the region (in research interview). Considerably more Indigenous presence is found in the political and media spheres of Andean nations (Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia) where the adoption of a plurinational state system has led to direct representation of some minority Indigenous groups in legislative and political bodies, as well as public institutions more generally. In Paraguay, however, where the plight of Indigenous groups such as the Guaraní and Ayoreo is deeply tied to environmental rights and protection of the Atlantic Forest, Indigenous representation in the commercial media sector is "minimal or next to null" (**Benitez, in research interview**).

Although it is often argued that commercial media in Latin America have economic interests that may explain why Indigenous and environmental voices are not widely or fairly represented (Chirix Garcia, 2019), it would be far too simplistic to argue that lack of Indigenous and environmental representation is a strictly economic issue. The neo-colonial division at the heart of Latin American media concerns a broader issue of power asymmetry and elitism. Coverage of climate change, land use and water rights in mass media platforms is a sensitive matter for media elites given the highly polarised nature of Latin American society at large, and the power that social movements can rally against political and media establishments.

Stories of environmental or social injustice in the mass media can trigger widespread social unrest, mobilisation and violent resistance. The climate of fear and self-consciousness within commercial Latin American media is largely due to the volatile nature of contemporary Latin American society. Yet it is not only injustice that fuels social unrest, but also the complicit silence of political authorities and those who control mainstream media platforms. According to **Josué Rivas**, the case of George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police in 2020, which led to the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement to a global phenomenon, is waiting to happen in the Indigenous context. "A single story will trigger our social movement," and he adds: "We are next, we are just waiting and preparing for the Indigenous future" (in research interview). Patamuna leader **Michael McGarrell** adds: "Large media companies will learn why it is vital to tell our stories" (in research interview).

News media are becoming the news. The recent scandal at the BBC with regards to Martin Bashir's famous interview of Diana, Princess of Wales (first broadcast in the UK in November 1995) helps illustrate the point. How can broadcasting and news media in general be impartial when the unethical conduct of journalists and systemic failures within the management structures of a broadcasting corporation becomes the news? What mechanism for reflexivity, if any, does mass media have of its own systems? How can impartiality be met when the news programme becomes the news?

This applies to the lack of Indigenous representation in Latin American media. The silence of mainstream media with regards to the involvement of multinational corporations in

environmental disasters and social injustice is a story in itself, which Latin American corporate media have few internal mechanisms to reflect on, critique or narrate. The stories Indigenous peoples have to tell - with regards to forest protection, monitoring and environmental lawsuits against energy and agribusiness firms engaged in the illegal destruction of primary forests, coupled with the marginalisation of Indigenous activism and advocacy from public forums - can provide a vital mechanism for the accountability both of mainstream media and corporate elitism more broadly.

The visual divide in Latin America

Ingrid Kummels maintains in her book *Photography in Latin America: Images and Identities Across Time and Space* that photography has caused a "visual divide" in the Latin American context (Kummels and Koch, 2016). 'Visual divide' refers to the comprehensive structures of inequality that people who are categorised as Indigenous face; like the well-known trope of 'digital divide', visual divides form patterns of inequality that are not merely inscribed in media representation of ethnic and race minorities, but also in the material and the socio-economic conditions of audio-visual media production. This includes media education, visual literacy, media training and the organisation of media-related work.

Issues surrounding lack of accessibility to photographic media and visual technologies by minority groups open up serious questions concerning lack of diversity, equality and also compromise by media corporations to reach out to Indigenous, Black and Afro-descendant communities. As a north-facing industry, the international media sector is complicit in this visual divide.

Finally, the visual divide is characterised not only by unequal material and socio-economic conditions that benefit particular social and ethnic groups who have access to media technology, training, education, resources, professional opportunities and livelihoods; according to Puerto Rican art historian Miriam Basilio, the visual divide is also entrenched along aesthetic alignments that run along north-south divisions (Basilio, 2004: 36). The aesthetics of Indigenous visual artists, for instance, are a serious point of consideration when dealing with aesthetic diversity and inclusivity. While the aesthetic parameters and norms of visual media tend to be dictated by Western sensitivities and priorities, Indigenous aesthetics can be infantilised or deemed naive (Wernitznig, 2003). What is more, where Indigenous visuals are underpinned by spiritual, cosmological or mythological motifs, the visual divide is further exacerbated by aesthetic differences that often render Indigenous art and spiritual motifs less favourable for coverage in popular media outlets.

The role of independent media

Within this broad-stroke analysis of contemporary Latin American media landscapes, it is important to position the work and social function of independent outlets that provide citizen journalism, activist journalism and independent real-time news via social media - all despite pressures, embargoes and oppressive communication policies carried out both by

neo-liberal and neo-progressive populist administrations across contemporary Latin America.

Print and electronic media groups such as *Mongabay Latin America*, *Atmos, 1854 Media, Mídia Ninja, Agencia Publica, Jornalistas Livres, Ojo Publico* and *Panos Pictures* are examples of independent groups where the ethics of Indigenous representation in the climate change story is not dominated by narrow political agendas, elite or corporate priorities, nor indeed biased electoral and policy motivations (which all but negate Indigenous media presence). Even though independent press and publishing does not equate with Indigenous media presence per se, and while the claim for Indigenous self-presentation is only found explicitly in Indigenous networks and media, independent media has nonetheless raised concerns for the need to include Indigenous voices within socially inclusive and environmentally conscious grassroots media outlets.

As **Laura Beltrán Villamizar** points out, independent media and publishers in Latin America have had to deal with an existing communication culture premised on the idea that "media takes, as opposed to provides," an ethos that independent media groups strive to challenge through more value-based work principles (in research interview). Likewise, **Marielle Ramires** from *Mídia Ninja* argues that citizen media is a social movement, not a machine for the interpretation of social movements (in research interview). As such, reciprocity, solidarity and empathy with Indigenous land struggles and resistance movements are at the epicentre of citizen and activist journalism, which independent media platforms tend to galvanise. Mídia India is a well-known Indigenous news platform founded in 2017 by Guajajara communicators, which has since grown into a national platform. With over 100 Indigenous collaborators who generate and communicate news items from across Brazil, this platform represents one of the few examples in Brazil of independent news media led by Indigenous communicators. Another example is TV Indigena, led by Guna communicator **Olo Villalaz**, a Facebook-based platform from Panama that boasts nearly 40,000 followers.

Independence of media channels is particularly relevant given the condensed nature of media control in Latin America, and the need for plurality and diversity in this regional context. While the media economy in Latin America is broadly characterised by economic pressures exercised by powerful conglomerates on smaller groups, and while this pressure sometimes creates situations that verge on media monopoly (as in the Guatemala case mentioned above), international support for climate, land and social justice is tied to the processes of communication and media independence. This can help facilitate, transmit and strengthen social movements, land struggle and the vindication of social and environmental justice, particularly in the face of violence and widespread insecurity or unrest caused by the aggressive action of land owners, hydropower consortiums, agribusiness, mining groups, poachers and narco-traffickers.

The democratisation of information caused by social media is a key factor in the diversification of a highly centralised and condensed media landscape in the subcontinent. The flipside of the argument is that social media can be an uncritical, unpolished and often

uncensored space that can quickly degenerate into toxicity; trolling; contentious communication; or even hate speech. The need for more filtered, conscientious and critical forms of media independence is vital to the strengthening of Indigenous presence in independent media platforms, as well as the growth of Indigenous-led media channels.

In sum, independent media platforms play a vital role in addressing media centralisation. Independence of the media can be extremely valuable, not only in terms of diversification of content and the achievement of pluralism and fairness of information and communication concerning forest protection and governance - in addition, media independence is pivotal to a bottom-up production of content that can support marginalised or disenfranchised forest protectors and defenders. This can be achieved, for instance, through investment or focus on local people and communities.

Socially and environmentally engaged forest photography in Latin America

Bearing in mind that in select cases photography is a medium for social and environmental action - not just depiction - critical questions arise concerning the positionality[14] of the photographer. To what extent can a photographer seeking to depict stories of climate action and justice be impersonal, impassive and objective? Or is it necessary - as many image-makers interviewed as part of this research suggested - to become part of the story-telling process? In the case of photographers and image-makers who are not Indigenous, such a decision involves adopting a socially engaged approach.

Jose Medeiros is perhaps one of the earliest examples of how artistic photography adopted a socially engaged outlook within a White, South American context. He is considered a landmark photojournalist in 1940s and 50s Brazil. His visual stories, produced for the leading Brazilian Illustrated *O Cruzeiro,* evoke everyday life in Rio de Janeiro, on the beach and during Carnival, while also covering social events involving members of Black communities (e.g. *candomblé*), life in Rio's *favela*s, and scenes from Indigenous groups and workers.

Another pioneer artistic photographer to have evolved a social voice within a so-called 'photo-poetic' approach is Mexican photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo, whose depiction of iconic Mexican artists, Mexican iconography and society is often cited as one of the finest expressions of photo-artistry in the Spanish-speaking Americas.

During the late 1970s and early 90s, Manfred Schäfer and Ingrid Kummels pioneered the curation of photographic exhibitions of community-based and participatory photography in Indigenous communities - firstly among the Asháninka in the Selva Central in Peru (*Somos Asháninka*, 1982) and then among the Raramuri in Mexico, which led to the *Somos Raramuri* exhibition in 1988. According to Kummels:

[14] Positionality refers to the stance or positioning of a researcher or journalist (this applies to photojournalism and visual storytelling) in relation to the social and political context of the study - the community, the organisation or the participant group.

> *The [Somos Asháninka] exhibition had great resonance. It was yet another element in an extensive mosaic that gave way to a broad reorientation in that era towards the recognition of the citizenship and cultural rights of the Asháninka and Nomatsiguenga. This process concretely led to land titles for the 'Tres Unidos de Matereni' Indigenous community, as requested by its members. A peculiarity and strength of photography is its ability to convey its own narratives: the viewers read photographs against the specific background of the moment and the space in which they look at them.* (Kummels, 2018: 377, author's translation)

More recently, the work of Sebastião Salgado has set milestones in the context of socially engaging photography and photo-essaying, given the way in which this renowned Brazilian artist has addressed issues of sensitivity and shock without losing sight of shared humanity and dignity.

Salgado's photographs continue to push the boundaries of climate crisis visualisation towards a subtle understanding of cross-cutting social and economic situations that is seldom available in commercial representations of similar themes (Hostetler, 1999). *The Other Americas, Workers* and *Genesis* are Salgado's most well-known photographic series, exploring previously unseen and unknown stories of class division, oppression, migration, worker exploitation and modern-day slavery, as well as environmental degradation. These narratives are treated sensitively by Salgado with a keen vision for transformation and social justice through a signature visual style marked by sharp black and white contrasts. Considered one of the most successful living photographers, given the staggering number of awards received over the years, Salgado has utilised his enormous public standing to mobilise a staunch defence of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest in the international arena.

In 1998, Salgado and his wife Lélia Deluiz Wanick created Instituto Terra, a non-profit civil organisation that focuses on environmental restoration and sustainable rural development in the Vale do Rio Doce (Atlantic Forest). The aim of the Institute is to carry out reforestation, water management, education, advocacy and whistleblowing, in order to "give back to nature what decades of environmental degradation destroyed" (Instituto Terra, 2021). The first step in the Institute's process to achieve land regeneration was the transformation of the *Fazenda Bulcão* into a Private Reserve of Natural Heritage (RPPN) - a title obtained in an unprecedented way in October 1998, being the first environmental recognition granted in Brazil to a degraded property in view of the owner's commitment to reforestation. As a result of Instituto Terra's action, thousands of hectares of degraded areas of the Atlantic Forest and close to 2,000 springs have been recovered.

Instituto Terra's work reforesting the Atlantic Forest - Fazenda Bulcão, Minas Gerais.
Photo credit: Sebastião Salgado

Further evidence of social and environmental engagement can be found in the works of Brazilian photographer Caio Reisewitz, whose extensive body of work touches on the contrasts between city and country during Brazil's feverish economic development of the 1990s, as well as the portraiture of pristine landscapes and dense forests threatened by urban sprawls. Photographer Ricardo Stuckert, also Brazilian, has produced an equally formidable body of work that focuses on political portraiture - particularly a documentation of Lula's worker movement and subsequent presidency during the 1990s and 2000s - as well as portraits of Indigenous People, including extraordinary aerial photographs of uncontacted communities in the state of Acre, on the Brazil-Peru border. The work of Brazilian photographer Rosa Gauditano spans over 40 years, going back to the 1970s, and it provides yet another photo-realistic and intimate portrait of people on the margins (including prostitutes and street children as well as Indigenous women and infants).

More recently, the work of Uruguayan photographer **Pablo Albarenga**, especially his award-winning series Seeds of Resistance, provides further examples of socially and environmentally engaged practice by a non-Indigenous photographer. Albarenga's photo-stories epitomise participatory action with Indigenous communities. Albarenga's series, produced for the Uruguayan daily *El País*, follows the work of individual Indigenous men and women actively fighting to protect their local environment. Albarenga argues that his documentary photography has different social and environmental objectives depending on the community and the needs, priorities and demands of the local people.

Vero is an Indigenous woman from the Achuar Nation of Ecuador. To many Achuar women, giving birth is something they do alone. When it is time to deliver the newborn baby, mothers leave their homes and give birth by themselves in the rainforest. Things don't always go well and many women may lose their lives in the process. Vero is part of a project of pregnancy health care that supports women during the pregnancy period and afterwards. She uses modern medical instruments to do her work, in addition to medicinal Achuar plants traditionally used for the care of mothers and their children.

Vero lying on her sacred Achuar Territory. (left)
Vero's garden in the rainforest, where many of her ancestral medicinal plants are grown.(right)

Miguelina is a Gunadule Indigenous grandmother whose struggle is related to her culture and ancestry.

The Territory of the Gunadule Indigenous People in the lower part of the Ibgigundiwala reservation, New Cayman, covered by banana monoculture. (left)
Miguelina is lying down on her land that has lost fertility over the years. Her desire is to protect their culture and to do so, she dresses like mother earth - that is, with traditional clothes called molas. The molas are a wearable representation of their worldview. (right)

Photo credit : Pablo Albarenga.
These images were possible thanks to projects Ome, Pütchi, Poraû
by Agenda Propia and Rainforest Defenders, by democraciaAbierta.

Albarenga argues that documentary photography and visual storytelling have two aims: a simple one and a complex or hard one (in research interview).Firstly, the simple aim: documentary photography in the Amazon Rainforest aims to denounce those individuals or groups that are committing offences that cause the destruction of the environment or local communities - for instance, energy firms, oil corporations or ranchers. Photography can raise awareness of human and ecological rights violations, so that authorities can take action; for instance, so that politicians can act, or even security forces can intervene (police and military police). Secondly, socially and environmentally engaged photography and visual storytelling bear witness of the human perspective - which is why the work of a visual storyteller is also to plant simple but transformational ideas in society at large: for instance, that the Amazon Rainforest is not a depopulated region. Albarenga explains:

> *This second objective is complex and very hard to measure. To plant an idea in our society; that the Amazon Rainforest is not just trees and oxygen for us, but also the people that live there. To highlight both the importance of territory and those who live in the Territories, while also making visible the relations that people have with their territories, which is not like the relation people tend to have with land. The relation most people have is extractivist. Our [non-Indigenous, colonial society] vision of territory is economistic and it is totally influenced by economic factors, or by notions like 'the Amazon is the lungs of the planet', which is an egoistic vision.*
> (**Albarenga, in research interview**)

Albarenga's work enshrines a simple but complex idea: the Amazon does not belong to human beings; it is a world in itself. What is more, those who live in the Amazon have their own unique ways of relating to land and the many non-human inhabitants of the forest, which are not reducible to Western self interest - whether oxygen or money - but which speak to a life-affirming sense of collective and common good.

In sum, socially engaged and participatory media work can make significant contributions, to the extent that these approaches can achieve the following, when developed through long-term consultation and co-creation with Indigenous forest defenders and frontline communities:

- amplify the needs and priorities of climate and land defenders
- fortify and mobilise campaigns and advocacy, while strengthening the resolve or cause of existing groups
- create bridges between different groups of Indigenous and environmental defenders
- raise attention of the media and international public on Indigenous demands, claims, allegations and past grievances
- expose the crimes and malpractices of individuals and corporations that violate human and nature rights through documentation, whistleblowing, forensics, evidence gathering and testimony

- improve awareness of social and environmental issues, leading to more informed understanding and changes in public opinion, decision-making and even legal frameworks and jurisprudence

Afro-descendant and Black representation in Latin American media

A critical review of climate imagery and subaltern perspectives in Abya Yala must address the lack of credit and visibility given to Black and Afro-descendant photographers and image producers, which raises questions of structural racism within Latin American media culture. As da Silva and Rosemberg point out in *Racism and Discourse in Latin America*:

> Brazilian media participate in and support the production of structural and symbolic racism in Brazilian society, as they elaborate and transmit a discourse that naturalises white superiority and complies with the myth of racial democracy, thus discriminating against black people. (da Silva and Rosemberg, 1991: 58)

Sara Aliaga (in research interview) makes a similar point with regards to the internalised racism of Bolivian media, arguing that mass media is not only a system of racist representation: moreover - and echoing the seminal work of visual sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2008) - the media is also an infrastructure that internalises racialisation, discrimination and stigmatisation within Bolivian public opinion. She adds:

> Media serves as tools so that society can continue segregating certain communities, which is important to change the narratives. This cannot be achieved from one day to the next, and it can only be achieved when the media listens to the Indigenous, minority and community perspective. (**Aliaga, in research interview**)

Lack of representation of Black and Afro-descendant perspectives in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Americas is also evident in the lack of visibility given to Black photographers and photojournalists, not to mention a lack of Black visual histories in the Latin American mediasphere (at least when compared to Caribbean and North American Afro-diasporas). Some Black photographers who have actively worked in the area of socio-environmental justice and climate change outreach include:

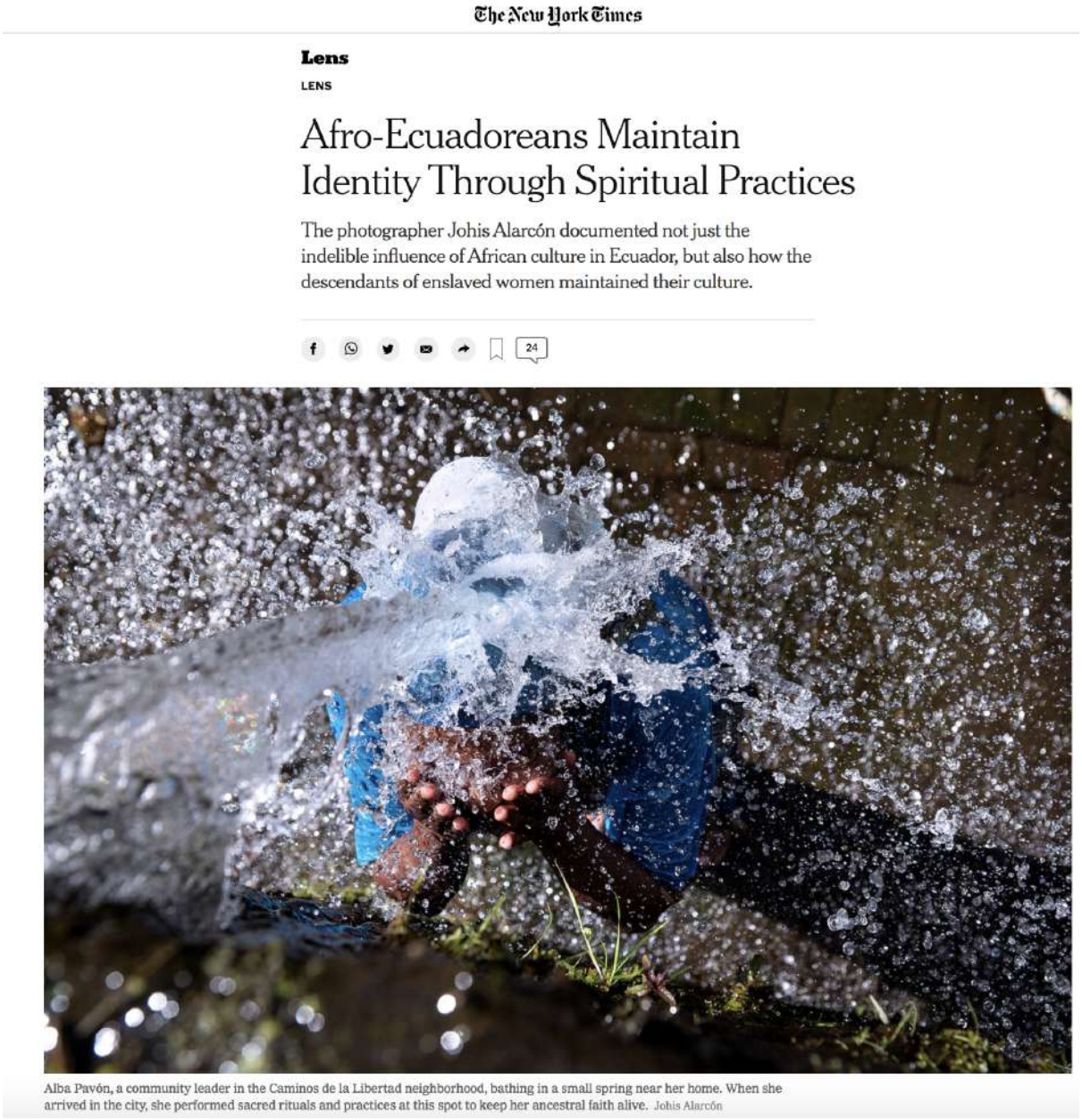
- Afro-Colombian photojournalist Jeison Riascos, who recently produced a photo-journalistic report of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Chocó Department of Western Colombia (a region known for its large Afro-Colombian diaspora)
- Lázaro Roberto, a Bahia-based Afro-Brazilian photographer who has documented Afro-descendant history in Northeastern Brazil for four decades. He is also the co-founder, along with Ademar Marques and Raimundo Monteiro, of Zumvi - a digital archive of Brazilian Afro-photography

ZUMVI Photographic Archive, founded in 1990 by Lázaro Roberto, Ademar Marques and Raimundo Monteiro, three Black photographers from the outskirts of Salvador, committed to the documentation of political cultural activities and the production of images of Afro-Brazilian culture. They created a "visual Quilombo", developing an Afro way of documenting and creating an archive of Black people's visual memories.
https://www.zumvi.com.br/

The work of Black Brazilian photographer Sérgio Silva is emblematic. In November 2013, the São Paulo Court of Justice denied Silva's appeal for compensation in the second instance after having lost his left eye when he was hit by a rubber bullet while covering a protest in São Paulo. In 2020, Tadei Breda published the monograph *Memoria Ocular* (Ocular Memory), which provides a biographical description of state-sponsored repression and racist violence committed against popular movements in São Paulo, as told through Silva's perspective.

The blinding of a Black photojournalist covering a race-related protest in São Paulo speaks to a symbolic and real-life attempt by political and security forces in contemporary Brazil to make the Black voice and image disappear from public view, not only through invisibility but through blindness. Violence in this case occurs both through police brutality, and psychologically internalised oppression and omission of racial equality issues.

Johis Alarcón also produces work which focuses on social, cultural, human rights and intersectional aspects of discrimination and White privilege among Afro-descendant and Black communities in Ecuador.



The New York Times

Lens

LENS

Afro-Ecuadoreans Maintain Identity Through Spiritual Practices

The photographer Johis Alarcón documented not just the indelible influence of African culture in Ecuador, but also how the descendants of enslaved women maintained their culture.

24

Alba Pavón, a community leader in the Caminos de la Libertad neighborhood, bathing in a small spring near her home. When she arrived in the city, she performed sacred rituals and practices at this spot to keep her ancestral faith alive. Johis Alarcón

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/31/lens/afro-ecuadoreans-identity-spiritual-practices.html
Photo credit: Johis Alarcón / New York Times

According to **Selma dos Santos Dealdina,** the problem with visual storytelling in Brazil is that mainstream media use a language of their own - a language that is intrinsically racist, and which, couched in technicality, normalises fixed racial types as though these typologies were cast in stone according to some normative and performative system (in research interview). Racist attitudes become ingrained in the language that media groups use and the treatment of images mobilised in the public sphere. Stories of Black people living in urban contexts throughout Brazil are often covered in news media in relation to crime and drug-trafficking. Black youths are often referred to as *bandidos* (bandits) when caught in possession of marijuana, while White individuals caught in possession of the same drug are

typically referred to in the news as “university students” (Dos Santos Dealdina, 2019). Positive stories of Black and Afro-descendent people are largely ignored in the public sphere. The same applies to positive representations of climate and land use within Black and Afro-descendent communities. Despite the deep environmental and ecological ties that many Afro-descendent communities maintain throughout Brazil and beyond, it is only through negative stories that broader society gets to know *quilombola* and Black communities in Brazil; big media reinforces a pejorative narrative that ultimately sets Brazilian society against itself (**dos Santos Dealdina, in research interview**).

Lack of Afro-descendant voices in mainstream visual media in Brazil, and South America more broadly, suggests that the desire to convey land struggles, emancipation and resistance movements carried out by Black and Afro-rural communities is not a priority for media groups perpetuating visual and digital divides that polarise Latin American society.

The June 2021 protests against the Bolsonaro government, which broke out in order to oppose new legislation seeking to criminalise social protest, are particularly relevant to Indigenous and Black communities. The Brasilia Indigenous March of June 2021 further exposed media bias, given the lack of exposure of peaceful protests such as these in commercial news media platforms, a responsibility that fell to the independent media sector . Bolsonaro’s government’s efforts to criminalise protest through new terrorist laws risks the further obliteration of Black and Indigenous voices from the public arena. Absence of Black representation, and categorisation of Black and Indigenous resistance movements as terrorist, deepens the racist divide that cuts through Brazilian society, as well as Brazilian media. As Calvin L. Warren explains in his book *Ontological Terror*, in a world mediated through racist language and visual grammars, “If one is unable or unwilling to remember, the Black self under inspection vanishes” (2018: 23).

Black invisibility, media blindness and the erasure of the Black self in public media all conspire to weaken the ways in which mainstream media represent climate and land use in electronic, print and other forms of popular media. The racist discourse that underpins media politics in Latin America (van Dijk, 2005) is not only a problem that remains unchallenged and unresolved. Racist media discourse is also characterised by divisions that run along cultural, social, linguistic and historical lines. Within that gap there are opportunities, not only for further diversification of the media industry, but more fundamentally for a systemic transformation and recasting of discourse in the public sphere in Latin America. The lack of Black voices in the climate and land use agenda in Latin America should be addressed through prioritisation of non-hegemonic languages, modes of knowing, memories and ancestral perspectives stemming from Black and Afro-descendent contexts. This process should not be addressed only cosmetically or at a superficial level, but as an opportunity to facilitate structural and systemic transformation of the media sector in Latin America, through promotion of Black and Afro-descendent principles, professionals and priorities.

Ending White saviourism

The White saviour complex has been amply critiqued in the context of colonialist photography. Writing for *The Guardian* newspaper, Bhakti Shringarpure has argued that White and digital saviour complexes are tied up in colonial history through a "politics of elsewhere" (2015) , in the sense that the phenomenon relies on the idea that White people can go out there, somewhere else, to save the world, without close examination of what is happening in their own homes. This is an issue that has been exacerbated by clicktivism or digital humanitarianism, according to Shringarpure (2015). The *Washington Post*'s Karen Attiah likewise exposed White saviour attitudes linked to the public relations campaign for the documentary *Kony 2012*, which led to Teju Cole's publication on Twitter of a White Saviour Industrial Complex anti-manifesto:

> *From Jeffrey Sachs to Nicholas Kristof to Invisible Children to TED, the fastest growth industry in the US is the White Saviour Industrial Complex. The white saviour supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening. The banality of evil transmutes into the banality of sentimentality. The world is nothing but a problem to be solved by enthusiasm. This world exists simply to satisfy the needs – including, importantly, the sentimental needs of white people and Oprah. The White Saviour Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege.* (Cole, 2012)

In her *Guardian* article 'White Saviours Belong in the 1980s. Let's Keep Them There', Gaby Hinsliff argues that *Comic Relief, Children in Need* and other charity and humanitarian franchises have enshrined White saviour visuals, particularly in terms of glamourising celebrities and projecting them to the global stage as humanitarian ambassadors and changemakers. Still within the context of charity and humanitarian programmes and their visualisation, humanitarian imagery and visuals are increasingly fraught with arguments surrounding race, which according to Hinsliff must be placed under "the long shadow cast by colonial history" (Hinsliff, 2019). The representation of 'people in need', which largely helps sustain a donor-based economy underpinning humanitarian, charity and some aspects of media production work, is often in the limelight as a point of contention and ethical debate, given the persistent negativisation, debilitation and dependency of certain people, as well as the position of superiority of the donor. Hinsliff offers:

> *Celebrity presenters fronting Children in Need in the UK are often stepping out of privileged lives, and they, too, tactfully avoid exploring the broader political context of the themes they are discussing.* (Hinsliff, 2019)

As noted in the opening section of this report, the media representation of sensitive issues such as forest clearance, climate change and the human stories behind these events, risk exposing White saviour attitudes and 'save the world' mottos that do not always pose the

hard-pressed questions concerning the role that global north consumer economies, and media consumption in this case, play in the perpetuation of climate problems.

White saviourism has been described as a form of paternalism or “aid colonialism” (Murithi, 2009; Tieku and Hakak, 2014). One example of this paternalistic and racialised aid colonialism is the United Nations’ portrayal of humanitarian mandates in visual media outlets as a solution to global development needs. Refugees from the Central African Republic living in Chad refer to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as “Papa UNHCR”, drawing on a paternalistic African tradition that typically calls presidents and political leaders “papa” (Ampiah and Naidu, 2008). Even while questioning the politics of segregation caused by a UNHCR food distribution policy within Southern Chad refugee camps, the system shows signs of an uncritical form of paternalism. The same applies to the effort to ‘Save the Amazon’.

The saviourist attitude is often allowed to be disseminated in media communication and outreach as normalised discourse, as if humanitarian and conservation missions going out to the forests of Central and South America to save trees and forests was good by definition. The effort to ‘save the world’ can be easily co-opted for personal gain and to glorify individuals as saviours in a quasi-religious or celebrity fashion. We have reached the “last bastion of white saviorism” argues **Jess Crombie** (in research interview). When organisations claim to be tackling climate change and acting on behalf of those in need, but in the long run only further their own self interest, the final act of White saviourism is performed (Crombie). As Madani Younis, Creative Director of Southbank Centre has recently pointed out:

> *We are in an age when we are suffering from what I describe as a new paternalism. And this paternalism allows institutions to co-opt the concerns of diversity, of gender, of class and so on. The problem with new paternalism is that those very institutions then get to decide what the pace of change is. And for me that is perverse. Because how can the very institutions that have been so stagnant and so slow in their response, then feel the responsibility is on them? For me, that has to change.* (Younis, 2019)

Media corporations that in the past or to this day have controlled narratives and information so as to perpetuate privilege are not necessarily in a position to decolonise. Colonial institutions (media, political, legal and academic) claiming to be the ones responsible for change and action, cannot claim this responsibility and deliver on this initiative through a slow and naive ‘diversity agenda’. Colonial structures such as this cannot decolonise. Large institutions must first accept their role in neo-colonial oppression and division, and acknowledge the internalised colonial structures and infrastructures that lead to the co-option of racial diversity and inclusivity within political, academic and legal frameworks (Freire et al., 2018). The agenda-setting approach can be positive for remedial action, but in the long run, it is an impediment to systemic change. Indigenous media presence argues that changes come from within, and that the presence within decision-making boardrooms of

Indigenous peoples, Peoples of colour and Black people is not a cosmetic manoeuvre to improve boardroom image. Indigenous media presence encourages a systemic way of changing the mindset of individuals and organisations; a shift towards a collective and kin-based model of organisation. Kin-based ecology places reciprocity (between humans on the one hand, and also between humans and trees) at the forefront.

The way in which the Central American, Atlantic and Amazon Forests are approached by the international media is still, according to **Sara Aliaga** “quasi-religious and saviorist, as if Indigenous peoples had been forgotten by God” (in research interview). Superiority and paternalism are “saddening” traits that the media enshrines, according to Aliaga, as part of a neo-colonial condition that perpetuates the domination of White, Western elites. However, the religious tone that international media, conservation and humanitarian actors sometimes strike should not be accepted uncritically. Saving the world is not a mission, unless it is a colonial mission. Indigenous Peoples are not arguing that the world needs saving, but that the planet is sick and in need of healing. Rather than a saviourist mentality that articulates the climate change dilemma as a crusade that requires going out there and saving those in need, Indigenous spiritual perspectives present more humble, concrete and diverse solutions: to stay within one’s home in the Territories; to seek answers from within one’s own cultural and natural (bio)diversity; to be grounded in a firm sense of belonging to the Forest; to work on one’s own life example in order to inspire the healing of others. That is where the transformation starts and where saviourism ends - where the life of the forest is positively sustained.

Conclusion

This report highlights the need for a critical mass of Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices coming together to change organisations, institutions and systems. As **David Hernández Palmar** - an independent filmmaker and curator from the Wayuu peoples of Venezuela - points out: “It’s not enough to have a single Indigenous person who happens to speak English on a decision-making table and expect that that is enough. We need dialogue and opportunities to rethink and start a new consciousness” (in research interview).

What is the new consciousness that Indigenous Media Presence brings into being? It is the merger of two existing consciousnesses: the technological consciousness developed in the West, which finds its apogee in digital consciousness, and Indigenous or Afro-descendant consciousness, which is firmly rooted in a sense of belonging in Nature. The coming together of these two consciousnesses affirms the synchronicity and self-awareness that can address climate collapse. It is not a question of choosing one or the other, but accepting the challenges of fast-paced change, and accepting transformation through this synthesis of consciousness, at once technological and spiritual.

It is important to ask pressing and penetrating questions concerning the present civilisational crisis, and the means by which our generations will address the challenges of overconsumption. The over-consumptive nature of Western culture is driving the predation and exhaustion of living biomes, causing the collapse of life on this planet as we know it. A new consciousness for media production is being summoned here, that questions how we consume and circulate images of climate change and forests. This consciousness is not oblivious, naive or ignorant, but self-questioning and self-probing. As a self-reflexive consciousness that is not fearful of self-doubt and self-critique, Indigenous Media Presence has questioned what the stories we are telling mean - what histories they make visible, what ancestral memories they recall, if any, and how we are spreading the consciousness (or not) to turn the tide against climate emergency.

Visual media must not only deal with visuals, but also depth of vision. It is important to respect relations to territory that lie outside Western cultural parameters; what is more, it is vital to raise awareness of the ways in which Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples relate to territory in their own terms. This relation is not defined by land as resource, or as economic premium. Indigenous People often refer to territory as home, as supermarket, as pharmacy, as Mother, as Brother or Kin, as Giver of Life or as Life itself, or in ways that are hard to even comprehend from Western perspectives. Visual storytelling plays a vital role in shifting perception from narrow, economistic understandings of land use to sociocultural perspectives where human beings do not necessarily own the land, but as the Indigenous refrains puts it: “Where the land owns us”.

Climate imagery can encourage this vision of Nature that can lead to societal transformation while prompting a shift away from cultures of overconsumption, greed and self-gain. This

consciousness is all-inclusive - the process of consolidating Indigenous consciousness and facilitating its communication is intended not only for you, for me or for them, but for everyone. The principle of the ‘common good’ travels with the image producers, to distributors, to publishers and consumers. We must all work selflessly if we are going to achieve climate action.

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